Canadian Alliance of Student Associations

Presentation to Dalhousie Student Union (DSU)
February 23rd, 2024
Thanks for having us!

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Executive Director
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1. Quick Overview:

What is CASA?
CASA at a Glance

- **25 Members**
- **12 Observers**
- **365 000+ Students**
- **7 Board Members**
- **One Vote Per School**
“Through its member-driven structure and grassroots approach, CASA’s mission is to advocate for students using policy development and research, awareness campaigns, government relations, and partnerships with other stakeholders.”
Vision

Accessible
Affordable
Innovative
High Quality
Values

- Non-partisan
- Member Driven
- Research-Based
- Easy-In
- Easy-Out
- Transparency
- 1 Vote Per Institution
Members

- Acadia Students' Union (ASU)
- Camosun College Student Society (CCSS)
- Upsilon University Student Union (AU SU)
- University of New Brunswick Student Union (UNB SU)
- Student Union (SU)
- University of Manitoba Student Union (UMSU)
- UNB SRC
- Krantlen Student Association (KSA)
- Student Union of Saint Mary's University (STU SU)
- SAMU
- Conestoga Students Inc (CONESTOGA)
- SAIT Students' Association (Saitsa)
- University of Alberta Student Union (UAlberta SU)
- The U
- Students' Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU)
- Centennial College Student Association (CCSAI)
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA)
- University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (UPESU)
- Trent Durham Student Association (TDSA)
- Mount Allison Students' Union (MASU)
2. Organizational Structure
Our Structure

- Our Members provide direction to our Board of Directors at our general assemblies
- Our Board is composed of:
  - Board Chair
  - Treasurer
  - Secretary
  - Director of Policy
  - Director of Advocacy
  - Director of Membership
  - Director of EDI
- CASA’s Board provides direction to the Executive Director, who manages Home Office staff
Member-Driven

- **Membership is comprised of:**
  - Primary & Secondary delegates

- **Responsible for:**

  - Representing your Students at a National level
  - Reviewing & assessing CASAs actions
  - Ensuring compliance to the governing documents
  - Electing CASA’s board and committee representatives
  - Attending CASA Conferences to bring DSU’s perspective
  - Meeting with federal MPs and politicians
Member-Driven

- **Member Driven means:**
  - CASA believes that Students have the power and autonomy to decide how much or how little they engage with the organization.
  - You get what you put in the organization.
  - Student Council bodies appoint CASA delegates and the CASA delegates are responsible in ensuring that they are amplifying their student voices at the national level.
How to Get Involved?

- How to amplify your student voices at CASA:
  - CASA Delegates
    1) Be a Board of Director
    2) Be a voting member on a committee
    3) Take a leadership role in a committee
  - Non-CASA Delegates
    4) Be a non-voting member on a committee - open to SU/SA councillors
    5) Attend CASA’s virtual consultation sessions and share your student perspectives with us - open to SU/SA councillors
    6) Ask CASA delegates questions and updates about what is going on at CASA
    7) Bring your concerns directly to CASA through your CASA delegates
The Board

The board is comprised of:

- Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Advocacy, Director of Membership, Director of EDI, Director of Policy

Responsible for:

- Overseeing CASA ‘s Day-to-Day
- Creating Annual Action Plan
- Ensuring Member-Driven Focus
- Chair Committees
Committees

- Federal Policy Committee
- National Advocacy Committee
- Governance & Internal Review Committee
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee
- Member Relations Committee
- National Indigenous Advocacy Committee
- Colleges & Polytechnics Advisory Committee
- Graduates Advisory Committee
- Elections 45 Committee
3. CASA Finances
**CASA Finances**

- **Students at the CASA table are responsible for:**
  - Holding CASA Staff and Board accountable of the financial running of the organization
  - Attend consultation sessions for creation of budget
  - Vote on the annual budget at every AGM

