

# **Vice-President Governance & Legal Affairs' Summer Report**

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## Introduction

This document outlines my update to the Board of Directors and the Membership of some of the tasks I have been working on / completed since the beginning of my term (May 1st, 2017). It is a compilation of all reports that I have presented to the Board throughout the summer.

Before I begin, I would like to thank everyone who elected me into the position of Vice-President Governance and Legal Affairs. The past five months have been challenging, but certainly rewarding. Both Nipissing University and NUSU are taking significant strides in the right direction, and I look forward to continuing to work with everyone on campus and within the community to maintain and build on this positive momentum.

## Building Project

The process behind getting a new student centre on campus is one that has taken quite a bit of time and represents a fairly significant portion of the role of the President, Vice-President Finance and Vice-President Governance and Legal Affairs over the past couple of years. After several meetings with lawyers, architects and university administration, I think it is safe to say that we are the closest we have ever been with this project.

Shane Dunstall, Warren Lindsay, Sydney Lamorea, and I have worked quite closely during our term with the following people to ensure that this process stays on track:

- John D'Agostino (our legal counsel) on various matters including the joint venture and lease agreements for the student centre.
- Rahul Shastri (trust fund lawyer) and Ken Peake (former trustee) to finalize the dissolution of the trust.
- Laura Mittelstadt and Richard Simm (KPMG) to secure additional funding.
- Nathan Jensen (architect) to finalize the project budget and timeline.
- Cheryl Sutton (Nipissing Vice-President Finance and Administration), Ursula Boyer (Nipissing Director of Finance), David Drenth (Director of Facilities & Nipissing's Project Manager for the student centre) on various matters including the joint venture and lease agreements as well as the financing model.

I can't thank these individuals enough for their help thus far, and am eager to continue to work with them through the duration of my term to ensure this project is delivered in a timely and cost

effective manner.

## Elections

Valedictorian: My first week in office consisted of a by-election for ceremony D, where a lot of time was spent responding to emails from students with questions about the election process.

By-Elections: Throughout the summer and into September I coordinated with Roger Dupuis from Nipissing technology services to set up the online voting for our director-at-large and student senator by-elections. Cory Tremblay was re-elected in the education senator position, while Allison MacNeil and Courtney Ivany have joined our Board of Directors. Unfortunately there is still one vacant spot on the Board and the senate positions for Applied and Professional Studies and Graduate senator remain unfilled. This year's elections committee will be working diligently to determine how we can fill all of these seats for the next academic year.

Setting Dates: election dates for the 2018-2019 term have been set. The executive election process will begin on January 15th with the voting period running from the 29th-31st. This will be followed by director-at-large and senator elections which commence on February 26th and wrap up on March 14th.

Increasing Involvement: Over the course of the summer I met with two members of the Equity Center as well as representatives from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. One of the items we discussed was in regards to the issues with the former elections format and what steps NUSU can take to remove any potential barriers that would prevent a student from being involved with us.

## By-Law/Policy Updates

The Governance Committee elections were held through our Board. By the end of June we were able to finalize the membership of the committee, which consists of Sydney Lamorea, Tyrel Somerville, Rebecca Dubeau and Eric Marrast. Since the committee did not form until half way through the summer, some of the work below was done exclusively by myself or in collaboration with another executive. The majority of the work that will be done in this regard for the remainder of my term will be in conjunction with this committee.

By-Laws: the by-laws that we currently operate under came into effect in 2015. Over the next eight months I will be working closely with the governance committee to review and amend them where necessary and have any changes brought forward at our 2018 AGM. If you have any concerns with the current by-laws and would like to see a change made, I would encourage you to bring these suggestions forward for consideration.

Committee Terms of Reference: all six standing committees of our Board of Directors were amended to reflect our current practices. I also finalized the terms of reference for the Shine Committee, which is new to our organization this year.

Job Descriptions: though our past by-laws have told us how to operate, beyond that, the guidelines for our Board of Directors to follow were fairly unclear. Thus, I have drafted job descriptions for the Directors-at-Large, including the Chair and Vice-Chair as well as the Recording Secretary of the Board. These are to be implemented for the next term (beginning in May 2018) and will provide a clearer picture of the duties and responsibilities of the NUSU Board members.

Policies: Throughout the summer I worked in collaboration with J'aime Brunet to update the clubs policy. The Governance committee has also implemented a health plan procedure and is in the process of reviewing our sexual violence intervention and response policy.

