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Nipissing University Student Union

## **Executives Report to the Membership**

Prepared by: Executive Committee

Wednesday, April 29th, 2020

### **In this Report:**

- President - Hannah Mackie
- VP Advocacy and Awareness - Mykayla King
- VP Finance and Administration - Ward Loveday
- VP Student Life - Shannon MacCarthy
- Thank You from The Executive Committee

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### **Hannah Mackie, President**

#### ***Overview***

This summer has been my second as your NUSU President. I have been lucky enough to be chosen by our membership to continue my work with the student movement. It has been an interesting experience with COVID-19 heavily influencing our work and decisions over the past few months. I hope to shine some light on the work I have been putting in on behalf of the student body.

#### ***Advocacy***

Advocating for students at a variety of levels is a large part of being the President. Part of that included continuing to stand on the Ontario Executive Committee for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). As the representative for CFS, I attended conferences, general meetings, and phone conferences with other student unions across Ontario speaking about student issues in Ontario and different tactics to address these issues. This has been a great network for support and connectivity especially during COVID. This group does a lot of lobbying on behalf of students at a provincial and federal level.



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Advocacy for me also looks like serving on a large number of committees in the university. Our belief is that decisions being made that impact students, should include students. This year I sat on many standing committees through the Academic Senate and also the Board of Governors. These committees make many academic and operational decisions, and myself, along with the other executives consistently participate in these to ensure that student interests are considered. I have continued to represent student interests through many hiring committees, as well as represent students on the Operational Readiness Committee, which discusses our return to campus from COVID and the considerations that need to be made.

### ***Building Project***

This month has been increasingly busy in regard to the NUSU Student Centre. I have been working with our internal and external building groups to make decisions and plan for operations, construction and opening. We are very excited to be welcoming our students into the space in 2021. We are looking forward to an influx of available jobs for students, study spaces and more. The spaces will be flexible for many different student needs. We are hopeful that this provides a social space for our students on campus without still feeling like they're 'at school' so close to their classrooms. This is where our offices will be, once open. We will also see additions such as club storage, meeting spaces for students, and more.

### ***Managing the Office***

In the job description of the president, it states that they are the general manager of the office and responsible for managing the affairs of the NUSU. For me that looked like ensuring communication was flowing smoothly, and that our team was functioning effectively. I also took the lead on our strategic planning efforts, to ensure that the office was working towards the same goals and objectives.



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I also worked on some policy development with a large amount of assistance from the staff and managed to utilize our Board of Directors Governance Committee to revamp our committee terms of reference.

I have also been the point person for reorganizing our operations due to COVID and working with the university to get us back safely.

Lastly, assisting the other executives and staff with projects and initiatives as they come up was a large part of my job this year as well. Typically, in the role of the president at NUSU it is your responsibility to be what the organization needs at the time.

### **Mykayla King, VP Advocacy and Awareness**

#### ***Overview***

This summer has been incredible, as I transitioned into the role of VP Advocacy and Awareness. I have been in this role now for five months. As VP Advocacy and Awareness, I am responsible for awareness campaigns, student advocacy, the Shinerama campaign, etc. Starting a new position amidst a pandemic has been very interesting, however very rewarding. In this report, I outline what I have been working on since I began my term.

#### ***Transition***

My transition into VP Advocacy and Awareness began shortly after being elected on January 20th, 2020. Charlotte Foster (Previous VP Advocacy and Awareness) did an excellent job transitioning me into my role and supporting me before May. The transition started in person, but due to Covid-19, the transition finished with Charlotte and I meeting online.

The transition consisted of learning the role I would be taking on come May, but also introducing myself to the NUSU staff. In March, I assisted in Wellness Week to understand how these types of campaigns work and what to expect. The previous executive team also provided the incoming exec team with a transition document that I took the time to familiarize myself with. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, my transition was very different from previous years. We are not able to work in the office; we are all working from home.