- **Accountability**
  - The treasurer is an elected student who looks at CASA’s spending every month and approve the reconciliation report monthly
  - The treasurer presents a financial update at every conferences for transparency and accountability
  - Board approves of any spending that is not operational spending and spending above $5,000
  - CASA delegates have access to our budget & updated budget all year long on basecamp
CASA Finances

- **Transparency**
  - All minutes from Meeting of the Members is uploaded to our website under [Governance](#) where the CASA budgets can be located.
  - Any council members from member schools are able to access the CASA budget on our website or by requesting it to the Executive Director.
  - An updated budget has been circulated to you all and is provided to CASA delegates at every conferences and/or upon request. These updates are prepared monthly and reviewed by the Chair and Treasurer.
## Membership Fee Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Cost per full-time equivalent (FTE) student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 6,000</td>
<td>$3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,001 to 12,000</td>
<td>$3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,001 to 20,000</td>
<td>$3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,001 and above</td>
<td>$2.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Membership fees shall be subject to a maximum of $63,582 and a minimum of $6,170 per fiscal year, subject to slight annual adjustments for inflation.*
CASA Finances

- **CASA Budget: How is the money spent effectively?**
  - **Staff Salary** - Ensuring student remains at the decision-making tables in Ottawa.
  - **Conferences** - CASA host 4 conferences every year at a lower cost for our members where members pay only for travel and CASA covers conference cost.
  - **Research** - CASA prides itself in presenting accurate and valuable information on post-secondary education and that is done through updated surveys and research.
  - **Advocacy** - There is no point in bringing students together if those student issues are not brought to the people who in the end make the decision.
  - **Government Relations** - Engaging with consulting firms to ensure that CASA remains prevalent in the GR space.
  - **Campaign** - Bringing the student voices as one to parliamentary hill as well as engaging with as many students across the country.
  - **Other costs** associated with running an organization.
4. In 2023, CASA ...
Advocacy at CASA

Policy & Research

Meetings & Lobbying

Consultation

Partnerships

Media Engagement

Campaigns

2 million students matter. You matter.

Vote in the Canadian Federal Election on October 19.
In 2023 alone, CASA ...
Released 5 Publications

1. *RECLAIMING & REIMAGINING*
   - Post-Secondary Accessibility for Indigenous Learners

2. *CASA’s 2024 Pre-Budget Submission*
   - Housing and Food Affordability for Canadian Students

3. *Living in the Red*
   - International Students and the Future of Canada’s Post-Secondary Education System
These publications looked at priorities set by students including:

- Housing
- Food Insecurity
- International Students
- Indigenous Students
- Student Mental Health

**Newest Report** - February 2024

- Moving Mountains: Student Resilience Against Cost of living Pressures
Had over 100 Lobby Meetings
Met with over 10 Minister Offices
Had over 100 Lobby Meetings

- Unpictured, in 2023,
  - We had 90 student leaders meeting with 85+ Parliamentarians over a week
  - CASA home office staff had 50+ advocacy meetings throughout the year by virtue of being in Ottawa and our Government Relations Strategy

- CASA provided trainings to equip students for these lobby meetings
  - Government Relations 101
  - Advocacy 101
  - Lobby Meetings 101
  - 2 mock meetings sessions
  - How to advocate effectively in Ottawa?
  - Media Training
Met with the Prime Minister’s Office

- And ALMOST met with the Prime Minister himself
  - Cancelled 20 mins before meeting as he had to head to Niagara following this:
    - U.S.-Canada border closes after vehicle explosion at Niagara Falls
Parliamentary committees make policy recommendations to the government after studying the issue and listening to witnesses.

Being asked to appear as a witness before a committee is a great honour as well as an opportunity to consult with students directly!
Engaged with over 5 Partners

- Attended 4 of the conferences hosted by our partner at Quebec Student Union.
- Formed a formal partnership with Support Our Science (Graduate Students) and New Majority (Young voters mobilization).
- Released a joint Mental Health Statement with our stakeholder partners at Universities Canada and College & Institutes Canada.
- Joined 2 coalition on Research and Education Fair Dealing with partner organizations across the country.

