



Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students

Executive Report May 1st, 2018 – June 17th, 2018 President's Report

Internal

May was primarily devoted to transition. This included transitioning the new executive, director, and Office Manager. The first Council meeting was held on May 17th to conclude business of the previous Council, and update the By-Laws to reflect approved changes from the April Council meeting.

There have been three bank meetings with our Account Manager to process transition of the accounts, as well as to get information on DAGS' financial standing. The DAGS VPFO has been diligently compiling documents through the bank, as well as working with the DSU Accounting manager.

There was a two-week transition period for the new Office manager, who shadowed the outgoing Office Manager to become more familiar with the position.

I have been working with new society executives to become more familiar with their positions, ways they can engage with DAGS, and directing them to resources to fulfill their goals. I have also been working on communicating the appointment for a Vice President Academic for the summer term. Work has begun to coordinate upcoming By-Elections to fill vacant positions. The ratification process through the DSU is also underway.

External Relations (University/ DSU/ CFS)

There have been many meeting with various members of the Dalhousie community, as a team as well as meetings conducted by individual executive

members. There has been constant communications with members of the Faculty of Graduate studies, including meetings with Dean Dr. Marty Leonard. Coordinating an appointment has also been done in collaboration with the Dean's Office and there have been weekly contributions to the Faculty newsletter (**Submissions are sent weekly on Wednesday evenings. Should anyone desire to submit to the Faculty newsletter, please submit updates to president@dags.ca*).

A lot of work has been done to coordinate Faculty Orientation; including review of pre-arrival modules and upcoming participation in a Webinar (more information in Programming and Events section) . The Graduate Student Experience committee has also met, and there are actions underway through the summer to prepare for the upcoming year.

With the move from the Grad House and the Mona Campbell building, there have also been meetings and communications with Facilities Management. This includes coordinating the move itself, as well as beginning to renovate the new space. The goal is to have the space ready for September. In addition to this I have been working to develop strategies to communicate desired improvement of student spaces from students to Facilities Management. In regards to department specific spaces, student societies are encouraged to reach out to their departments to share the improvements they see for student spaces. Departments are able to submit to Facilities management over the summer about desired renovations. In regards to the Grad Pad in the Killam library specifically, we are able to communicate student feedback directly. Please email president@dags.ca with specific feedback regarding this space as we establish a more direct method for students to communicate feedback directly.

I have been working with Dalhousie Food Services to compile food options for the summer; with a particular focus on Sexton Campus. There are renovations for a new food service in the alumni lounge to be ready for September. In the interim, there is a temporary food service being offered in the Alumni Lounge.

Communicating directly with societies continues to be a key focus for me. If I have not yet contacted your society to arrange a meeting, please be on the lookout for a request to meet. If you would like to meet with me sooner, please send me an email to president@dags.ca and I will arrange a meeting quickly.

During transition, there was a meeting between members of the DSU and DAGS Executives. We are continuing to build a stronger relationship to better serve both organizations and our members. As a DAGS team, developing this relationship further is of key importance. I attended the DSU Council meeting as an observer to ensure we are kept in the loop about what the DSU Council is planning. Through the summer, I will be participating in the Orientation Week committee. Other executives are engaging with the DSU; including our VP External and the Senate Caucus. We are hoping to engage more Graduate students within the DSU, and we have been communicating available opportunities. Should individual interest be expressed, we are directing students to opportunities to get involved. Work is also underway to develop materials in coordination with the DSU graphic designer to assist with communicating to our membership throughout the year. There is a particular focus to work with the DSU Food Bank to raise awareness about food insecurity –particularly for graduate students – and engage students with this vital service.

In preparation for the Government Round Table, The DAGS VPFO and myself participated in a planning session offered by the CFS. The DAGS Executives have worked with the CFS Maritime Office individually as well; including the DAGS VP External attending the CFS National General meeting. I attended a town hall event focusing on students who are parents in an effort to begin further work on this issue within the Dalhousie context.

The department of Labour and Advanced Education hosted the quarterly Student- Government Roundtable at the end of May. The DAGS VPFO and I attend as representatives. There are upcoming actions from the Labour and Advanced education to circulate summary information of the meeting, as well as an invitation to present at a Round Table in the future.

Services

With the transition period at an end, the new Office manager has been facilitating grants. This includes previous grants that needed further processing. Society audits have also been underway. Updating the website has been a focus to ensure contact information is up to date, but there is a lot of work to be done, with planning underway. The DAGS VPFO has been ensuring that grants and disbursements are accurately budget for.

