

Students Nova Scotia 2013-16 Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan applies from April 2013 to April 2016 and highlights StudentsNS' multiyear goals and strategies. StudentsNS will use the strategic plan to evaluate its performance.

StudentsNS must adapt to changes in the Nova Scotia post-secondary environment so as to seize those opportunities that can move student interests forward. Over the years this plan covers, the organization may pursue different opportunities or strategies or prioritize different policies and measure its success based on these different priorities. Annual Plans remain the primary reference document for staff each year. The Strategic Plan, nevertheless, remains an important reference point for drafting annual plans and measuring overall progress

This Strategic Plan was approved by the StudentsNS Board of Directors on April 20, 2013. In creating this plan, the Board initially participated in a brainstorm that was facilitated by an external governance experts. The brainstorm included a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (aka. SWOT) analysis and initial identification of goals, strategies and measures of success. Based upon those conversations, the StudentsNS Executive Director drafted a preliminary plan in consultation with the board officers and other staff members. Finally, the draft plan was circulated to the Board for amendment and approval.

The Strategic Plan is consistent with StudentsNS' Mission to represent the collective interests and priorities of post-secondary students in Nova Scotia and our core values:

Accessibility: Every qualified Nova Scotia student who wishes to pursue post-secondary education should be able to do so, irrespective of their financial situation, socioeconomic or ethnic background, physical, psychological or mental disability, age, sexual orientation, geographic location, or any other factor exogenous to qualification.

Affordability: The cost of post-secondary education in Nova Scotia should not cause undue hardship upon any student, restrict their ability to pursue the career path they choose, or make them financially unable to live in the community that they choose.

Quality: The Nova Scotia post-secondary system should strive at all times to provide the highest possible quality of education to its students, fostering student success.

Student Voice: Nova Scotia students must be empowered to actively participate in setting their post-secondary system's direction via engagement through their representative student bodies, within the post-secondary institutions themselves, and through the broader democratic process.

2013-16 StudentsNS Goals, Strategies and Measures of Success

Goal	Strategy	Measures of Success
1 - Conduct effective advocacy	Advance Priority Policies	NS continues to invest in improving the Student Assistance Program
		Tuition is regulated for all students at rates of change that protect and enhance post-secondary affordability
		The University Funding Distribution Formula is redesigned in ways that promote institutional accountability and sustainability
		NS increases university operating grants at the rate of economic growth
		Students control approval of new or increased ancillary fees
		The NS minimum wage is tied to the LICO
		International students receive MSI coverage immediately upon arrival
	Collaborate with the Province and Universities	Students participate in negotiations for the 2015-18 MOU
		2015-18 MOU clauses reflect student priorities
		StudentsNS participates in Student-Government Roundtables
	Host Annual Lobby Conferences	StudentsNS and its members maintain a regular dialogue with university administrations on StudentsNS priorities
	Host Annual Lobby Conferences	StudentsNS representatives have met with two-thirds of MLAS at least once per year
Collaborate with civil servants	Civil servants report that StudentsNS is a constructive and impactful stakeholder	
2 - Improve representation	Host student assemblies	Student assemblies of some kind are held at least twice per year on every member campus
		Board and staff members discuss student assembly conversations in their work
		StudentsNS has received documented student feedback on draft position papers
	Promote StudentsNS among students	There are StudentsNS materials in all orientation packages of member student unions
		The StudentsNS brand is visible in member buildings
		Students are familiar with StudentsNS' name, purpose and positions
	Mend the Gap in NS student politics	Campaign is running on all campuses with events and posters
		Gender representation on the StudentsNS Board is improved
	Continue work to unite student voice	Data released on women's participation in student politics
		StudentsNS is recognized by government, universities and the media as the primary voice representing students at the provincial level
Build the capacity of the NSCCSA	StudentsNS meets requests for support from the NSCCSA	
3 - Strengthen policy and research	Complete a comprehensive position paper library	Position papers are released regularly based on Board priorities
		Position Papers serve as references on key NS issues
	Communicate research and policy outside position papers	Other reports communicate StudentsNS policy priorities
		Succinct factsheets are available on studentsns.ca
	A research library is available on studentsns.ca directing visitors to key information sources	

		StudentsNS provides regular evidence-based commentary on policy issues relevant to students (e.g. op-eds, blogs)
	Build research network	StudentsNS has detailed records of research contacts StudentsNS has contacts with potential research volunteer networks
4 - Conduct impactful campaigns and communication	Impact NS elections	The discourse on student priorities is framed by the position of StudentsNS and its members
	Build a strong media presence	StudentsNS maintains elevated reach in formal media, as measured by qualitative comparison of past and present performance
		StudentsNS is the primary media contact for student perspectives
		StudentsNS is generating news, not just responding
	Build a strong online presence	StudentsNS' reach on social media is consistently expanding as measured by increased twitter followers and Facebook views and "likes"
		Studentsns.ca has a top Google search ranking for 'Nova Scotia' and 'students', 'universities', 'student financial assistance', 'tuition', 'international students', 'student union', 'student association'.
	Expand interactive digital content	StudentsNS has maintained the Students Speak Out campaign, with new interviews each year
		StudentsNS seeks other opportunities for interactive communication and campaigns
	Host an annual Student Wellness Conference	Conferences are attended by representatives from 80% of NS post-secondary institutions
		Conference attendees come from a range of different backgrounds, including student union executives, women's centre leaders, domestic students, international students, etc.
Student-led initiatives initiated after conferences		
Two-thirds of attendees evaluate conferences positively		
5 - Expand partnerships	Identify and approach partners	Partners willing to be identified on studentsns.ca Partners report that StudentsNS is a helpful collaborator
	Collaborate with faculty associations	Have made common statements on issues of common concern and viewpoints
6 - Maintain strong governance and operations	The Board drives StudentsNS	Board members feel ownership over StudentsNS
		Board member exit-interviews are conducted each year and their recommendations are pursued to the greatest extent possible
	Remain connected with alumni	An alumni database is maintained with contact information
		Alumni are contacted to volunteer on relevant projects
	Build strong governance	Governance policies are respected
	Responsibly manage finances	StudentsNS has received clean audits or reviews
		StudentsNS maintains positive unrestricted net assets
	Guarantee transparency	The most recent audited statements, minutes, budgets, governance policies, plans and annual reports are available on studentsns.ca
		An honest and up-to-date record of StudentsNS' results and set-backs is available on studentsns.ca
Retain staff	Staff members are fulfilling the full terms of their contracts	
Secure additional funding	At least 10% of total revenues each year are generated through funding sources other than member fees	



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