## Hiring

Interns: beginning in May I implemented a partnership with the iLEAD program through the School of Business. This program allows students to earn course credits in a workplace environment. The partnership has sparked conversation surrounding how we can help improve and expand the experiential learning opportunities offered to our students. Traci Malkowski and Dr. Natalya Brown have been very helpful in getting this off the ground. NUSU currently has two business students, AJ LaCarte and Hailey Marin, completing research surrounding marketing and sponsorship. We are happy to have them on board and look forward to expanding this partnership in future years.

Office and Communications Assistants: these positions generated a lot of interest throughout the summer, which did not make the process any easier for the hiring committee (which consisted of Michelle Rae, Sarah McGowan, Sydney Lamorea and I). We shortlisted to 11 candidates and after conducting these interviews, we hired Spencer Anderson and Tori Bellar for the Office Assistant role and Zach Pecore and AJ LaCarte for the Communications Assistant role. The OA's will be working 15 hours each, reporting to myself, and the CA's will be working 10 hours each, reporting to Sarah McGowan.

## Canadian Federation of Students Skills Conference

The 2017 CFS Skills Symposium took place at the University of Toronto Mississauga campus from May 26-28. In attendance were all five NUSU Executives, and eight other student leaders on campus, including but not limited to members from residence, student development and

services, the equity center, and student recruitment. The weekend included information and training sessions surrounding inclusion, being an ally, and creating healthy workplaces, among other things. The value from this weekend came out of the connections that were made with union representations from other institutions. I have been able to speak with and bounce ideas off of students from the University of Windsor, Guelph, Ryerson, and Carleton.

### University Involvement

Academic Senate: three meetings of senate have occurred since I officially took over as one of the voting student representatives. In addition to sitting in on these meetings, I have also been a part of various subcommittees including, but not limited to Standing & Petitions and Technology & Infrastructure. My involvement within the subcommittees is due to the fact that I was sitting in as the acting Student Senator for Applied and Professional Studies.

Board of Governors: similar to the academic senate, I have also sat in three Board of Governors meetings as a voting member. On May 4th, a motion was brought forward to increase tuition by three percent annually for the next two years. NUSU actively spoke out and voted against this motion, and although we received sympathy from some of the Board members, the motion was unfortunately passed. On June 1st the Board approved a budget that will see Nipissing operating at nearly a \$3.9 million deficit for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Although this seems troubling, the university auditor assured us that we are in a much better position than we were just a couple of years ago and are heading in the right direction. Sydney and I also attended the Board retreat on September 15-16 and were able to discuss some of the issues that students face with university staff, faculty, and administration. The Board updated us on the University's strategic plan, strategic mandate agreement, and the \$40 million advancement campaign they are about to launch, spearheaded by Len Gamache.

PVPAR Search Committee: As many of you may have heard, former Provost and Vice-President Academic & Research Harley D'Entremont retired from Nipissing in September and will be replaced on October 10th by Dr. Arja Vainio-Mattila. Throughout the summer I was a part of the search committee that recommended Arja to the Board of Governors. Being able to share what students would be looking for in a potential Vice-President candidate was a role that I did not take lightly.

### Community Involvement

Enterprise Olympics: Our Vice-President Finance Shane Dunstall and I had the pleasure of volunteering as mentors at this event. It was an entrepreneurial competition among Northern Ontario high school students, where the students were given a limited time period to develop an innovative product or service and then present it in front of a panel of judges. As a business

student who has previously competed in case study competitions where celebrity judges/mentors were in attendance, it was nice to come full circle and be able to give back to the community.

Chamber of Commerce: this is the second year that NUSU has been a member of the Chamber of Commerce and we are really picking it up a notch this year. I attended three different Chamber events throughout the course of the summer and also met with the President, Peter Chirico, to discuss the types of opportunities that are available for students in North Bay both during and after graduation. The Chamber's Young Professionals chapter provides a great networking opportunity for university students within North Bay and I would encourage students to reach out to myself or Shane Dunstall regarding how you can become involved.

Small Business Rocks: Shane and I also attended an event at the Raven and Republic, hosted by the Northern Credit Union, which further strengthened our ties within the North Bay business community. We are looking to continue to build these types of relationships to expand the opportunities available for Nipissing University students.

Military Family Resource Center: our Director of Communications, Sarah McGowan, and I put quite a bit of work this summer into formalizing a partnership between NUSU and the MFRC in order to raise awareness and increase supports for the military and veteran family community here in North Bay. We are in the very early stages of the partnership, but have received a lot of positive feedback and are expecting great things to come from it for our students.

## Conclusion

Once again, thank you for electing me into the position of Vice-President Governance and Legal Affairs. I truly look forward to the next seven months, and encourage all students to reach out to us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.