

DSU Council Meeting

March 27th, 2013

Present: Jamie Arron, Aaron Beale, Edgar Burns, Gavin Jardine, Aaron Wolf, Kammy Vicaire (via proxy), Ryan Hartigan, Elizabeth Croteau, Kyle DeYoung, Thomas Eaton, Julian Erksine, Alana Fleet, Lenah Kitenge, Katherine LaFortune, Christopher Firth, Maggie Lovett, Andrew Mecke, Matthew Murray, Angel Panag, Taylor Quinn, Zainab Shahtaj, Lauren Haley, Samantha Spencer, Amy Stevens, Katherine Strynathka, Ben Bisset (via proxy), Martin Miller, Navid Rahemtulla, Jon Magill, Ibrahim (Hima) Merdan, Curtis Johnston

Regrets: William Lin

Absent: n/a

1. Roll Call

2. Acceptance of the Agenda

Motion: to accept the agenda as presented.

Motion: remove university advocacy

Moved by Jamie, seconded by Aaron

Motion CARRIED

Motion CARRIED

### 3. Consent Agenda

a. Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting

b. Communications received

i. CASA-Motion

ii. University Budget Response

### 4. Presentations

a. DSU Budget

-Budget is balanced-done through combination of cuts and increased revenue.

-Estimated a 1% increase in student numbers

-Estimated food revenue conservatively

-Added in a strategic initiatives fund. Typically we just find homes for things we want to

do that aren't traditional.

-The structure of the Sandbox team has changed. They thought it would allow student

engagement, but is actually more limiting.

-DSUSO is now part of DSU team. They've been made an actual department of the DSU.

-Funding levels for CASA-left as it is now.

-Funding levels for Sexton campus hasn't changed. There's a slight increase in one

department, because minimum wage has gone up.

-Future challenges and opportunities: Food service. We need to ensure quality options

and a healthy bottom line.

-Strategic planning. We should think of the budget as a 3-5 year plan. Identify priorities and prevent duplication.

-Office hours: Tuesday 5-6, Thursday 10-11, Friday, 1-2:30 if you wish to come in and

see the budget in full.

-Council will receive budget after this meeting -Council will receive budget after this meeting

## 5. Items for Decision

### a. CASA

-At the AGM, we implemented new constitutional amendment to enter, leave organization. This was done in response to feedback.

-We are now talking about moving to associate status and reviewing our advocacy priorities.

-Why re-evaluate? The current landscape is challenging. Tuition has increased at 3x inflation. The challenges are significant, so it's worth looking at what we're doing. There are very significant opportunities where we can make an impact-upcoming provincial elections, the Dalhousie budget, the funding formula, etc.

-Outlined the process we have undertaken thus far.

-Held numerous discussions with societies-found them to be really productive.

-In general, it seemed there was strong support, on the condition that people understood what the review process was going to look like.

-The review process would attempt to answer questions such as: What are our goals and strategies; what are the pros and cons of CASA; what would pros and cons of self-directed advocacy be?

-Review committee: leaning towards a very faculty-centric type of approach. One rep per faculty.DSU Pres and VP AE are non-voting. This group would oversee consultation with students at large. There are some concerns the committee could be overly large-premise is that it's a very open process.

-What does being an associate member actually mean? Associate status can be

maintained for 24 months. Associate members may attend committees, and depending on terms of reference, may participate in a variety of ways. With graduate committee, can attend and vote. For policy and advocacy can attend but not vote. During plenary sessions, associate members can move and second, but can't vote.

-What we're proposing is quite standard. Of 25 members, 12 have at some point reviewed their membership.

-Would DAGS be eligible to join independently? Short answer is we still don't know.

-Regarding the idea of hiring a researcher-it could be super valuable. The Faculty Association came out with a report regarding the Dalhousie budget, which brings up all the things we've been asking, but didn't have the time to go out and research. We don't want to arbitrarily set up a system for the incoming exec. Want to work with them. Part of the committee's role would be to evaluate what would be most effective.

-Why move now in order to engage in review? There needs to be something that grounds the discussion, something real, tangible, immediate. Makes it into a priority.

Motion: Be it resolved the Dalhousie Student Union change to associate membership status within the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations for the 2013/14 academic year.

Be it further resolved that DSU Council initiate a comprehensive review of advocacy goals and strategies, commencing May 1st, 2013, built around the following terms of reference:

PURPOSE: The review process shall focus on four essential questions:

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What are our goals and strategies for effective advocacy?

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What are the pros and cons of being members in CASA? If we continue our membership, how can we ensure maximum effectiveness?

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If we were to pursue self-directed advocacy, what would be the pros and cons and what would this model look like?

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What other alternatives might there be?