Good morning,
Just a quick note to say thank you again for collaborating on the statement for World Mental Health Day. Think the joint-statement approach was appreciated and well-received. I liked your statement on your website as well, and think it strengthened the message.
Shared the joint statement with contacts in the offices of Minister Saks and Freeland, along with the NDP and Con critics for mental health.
Engaged with over 5 partners

National Indigenous Advocacy Committee (NIAC)

- Hosted 2 advo days where NIAC co-chairs met with Parliamentarians advocating for Indigenous Students
- Hosted annual NIAC retreat
- Indigenous lens to CASA’s advocacy document
- Upcoming: NIAC campaign in partnership with Assembly of First Nations
Launched a National Campaign

CASA | ACAE

Renewed investments in Canada Student Grants are needed to ensure that students across Canada can afford higher education.

Without action, federal grant maximums for students will fall from $5000 to $3000.

#HalfYourCSG

Over 500,000 students in Canada access Canada Student Grants each year. But next school year, federal grant maximums will decrease by 50%.

What would #HalfYourCSG mean for your academic journey?

CASA | ACAE

Ashley hopes to work in the federal government one day, and she relies on Canada Student Grants (CSG) to realize these goals at the University of the Fraser Valley.

Changes to CSG coming for the 2023/2024 school year mean that students like Ashley will have less federal grant funding.

#HalfYourCSG

CASA | ACAE

Investments in Canada Student Grants are set to run out this year, meaning that federal grant maximums for 46,000 students across Canada will fall from $6000 to $3000 for the 2023-2024 academic year.

#HalfYourCSG

Canada Student Grants (CSG) provide upfront, non-repayable, needs-based aid to low and middle-income students across Canada.

This July, the grant maximums are set to drop from $6000 to $3000.

#HalfYourCSG

CASA | ACAE

Kendall is the first person in his family to graduate from university, and he relies on Canada Student Grants (CSG) to make his BA in Political Science at the University of New Brunswick a reality.

Changes to CSG coming for the 2023/2024 school year mean that students like Kendall will have less federal grant funding.

#HalfYourCSG
Launched a National Campaign

#HalfYourCSG

- Tuition cost is not the only cost associated with attending post-secondary
- Asking the government to make the doubling of Canada Student Grants permanent
CASA is often looked at by media as a subject matter expert.

Just in 2023 alone, CASA did over 50 interviews highlighting student issues, especially international student issues.

CASA also offer our members media training as well as media prep before an interview with key messages and practice.

\[\textbf{Appeared in Media over 50 times}\]

- **New Canadian Media**
  - International students anxious as 20-hour-per-week work cap could be re-imposed

- **CTVNews**
  - With Canada set to reimpose cap on working hours, international students worry about paying for tuition, living expenses

- **Politics Briefing**
  - Explosion of vehicle at Rainbow Bridge border crossing puts Canadian ...
  - The Globe and Mail
  - Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and Quebec Student Union and participate in a sitting of the committee on transport, infrastructure and ...

- **The Hill Times**
  - Investing in student mental health: a critical imperative for Canada's future

- **Canada**
  - to ease out eligibility of online learning for future post-graduation work permit
  - The Times of India

- **Post-secondary students’ continued struggle with mental health | News — The Link**
  - According to a 2022 report commissioned by the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) in collaboration with the Mental Health Commission ...

- **Foreign students worry as weekly work limits loom | Asian Pacific Post | Chinese newspaper**
  - Asian Pacific Post
  - students in Canada were not allowed to work off ... The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), an advocacy group representing Canada’s ...
5. Record of Success
In 2023, we saw an extension and facilitative measures in regards to the Post-Graduate Work Permit for international students.

Starting **April 6, 2023**, new facilitative measures will allow some PGWP holders **permit extensions**.
Canada Student Grants

From this:

Refreshments in Canada Student Grants are needed to ensure that students are served.

Canada Student Grants are set to rise this year, meaning that federal grant maximums will increase from $000 to $000.