Please send an email to Victor, or come to the Office, if there is anything you or your society needs. Feel free to include me on any correspondence, and I will do my best to provide further support.

Programming and Events

A primary focus has been to participate in the planning of orientation events relevant to graduate students. Faculty orientation planning is ongoing; including pre-arrival orientation modules and webinars. I have been working with the Faculty to review these modules and provide feedback on updates that should be made. In addition to Faculty orientation, I have been communicating with the International Centre to ensure that we can engage with graduate students participating in International Student Orientation programming. I am looking to connect with individual societies to be aware of their own programming plans to provide support, as well as to communicate opportunities to engage with other orientation programming. I have been sitting on the DSU O-Week committee in an effort to be a communication link between programming for all students and programming specifically for graduate students.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

May 2018–June 2018

Vice President Finance and Operations

Maxine Kirshenbaum

Internal affairs

As with the rest of the elected DAGS team, the first month in office involved a lot of transition work. This included meetings with CFS, the DSU (exec+staff), FGS, Faculty Management, DAGS outgoing office manager, the bank and various committees/representatives. The transition period saw our team working to get up to speed on many aspects of the association, as well as the defunct bar.

Transitions particular to my role involved assessing the current financial standing of DAGS, as well as the Muse, including addressing taxes owed and outstanding fees left over from the previous term. Additionally, I drafted a Summer-term budget and have prepared a rough full term (May 2018-April 2018) budget. The associations budget is still under revision and has space for improvement. I am working to maximize funds allocated to grants and ensure we have the means to host events for grad students each term. I, along with the other exec members, are also working to partner with other groups/association to host events, modules, workshops...etc. for graduate students.

Operationally, a fair amount of this first month has been spent trying to get a handle on Muse affairs. While DAGS currently has a temporary office in the Mona Campbell building, many important files and statements sit in the Muse. We recently received access to the Muse and thus have begun to collect and sift through these. Computers with past financial records were also in the Muse, and thus have only recently been collected. Many accounts opened in conjunction with the Muse, as well as many services in the Muse, were (are) still being charged to the DAGS account. We are working to address these, with varying success. We are working with security, faculty management and a host of other services to clear out of the Muse space. Currently that involves sorting through items and distinguishing what can be repurposed for the new DAGS office space (which will be in the SUB, 4th floor), what can be sold and what has to be discarded.

Victor (DAGS office manager) and I have been working together to collect as many receipts, statements, summaries...etc. related to the accounts of DAGS and the Muse for the past 5+ years. The intention is to create a 5+ year financial overview/statement for the operations to emphasize the trajectory it (as a whole) has been following. Victor and I have also put in place some book-keeping/accountability practices for grants, fees...etc. (i.e., basic account affairs).

External Relations (Uni/DSU/CFS)

I've met with the DSU exec and staff to discuss account affairs, history, concerns regarding DAGS/Muse. I attended the FGS AGM at the end of May. I have met with the Dean of FGS. I have met with CFS/individuals of CFS numerous times. I have met & spoke at King's Master of Journalism orientation. I have met with Michael Davis-Cotes, coordinator/heart and soul of DSU food bank. I have met with faculty management staff. I have met with our bank account advisor multiple times.

I attended a government round-table discussion hosted by the NS department of Labour and Advanced Education. I have attended the DAGS council meeting(s), as well as several DAGS exec meetings. I have attended a Graduate Student Experience committee meeting.

Many early meetings (beginning-mid May) were related to transition and sharing our exec team goals for the coming terms. In these meetings, we brought up a number of concerns we heard voiced during & after campaign season, including food/financial insecurity, communication issues, accessibility issues and student society support/activity.

Services

We've been working on cataloguing the grants we are receiving/were received by the past exec. We are working on getting society disbursements out and are offering the support we can to those who need it.

Programming and Events

We have been working on Fall orientation from the get-go, including working with FGS to incorporate anti-oppression training into every graduate student/society orientation. We are also working to improve International Student Orientation and offer more accessible/appropriate/

supportive modules &/or training sessions to incoming international students.

We are working to ensure there are more family-friendly graduate events offered. Coming out of transition season, we hope to offer some outdoor events for graduate students. We've also been discussing hosting events with different student societies to promote interaction between groups of graduate students and increase the variety of events/experiences offered. Furthermore, we hope to have events that educate graduate students about graduate-student issues, such as food insecurity. Our exec is hoping to work with student societies to come up with events that promote community, education and/or engagement. Examples of these would be to encourage student societies to host food drives for the DSU Food Bank, to arrange outreach events with elementary/high schools and/or host monthly society social events (such as mixers, bagel lunches, movie nights...etc.).

