Equitable Education and Rising Fees
In response to the continual increase of student fees at Dalhousie, students propose three alternatives to rising tuition:

Remove ALL tuition increases and FREEZE tuition for both domestic and international students.

The global pandemic has only highlighted the precarious nature of students’ financial realities. Many students face loss of employment, food insecurity and increasing anxiety given the global uncertainty. International students have been further burdened with unfair quarantine costs and extra tuition hikes. Imposing tuition fee increases during a pandemic shows that the University has not taken the necessary steps to address the financial concerns faced by students.

Develop a sustainable budget that moves towards universally affordable and accessible education.

Tuition currently makes up over 45.8% of Dalhousie’s revenue, meaning students are the university’s largest investors. In this year’s budget draft, 7.8% of the operating budget accounts for scholarships, which must be maintained to assist groups who face systematic barriers when accessing post-secondary education.

Blanket scholarships intended to bridge the divide created by rising tuition fees are insufficient, largely because they can only be obtained by a fraction of the student population and at-risk students are falling through the system’s cracks. These funds should be used to decrease or stabilize current tuition and ancillary fees for all students.

Lobby the provincial and federal government to increase funding for Advanced Education Sector, specifically to reduce tuition costs and to provide direct to student funding.

In 2010-11, 60% of Dalhousie’s revenue came from government sources, with only 31% coming from tuition and fees. In 2019, government funding (49%) barely edged out tuition and fee revenue (42%). In Dalhousie’s proposed budget, tuition fees account for Dalhousie’s largest pool of revenue sitting at 45.8%, while provincial opening grants sit at 44.2%.
More and more of the costs of running and maintaining our universities are being offloaded onto students. Education is both a right and a necessity within today’s society. For us to maintain the important contributions students and Dalhousie graduates add to our society, we must ensure the institutions that fund them are adequately funded, and not at the expense of students. We need public investment in our public education system.

Student Testimonials

“The education is extremely poor for the money that we pay... Many people can’t afford continuous tuition hikes.” – B.

“Shows how money hungry the [Board] is, the lack of care of students... no understanding of international students and how much their parents work to pay for already high enough fees” – R.

“Dalhousie should be decreasing its expenses instead of placing the greatest financial burden on the students, the least financially secure population involved in the situation. This is a step backwards in making education and social mobility possible for all wealth classes.” – Anonymous

“I have attended this school for 6 years now, through a bachelor’s and a Masters. Seeing how the tuition has continually increased but I have not witnessed any marked change in what the university has claimed to have improved. This is disgusting. I used to advocate for Dal as a "good school" but I can't do that anymore because it is the exact same as every other institution out there. There is no excellence in robbing your students in exchange for an adequate degree. I cannot wait to actively dissuade prospective students from attending Dalhousie.” – B.

“Dalhousie does not consider students as stakeholders. Evident by constant lack of action on numerous issues. I do not recommend the school when people ask me.” – M.

“The additional fee increase for International students is insane. It will make sure that many students do not choose Dal as their educational destination anymore while also putting a lot of stress on current international students already impacted by the pandemic and related costs in Halifax.” – Anonymous

“...Dal does little to advocate for student’s wellbeing at a policy level but expects them to shoulder increasing costs with only a small number of bursaries and grants.” – A.

“I have paid over 250,000 to this university for my degrees and while I am privileged to be able to access loans and funds to support this learning, I will be paying this back and feeling this weight of anxiety for many years to come and am fully disillusioned with higher education. My Dal Tiger pride has long faded, but my loan payments and regret will endure.” – J.
“What exactly is this money going to, can we see the exact, honest full cost breakdown? Are we not paying enough...It is getting to the point where it seems like we are not cared for at this University and that we are simply pawns to give the people at the top more money. I have not received an education worth the price of this tuition let alone an increase. Overall, I am extremely disappointed with this tuition increase.” – L.

“...the University does not care about students.” – U.

A Reflection
Over the past two years, I have been extremely fortunate to continue to have the opportunity to represent students at the Board level. In this time, I have continued to advocate on behalf of students for more transparent communications regarding Dalhousie’s budget, fees, and where student tuition funds go in our university.

This Winter term will be the third tuition fee vote I have been present for, but no changes to the way Dalhousie interacts with students regarding fees have been made. It is unacceptable, that with over a year’s time to roll out better communication regarding fees, no progress has been made. This Spring an email was sent to students indicating that the university had been working with the DSU to organize an event for students to provide feedback regarding the proposed budget from the BAC. I would like to make it clear that this has not happened, nor has the DSU been asked to partner on any such event. Many students are still waiting for an opportunity, aside from emailing BAC, to present their feedback to the university.

Thank you,

Madeleine Stinson