Budget 2023: Students Appreciate the Government’s Path Forward

"Students appreciate the temporary investment in Canada Student Grants (CSG), and look forward to working with the government to create a long-term, sustainable approach to the Canadian Student Financial Assistance program in the upcoming year."

Christian Fotang, Chair of CASA

To this:
Say goodbye to interest on Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans as of April 1st, 2023!

Eliminating Interest on Student Loans
International Students Fraudulency

CASA Responds: IRCC Announces changes to International Student Program

Recently, international students have faced hardships and even deportations as victims of fraudulent actors.

In response, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has introduced a number of changes aimed at protecting students.

CASA welcomes the interest in cracking down on fraud, as well as improving the resources and enhanced verification processing of designated learning institutions.

Watch the full announcement from Minister Marc Miller and read the press release from IRCC at the link in our bio!
International Student Working Hours

From this:

New Canadian Media

International students anxious as 20-hour-per-week work cap could be re-imposed

To this:

New Canadian Media

Canada’s international students relieved after federal government allows longer work hours

Announcement from Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Canada (IRCC) regarding off-campus work hours for international students

IRCC has extended the waiver on the 20-hour limit for off-campus work while class is in session until April 30, 2024. This extension will allow international students to work more than 20 hours off-campus through the remainder of the school year and until August 31, 2024.
Graduate Student Funding

From this:

casaacae “Students want to stay in Canada, to study in Canada, to build their careers and use these awards as points of entry into Canada’s world-class research ecosystems. But without investments, they simply cannot afford to do so.”

CASA presents to the SRSR Committee today to advocate for:

- Increased Value of Tri-Agency awards
- Increased Amount of Tri-Agency awards
- Seats for students on research governing councils

To this:

The Globe and Mail

Parliamentary committee calls for boost to scholarship and grant funding

A parliamentary committee is calling on the federal government to boost scholarship and grant funding for graduate students and postdoctoral...
Recognition in the House of Commons

Housing / Oral Questions
December 5th, 2023 / 3 p.m.

Karen Vecchio  Conservative  Elgin
—Middlesex—London, ON

Mr. Speaker, in little under a decade, Canada’s housing costs have basically doubled. Earlier today, members of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations shared with me a story of seven individuals living in one apartment. We know there are many similar stories about this across the country.

Sean Fraser  Liberal  Minister of Housing

Mr. Speaker, I thank the members of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations for its advocacy. I used to be a member when I was in the student government at StFX University.
CASA’s Successes last 2 years

- Elimination on the interest on Federal student loans
- $9 billion COVID aid package to postsecondary students & recent graduates
- Launch of The National Standard for Mental Health and Well Being for postsecondary students
- Doubling of Canada Student Grants for 2021-22 & 2022-23 academic years

Read about our wins & publications on our website (casa-acae.ca)
6. What does this all mean for DSU?
Why CASA?

Representing DSU Students at a national level in Ottawa

Attendance at CASA conferences - can take on leadership roles on priorities

Participation in CASA committees and working groups

Advanced stakeholder relations - your executives can thus focus on more internal issues and CASA builds on the external relationships

Access to professional training, advocacy resources, and student-union networks

Member-Driven and be part of change now & future
Current Observer at CASA

- DSU started observership on August 8th, 2022

- In the last 2 years,
  - DSU executives attended 2 CASA Advocacy Week in Ottawa and met with 10+ politicians
  - Accessed professional development trainings offered at CASA conferences
  - Attended 10+ consultations hosted by CASA to discuss student issues
  - Observer CASA committee works

- No membership fees - only $100 per delegate per conference
And after 2 years observership?

Expiration of 2 year Observer Status (August 8 2024)

Become a CASA Member

Decide CASA isn’t for you
Stay Updated With CASA

: www.casa-acae.ca
: @casaacae
: @CASAACAE

: Canadian Alliance of Student Associations
Questions, comments, queries?

FEEL FREE TO EMAIL US

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