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### ***Student Academic Advocacy***

A significant piece of my job is academic advocacy for students. I have had a few students come to me looking for academic help. Neither were cases for either a petition or an appeal, but I was able to help them by pointing them in the right direction. I have taken the time to review the academic policies to ensure that I can advocate for students to the best of my abilities.

I have been attending the AAAPC meetings and the Petition Exec Meetings to review the submitted petitions and appeals. Attending these meetings has allowed me to understand how the policies work and how to better advocate for them.

At the beginning of my term, I attended the Academic Senates. Senates will be starting up again and having the opportunity to participate in these meetings before the school year started was very beneficial. It will allow me to prepare for them accordingly.

### ***Campaigns***

Campaigns will be run a little differently than in previous years. Until further notice, all campaigns will be run online, as the fall semester is being held online. This allows our distance students to take part in the awareness. At the beginning of my term, I took the time to research national fun holidays, awareness days, and regular holidays and important dates. I also did some research on the Canadian Federation of Students, as well as the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario, to look at the campaigns they run. This helped in creating a schedule for the campaigns I would like to run during my term.

I attended DrinkSmart student focus groups, where I was able to talk with student leaders from other universities. We talked about what types of campaigns are run at their schools during these conversations, what worked/didn't work, and some suggestions of what they would do next time. DrinkSmart recently updated its website and has added new content and information for us to use for our campaigns.

In the summer, I helped facilitate two campaigns; Pride Month and Internet Safety. Rebecca Dubeau (Office Administrator) and I teamed up on both of these campaigns. Much



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research and reaching out to different departments were done to ensure that both campaigns provided accurate information and resources.

In June, it was our Pride Month Campaign. We planned for each graphic to have a themed educational resource that matched the letter in the word PRIDE. For example, E stood for education, and D stood for definitions. By doing this, we were able to spell out the word Pride on our social media. We received great feedback from this campaign from our students, as well, from the 2QT Pride group on campus. Rebecca and I were in constant communication with 2QT Pride to ensure that the information posted was accurate.

In July, the campaign planned was Internet Safety, and the graphics were released during the final week of July. The purpose of this campaign was to provide information and resources to our followers to ensure that they are using the internet safely and being productive and professional. A lot of the information shared was cited from LinkedIn Learning, a resource Sarah McGowan (Director of Communications) has been working diligently on making it accessible to our membership. The analytics showed that the online campaign was well received, with many of our followers sharing and saving the posts.

### ***Shinerama***

I attended the Shinerama National Leadership Conference in May. This conference was extremely beneficial, as I not only learned about Cystic Fibrosis but also different aspects of running events. This conference was free and was opened to our office to attend, as it was being done virtually. After the conference was over, I had meetings with my Campaign Advisor monthly. They were able to help me brainstorm ideas, work through some of my potential ideas and give me an insight into what other schools are doing and if we could incorporate it somehow in my campaign.

Due to the unprecedented times, we could not host our annual Shine Ball Tournament and our annual Shine Day Car Wash. We had to find a replacement event to host during our O-Weekend that followed Covid-19 health restrictions and regulations. With much help from Sarah, we partnered with The Studio to host a Zumba event on Saturday, September 5th, on



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the Lakers Field at the RJ Surtees Athletic Centre. The event was held in person, solely for students who signed up for O-Weekend but was also held online for anyone else.

Unfortunately, the in-person event was not well attended, but those who came gave great feedback and had a good time.

We also ran an online campaign called Shine Your Ride for CF. This campaign ran from September 1st to September 6th, where we asked everyone to “Shine Your Rides,” which was an online car wash. We asked everyone to wash their modes of transportation, post it online with hashtags, and tag NUSUtalks on social media. We also asked participants to share a fact about CF and to donate to the Shine Campaign. Participants were entered into a draw to win a prize every time they tagged NUSU in a post. Thank you to The Studio!

Thanks to an outstanding North Bay business, Gold Fleet Subaru, we had another fundraising opportunity. Gold Fleet ran a promotion between September 1st and 6th, where people could book and pay now for a car wash, with the proceeds being donated to Cystic Fibrosis. The car washes cost \$9.95 and were available anytime in 2020. Thank you to Gold Fleet Subaru!