This review may entail (at the discretion of the committee) discussion of topics such as:

- Discussion and clarification of the historical and current challenges and support structures for students with regards to tuition, debt, employment, etc

- Further discussion of Dalhousie's role within the provincial landscape and of the particular challenges faced by Dalhousie (eg. per capita vs. per student funding, provincial funding formula)

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Discussion and clarification of the core goals of the DSU's external advocacy efforts

- Discussion and clarification of the effectiveness and appropriate roles of varying strategies of external advocacy (eg. direct political lobbying, street level mobilizations, direct political pressure, etc)

- Historical review of Canadian student movements, and the roles of organizations such

as the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, the Canadian Federation of Students, and of Students Nova Scotia (formally ANSSA)

- Discussion about the opportunities of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and the DSU's role within the organization

- Exploration of potential alternative models of external advocacy, separate from current membership organizations

The committee shall ultimately work towards a recommendation whether to a) re-establish full membership within the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, b) remain an Associate Member for an additional year, or c) leave the organization altogether in lieu of an alternative advocacy structure. Recommendations regarding university level and provincial advocacy are also welcomed.

MEMBERSHIP: This review shall be led by a committee consisting of one representative from each faculty (as determined by appropriate society/societies), as well as one member at large of the Union.

A chair and secretary of the group shall be chosen from within the group with the intent to be responsible for scheduling meetings, collecting and disseminating meeting minutes, and facilitating meetings in a fair and equitable manner. The committee shall meet at minimum once per month, or as determined by the chair. The committee shall have the authority to form subcommittees as it deems necessary. The DSU President, Vice President Academic and External, and 1 DSU staff member may also sit as ex-officio members.



PROCESS: The review should include multiple means of consultation, which may include:

- faculty specific discussions

- at large education campaigns and consultation through general surveys, intercept

surveys, focus groups, and broad-scale consultative events

- discussion with current and potential partner organizations and ally organizations (eg.

other schools facing similar challenges, faculty unions, other federal advocacy groups

interested in education, etc)

REPORT: The committee shall present back its findings and recommendations to DSU Council

in Winter 2014 and shall make all information easily and widely accessible through DSU

Website and any other appropriate means of communication.

Moved by Jamie, seconded by Aaron Beale

Motion: Divide the question, separating the BIRT from the BIFRT.

Moved by Beth, seconded by ???

Motion CARRIED

Discussing the first half of the motion re: dropping to associate member

Beth: We haven't allocated the money to be saved to do something else. Doesn't think the \$22000 alone will be spent directly on advocacy, unless we mandate something. Hesitant to lose absolute benefits to non-defined resources. We do not need to drop down to associate member to mandate a review. The two things are not dependent on each other in any shape or form. Thinks a critical eye is a good thing. Thinks it's pre-emptive to drop down before a review. Engineering is ambivalent about dropping down, but cares about the money and where it's going.

Omri: Alarmed at the use of the term 'business relationship' when talking about CASA. Thinks members wouldn't like that about a body who is democratically representing them. It brings down the level of debate to view it in those terms.

Martin: Characterizing CASA as a business allows him to express his opinion. We pay \$50000 per year to organization whose concrete results have not been very good. Other schools have

divested themselves. Doesn't feel he represents full nature of groups-what is the most pressing threat to Dal and the DSU? The provincial cuts. It might be advantageous to consider whether we should be spending at federal level or provincially.

Taylor: Agrees with what Martin said. On the issue of dropping down: it creates a pressing issue. A very active debate that was had at DASSS-people aren't usually that engaged. Dropping down is needed to make it an issue that is on students minds. Simply having a review committee and keeping full membership is not pressing the issue and does not make next year's exec accountable.

Alana: Is against dropping down. Most people around the table aren't very knowledgeable about what CASA does. The fact that we've had so many questions, the discussion has just gotten started. This only stresses the need to have review before making a change in membership. We have heard about why we should drop down, but little about why we should maintain our membership. Need for more balanced conversation.

Thomas: From a CS debate-we don't need to drop down in order to have this debate. Just presenting the second half of this motion is enough to start the conversation. Conversation has already been started.

JD: In support of the motion. Curious as to what the review committee at other schools looked like.

Beale: In favour of motion. Worked on municipal elections-metro transit, rent control, etc.

Looked into these issues. Dal budget-the things in the DFA report were things we suspected

but didn't have the resources to look into. Provincial elections and MOU negotiations are coming up. Things we've lobbied on federally-blood ban, aboriginal education. These are things

research has already been done on.

Jessica: There's a record of success from CASA. They've lobbied on accessibility. They're invited to events, consultations, etc. Student loans relies on CASA for some things. These are only a few of the things CASA has done. What efforts have been made to promote CASA to students over the year? Does the DSU have a plan in writing to replace CASA? Have we thought about how to address issues such as grants?

