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Nipissing University Student Union

AGM Report from the President

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Introduction

The last six months have been extremely busy, trying and exciting. With many government changes, and changes in the university, the NUSU has been doing its best to adapt quickly and continue working towards our goals. Through my position as President, my responsibility is to ensure the overall wellbeing of the NUSU, and management of the NUSU. I fulfill this responsibility in a variety of ways. Supporting and managing the other executives, being active in the community as a public figure, engaging and ensuring good relationships with the Nipissing Faculty and Administration, having oversight on the financial and administrative functions of the organization, and engaging in government relations locally and federally with our bodies such as the Canadian Federation of Students, are some of the ways I achieve this.

University Bodies

As a part of my position I sit on a variety of committees and groups throughout the university to represent students and provide the student opinion. An example would be the various University Board of Governors committees I am a part of, and also being a voting member on the Board of Governors. Here is where important discussions and votes are had on the administration and operation of the university, such as the annual budget. Another example is being a voting member of Academic Senate. This group is comprised of faculty, administrators and students that focus on the academic operation on ongoings of the institution. There are many subcommittees here that I am also a part of.



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Informally, I also engage with many departments on campus to have conversations about the student experience and provide insight for these groups when they are running events, planning, and engaging with students.

Community Engagement

Sarah McGowan, our Director of Communications, and I are often responsible for community engagement, ensuring that the portrayal of Nipissing Students in the community is positive, and participating in ensuring North Bay is an engaged and welcoming community for students to be a part of. This often means engaging with the Chamber of Commerce, working with the City of North Bay through the Mayor's office and with City Council. We often attend and work with the community to engage and participate in events to help provide opportunities for students.

Orientations

I was honoured to be a part of most of the orientations that took place on campus this year. New Student Orientation (NSO), was the first to occur. We (NUSU) were invited to have a table in the Resource Fair to promote the NUSU and the services we provide to students, and sell our frosh tickets. I was lucky to be able to do the welcoming address for the students every morning. Our summer interns (Nipissing Students) were also invited along with us to participate in the Lakers to Lakers Panel, where incoming students could ask a panel of upper year students any question they liked. Shannon MacCarthy (VP Student Life) did a wonderful job with Frosh Week this year and I was excited to participate. I also was invited to speak at the respective Accessibility and Graduate Studies Orientations. Later, Sarah McGowan and I planned and ran a trivia night to welcome all of our new Graduate students. There was a great turnout!

Student Engagement

Student engagement has always been a tricky thing to succeed in and measure. One of my initiatives that the whole office engaged in and participated in was "A Week at NUSU". It was a series of Instagram stories that are still in our highlights on our page! This series was an attempt to utilize a different platform to communicate with students about what the NUSU is, what we provide, and who provides it to you. It saw a good response and we received positive feedback.

Through all of our VPs' initiatives I have often been able to participate in the planning and provide input on trying to make our activities and events as accessible to students as possible, whether it be financial, timing, etc.



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Canadian Federation of Students

The CFS is a nationally and provincially organized group that acts as a union for student unions/associations. They are the largest and oldest student advocacy group in Canada, and they work to provide voices to students, create pathways for students from different areas to collaborate and communicate, provide discounts and services to students (free tax filing), and lobby at provincial and federal levels for the rights of students.

I am the provincial and national representative for Nipissing University, and have attended the Ontario Annual General Meeting where I was away for four days discussing current student issues, the legal challenge against the government and also discussing/voting on various motions as well. I also sit on the Ontario Executive Committee where I am periodically required to participate. The National Annual General Meeting is approaching and I will be attending this as well. It is very similar to the OAGM, but on a national scale.

In terms of campus engagement, the CFS came on campus twice to table about the importance of voting and being an educated voter. They also have representatives come and present to our board and talk about who they are and what they do.

Government Relations

As mentioned, a part of my responsibility is engaging and managing government relationships and communication. This has involved communicating with local MP's and MPP's on student issues and concerns, networking and building relationships with the municipal government, and providing a pathway for students to engage in politics, and be heard. This year, Sarah McGowan and I, alongside the Canadore Students Council and the Retired Teachers of Ontario hosted a federal election debate with our local candidates. This was a great way to allow students to ask questions to each party, and engage in our electoral system.

Policy Revision

Part of some of my work from last year that has carried over to this year has been working on continuously revising our policies. With the Governance Committee, we have managed to revise and work our way through a few of them over the last couple of months. The most exciting change is having a NUSU Code of Conduct finally in place.

Chairing the Board



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One of my responsibilities is also chairing the NUSU Board of Director Meetings. This involves organizing the reports every month, creating the agenda, scheduling meetings, notifying the members, coordinating food, and preparing for the monthly discussions.

Branding and Positioning of NUSU

I have been working with our Director of Communications Sarah McGowan on the branding and positioning of NUSU. It incorporates many of the things I talked about above. It incorporates many small day to day things as well. Considering things such as opportune times to sell our merchandise, strategically involving ourselves at events, and planning for our position and messaging for recruitment events such as open houses, and orientations.

Ancillary Fees

The government changes regarding the Student Choice Initiative have been an ongoing impact on our office since January. Since I have come to into my term as President, the most work here has been on figuring out the new protocol with Dr. Casey Phillips, and the rest of the ancillary fees committee. We had to have many discussions as an office about the different potential outcomes and how we would respond as an organization. The individual fees had to be created, with descriptions and amounts associated with them.

Hiring

We hired a new Office Administrator, Rebecca Dubeau. She is a wonderful addition to our team, and has been very helpful! Over the next while we will be designing and implementing a hiring process that will stem from processes used to hire Rebecca.

The Student Centre

I have been working with various people in the NUSU office to ramp up to the opening of the building. Warren Lindsay (Director of Services) and I have been attending meetings with our architect and interior designer looking at interior finishes. Warren, Tayler Sullivan (VP Finance and Administration), Mira Hotte (Director of Finance), and I have also been looking at the organizational structure lately as well. Warren and I have been having in depth conversations about specific operational pieces (fire alarms, defibrillators, etc.) and also what programming and operations might look like in the first year to begin a staff list. Tayler and Mira have been working on doing some forecasting with numbers so we can determine how much of the staff we can actually hire. Other conversations happening here would be around potential sponsorship and collaboration opportunities.