### **Ward Loveday, VP Finance and Administration**

#### ***Overview***

This is my first year as VPFA and this report will be primarily based around the items I have been working on during the summer months. My transition into this Executive position has been quite difficult, learning and understanding the roles and responsibilities that come with the position through online resources has been a challenge. However, this comes with great benefits that have allowed us at NUSU to see how we can improve our own process to prepare incoming future Executives.

#### ***Health Plan***

The health plan, like every year is an ongoing and evolving matter that involves a lot of time. The daily tasks have remained the same, with September being specifically busy regarding opt-out options and various other health plan related questions. As well, NUSU has been found



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liable for discrepancies of enrollment lists provided to the insurer (ACL), which has resulted in extra costs. The correct process has now been defined and the risk of unexpected costs should be limited. Furthermore, the online health services provided by ACL have been connected with our on-campus services to ensure that all services are available to students regardless of campus closure.

Due to the implications of Covid-19 we were able to reach an agreement with our insurer to extend all students health plans from the 2019/2020 term for an extra month until the end of September. The purpose of this is to provide students who have graduated extended health care access during the unique circumstances caused by Covid-19.

### ***Budget***

The budget has also been an evolving project over these summer months, particularly due to Covid-19 and what the returning rate of students would look like. We concluded and approved a budget that was based on fees collected from a 75% return rate of students when compared to the projections made from last year. This projection was agreed upon based on the expectations of students returning, which at this time we can conclude that it was an overestimation and we will have more students returning than expected. As well, we were unable to make any changes with ancillary fees due to the projected decrease in fee collection, and the associated operating costs for NUSU.

As well, to ensure that NUSU is operating in a manner that reflects the best interest of students, we have implemented a credit card expense log. The purpose of this log is to have a clear understanding of NUSU's expenses and increase financial transparency. The expense log is reviewed every month by the Audit and Finance Committee to ensure they are being spent as expected.

### ***Administration***

Administration is an ongoing process and has involved many items such as registering the names for the Student Center bar and restaurant, as well as evaluating the current policies NUSU has in place. A lot of the work has involved implementing language that suits the current Covid-19 situation. We have restructured various ancillary fee descriptions to more accurately identify where such funds collected will be going, and how we will provide our services via an online delivery format. As well, various items such as the elections policy have been modified to reflect the expected election process during the online semester.



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## **Shannon MacCarthy, VP Student Life**

### ***Overview***

This is now my second year as the Vice-President Student Life. This summer has obviously been very different from my last, as COVID-19 has changed so many things for our students and our operations. Through this summer report, I hope to expand on some of the things I have been working on this summer to help our student body.

### ***Clubs and Societies***

I have been working closely with the Clubs and Societies this summer to organize plans for the fall and winter semester. Clubs and Societies are still going to be running remotely, providing online events for their members.

### ***Food Bank***

The food bank has been running for the entirety of the summer from Chancellors House. We have had an average of 12 students coming to the food bank in-person every Wednesday. This summer, we also ran an online gift-card program for students in need not living in North Bay.

### ***Events***

This summer, we had a Summer Events Coordinator (Alexander Winter) who worked in the Services department providing students with online events during the summer. He ran some great events like a Paint Night, Trivia, Bingo, and more. When the province moved into Phase 3, student online retention reduced, so attendance dropped off.

### ***Orientation***

Our Orientation event ran incredibly well with about 260 first year students signed up. There was a combination of online and in-person events for first year students. The leaders ran an



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incredible week, and we were so grateful that we were able to put on another successful orientation for the incoming Lakers given the era.

### **Thank You from the Executive Committee**

Thank you for placing your trust in the executive committee that you have elected to guide our membership forwards. We look forward to rising to the challenge of this year, and ensuring your voices are heard. Please reach out to us if you have any questions, concerns or ideas regarding the student experience and your union.