Kyle: Discussed CASA at LSS meeting. There was a collective meh in the room-reflects the impact they have on professional students. CASA made a presentation that didn't say a lot in half an hour. With the money we save, can we amend that to have it directed at advocacy? It's symbolic if we dropped down, says maybe all of our students aren't happy with the work they are doing. Would rather if the money stays here and does something within the union.

Kat: Leaving CASA would weaken the graduate student voice on the federal level, which we need now more than ever. We should try and create the difference you think Dalhousie wants to see. How much effort do Jamie and Beale feel they've put into CASA?

Wolf: The list of CASA success mostly includes showing up to meetings. He would never be allowed to do that. It's not a very good metric of success. Thinks we can spend the money a lot better. Reading the DFA report further solidifies this decision in his mind. That's what happens when you have the resources to really dig into the issues.

Andrew: Curious as to requests exec has made directly at CASA, and what the response was.

CASA is a democracy; they do things we ask them to do. We have no idea what will happen next year in post-secondary education. That can affect us very negatively if we can't stand up and say the direction we want them to take. We may just be shrugged off as an associate member.

Jon: Alana spoke about students not knowing all that much-it has been recognized by the exec that promotion has not happened. Not comfortable dropping to associate status without constituents knowing what CASA does. Doesn't accept argument that committee won't do a good job if they don't drop down.

Gavin: To answer the question about what motions we brought forward:

Motion 1:

Whereas: Health Canada, the regulator for Canadian Blood Services, maintains policy that discriminates against men who have had sex with other men and prevents them from giving blood based solely on their sexual orientation and sexual history.

Whereas: Some students are already active on this issue and the issue affects students at all university campuses across the country.

Whereas: Health Canada is a federal department and this is therefore a federal issue.

BIRT: CASA lobby Health Canada to have this policy reformed to measure risk against a set of

behaviors, sexual and otherwise, rather than the sex of a person's sexual partner(s).

Motion 2:

Whereas: CASA's use of the policy diamond restricts CASA from being orientated to larger or longer goals by screening asks that don't have research or opportunity.

Whereas: This unnecessarily mediates the needs and requests of the membership making people disengage.

BIRT: CASA's membership vote on all policy and political stances before they are accepted as CASA's.

Neither motion was passed, for a number of reasons.

Julian: Dal's involvement is CASA is dependent on what the DSU exec is doing. This year we haven't been very involved. Would like to know opinion of incoming exec. Doesn't feel comfortable just dropping down, as the exec has been very involved in the past. Wouldn't feel comfortable dropping down just because our exec hasn't been very involved.

Curtis: We went from being super involved to not very, and now we're wanting to leave. Thinks it would be good to still have a voice during the review. Next year's exec, Sagar may choose to be really involved. Dropping out/down after one year just seems too fast. Things at the federal level move slowly. To have that voice may be effective for long term goals.



Maggie: The Med society couldn't meet, but she discussed it with members, and there was a collective meh. What's best for the rest of the student population? People don't understand what CASA is/does; that's a systemic thing. CASA's presentation left her unconvinced. Failed to truly understand the benefit of CASA. Echoes the concerns about not being able to provide constructive, tangible criticism re: budget. Disagrees with Andrew-we do know what's coming up in the next year-an election, MOU, etc. Wise to invest resources in what we do know is coming.

Jamie: Regarding the incoming exec-Sagar is in support of review, and Beale obviously is in support. They are the two most directly involved. The current exec is in unanimous support for review. Not talking about dropping out, but about dropping down and reviewing. That's what associate member is for. If we don't drop down, by the time the decision would come to drop out, no one on review committee would still be around. In support of earmarking the other \$22000. This year's exec is fully in support.

Motion: Call the question

Motion CARRIED

Martin opposed

Chris, Ryan abstain

Motion CARRIED

Jon, Thomas, Julian, Kat, Beth, Alana, Andrew, Jen (proxy for Ben) Curtis are opposed

Lauren abstained

Discussing the creation of a review committee

Jamie: The outline presented is meant to be a starting point. Would like to have a discussion about it today, approve terms of reference at next meeting.

Motion: table decision about review committee, but continue to have discussion n about review committee, but continue to have discussion

Moved by Beth, seconded by Beale

Motion CARRIED

Jamie: Would like to establish a committee with one rep per faculty. DSU Pres and VPAAE would be non-voting members. Asking 4 key questions. Committee would appoint its own chair. In theory, like the structure, but in practicality it might be quite large.

Jon: On Senate, whenever a working committee is struck, we approve membership, then they make their own terms of reference. Something we should consider. We should focus on membership. Caution against approving terms of reference without input from incoming council.

Kyle: 15 may sound like a lot, but people won't always show up. Amendment in shall section-5 essential questions.

Julian: Is this committee indefinite? Would it dissolve?

JD: What's been the process around this at other schools?

Beale: It really depends on what we're trying to do.

Chris: Agrees with Jon about appointment and membership. 15 doesn't seem that big for something this intense. Would rather have a few more opinions on the committee that will

decide this. Maybe they should make their own term of reference to be voted on by council.

Alana: Regarding number of people-15 people might allow for flexibility. Can create subcommittees if needed. Regarding length of committee-would think there's no finite length, but a year from now council would decide what to do with committee. Details should be left to new council, but is hesitant not to have something in place to guide them.

6.

#### Items for Discussion

##### a. Levied societies

Jamie: Four main things:

1.

The existing opt-out processes would be managed through the DSU, and would have staggered periods;

2.

Giving BOps a mandate to review levied societies. They would implement a framework, and commitments would be made on both ends through agreements. BOps would ensure everyone keeps up their own end of the agreement;

3.

Governance structures: some have majority of community members on their boards. Ask if this is ok. Should the majority be students? May be ways we can standardize and help promote the board elections. Doesn't think this is a key issue for students at large;

4.

Need to establish clear process by which a referendum question about their existence can be asked.

Alana: Have we considered having a system where we can opt-out online? This is how it is done at Queen's every year. It can be positive for the societies, as it gives them the opportunity to explain what they did and their relevance to students.

Curtis: Why would different societies opt out at different times? We tried to bring in online system before, has it been considered again?

Jon: Likes those two ideas. What's the process going forward with this?

Jamie: These ideas would entail a bunch of policy changes, which would have to come back to council.

Jessica: Re: online system. There's a large expense in setting up an online system. In support of the idea, accessible for everyone.

Wolf: Can fill out forms through TigerSociety or current website at no cost.

Alana: There needs to be a more formal, written, clear process laid out. Currently not clear as to what processes were.

#### b. Faculty election processes

Jamie: Looking for comments on how the faculty elections process went. Thinks we should standardize the nomination periods so we can do mass callouts. The Elections Committee did not have significant promotion of the election, but voter turnout still went up. Long term, hopefully people click into the idea that they can run.

Kyle: Had a lot of issues with the election. The Law CRO talked to DSU CRO about getting preferential ballot, but it didn't happen. Voter turnout went down 20%-people gave up before they got to society elections. The online interface was confusing.

Wolf: Was working background of the voting system, but was taken off system during voting. He never heard about preferential voting for law students. Spoiling

Alana: Had been trying to figure out quorum-that was an issue. Had been asking information-asked to receive results and never got them. Communication was a major issue. Voter turnout increased.

Beth: DUES were never given results. What was the logic from changing from the other system that was awesome?

Jamie: TigerSociety came with an elections module. Mike charges on a per ballot basis-would have been increasingly expensive to add all society elections.

Taylor: The DASSS exec positions are the exact same as the DSU positions-it got confusing when the pages switched.

Motion: to go in camera

Moved by Jamie, seconded by Andrew

Motion CARRIED

## 7. Notices of Motion

### a. CASA Funding Motion

Whereas the Dalhousie Student Union has moved to an Associate membership in the Canadian

Alliance of Student Associations; and

Whereas this change will result in an approximate \$22,000 savings during the 2013-2014 budget year; and

Whereas this financial surplus has not been allocated in the 2013-2014 operating budget;

BIRT the approximate \$22,000 of unallocated funds resulting from the change be used solely for advocacy related to the upcoming provincial election; and

BIFRT this budgeted amount be spent between May 1, 2013 and April 30, 2014 and if it is not spent in its entirety during this time, any remaining funds must be transferred to the Dalhousie Student Union endowment fund.

b. Motion allowing Greek Letter organizations to be ratified

8. Question & Answer Period

Beth: Can we consider moving the date of the last DSU meeting to fall within classtimes? It was not very clearly changed.

-After deliberation, there answer was no.

Curtis: Why are there no reports?

Chair: Forgot to send a reminder.

Alana: Can we have updates on the university budget?



Beale: DFA wrote a report on the Dalhousie budgets over the past 10 years. It has startling conclusions. University projects deficits in order to justify cutting things.

Jamie: We continuously inquired about how we're in a deficit and still building buildings. The essence of the report is that they're taking money from the operating budget to pay for these budgets.

Jon: Is there a report coming from the Exec Review Committee.

Taylor: Had final interview today. Will give report next meeting.

#### 9. Announcements

Taylor: LINK for incoming society leaders. Saturday April 13th in the McInnes Room.

Ryan: Is switched rescheduled>

Beale: Things are slowing down, but still planning a few actions.

#### 10. Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn the meeting

Moved by Edgar, seconded by Wolf

Motion CARRIED