Other

I have been working closely with a third-party accountant to address the financial standing and future of DAGS. We are working together to draft a 5-9-year financial overview of operations for DAGS/the Muse. We are working with the accountant to assess the financial options for DAGS and possible changes/restructuring that can/must occur. As such, much of my time this past month has been excavating financial summaries, receipts, balance sheets, payroll, statements...etc. for the association and the bar. A lot of time has also been spent discussing matters with our accountant and receiving advising from them.

DALHOUSIE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

EXECUTIVE REPORT

May 1, 2018 - June 19, 2018

VP EXTERNAL

Internal

Throughout much of May, I was involved in transition work including meetings with the current exec and training with outgoing DAGS exec and staff, the DSU, and CFS.

Along with the rest of the exec, I have been helping plan for the upcoming year and the future of DAGS. On my own I have also been planning out the campaigns and events for the coming year.

University/ DSU/ CFS/ External relations

Since the beginning of my term I have attended meetings with the following groups and individuals:

- FGS Student Experience Committee
- Dalhousie Senate
- Dalhousie Senate SAPRC
- Dalhousie Pride Committee
- FGS Orientation week planning
- FGS Dean
- DSU executives
- CFS-NS organizers
- DSU Food Bank

I represented DAGS (Local 113) at the 71st Semi-Annual National General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) from June 8-12.

Throughout the NGM, I sat on the following committees, caucuses, and constituency groups and attended relevant meetings :

- Maritimes Component
- National Graduate Caucus
- Budget Committee
- Women's Constituency

- Queer Constituency

The National Graduate Caucus discussed a graduate student-specific mental health campaign which I will work with the NGC Chair over the coming year.

I put forward an emergency motion regarding the recent buyout of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project which was passed unanimously. Following the approval of this motion, we will join CFS National in writing letters to Prime Minister Trudeau regarding the pipeline buyout and we will support future actions in solidarity with the Coast Salish-led resistance to the pipeline.

Services

My role so far has not involved much work with services. I will be working over the next little while to ensure we have materials from the Muse and from CFS-NS for orientation week.

Programming and Events

I have been involved in planning for Orientation week, including providing input for the FGS Orientation week and beginning discussions with the DSU, CFS-NS, and NSPIRG about grad student orientation week events.

Following the DSU's and CFS-NS's boycott of Halifax Pride last year, I have been in discussions with various groups including those represented in the Dalhousie Pride Committee and others to determine DAGS's position. I am proposing that, following the lead from other groups, we do not participate in Halifax Pride officially. Instead, I am in discussions with other CFS-NS locals and the CFS-NS Maritimes Office to plan alternative pride events for students.

Tomorrow I will attend the King's Student Union's rally to support survivors at their Board of Governors meeting.

DALHOUSIE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

EXECUTIVE REPORT May 4th, 2018 – June 17th, 2018 Director's Report

Internal

First month May was totally devoted to the transitions and understanding thoroughly the responsibilities as Director. Beginning with the first council meeting that was almost included the previous business, outstanding accounts from previous years and the planning of the upcoming year as well as the fiscal term as well as the most significant issues in the By Laws.

I have been working with the engineering students and DEGS society executives, specially in sexton campus so that they can feel DAGS is easily accessible to them and for them. In the last council meeting, the proposal for the secondary director was removed, with the permission of the council with respect to Financial conditions of the DAGS Councils and to remove the conflicts.

I am continuous taking the feedback from the current sexton students about their requirements. Some of the points I concluded from the discussion with the students are listed below:

- Food services at sexton and their hours;
- Number of TA, assigned to the number of students;
- TA reimbursement / Pay;
- Summer Tuition Fees (weather you take the course or not in Summer, especially for international students);
- Summer Courses (Graduate students was offered to take UG courses in Summer due to faculty unavailability);
- No special help to find any co-op for the respective programs;
- Low research Funding for the international students.

University/ DSU/ CFS/ External relations

The meeting and feedback has been continuously taken from the students and Dalhousie communities either in team or individual form. I had meet a lot of students during this time in sexton lounge area about there feedback related to their respective programs and funding as well as the resources provided to them against their expectations from the university. I had found that at some point we failed to fulfill the engineering student requirement of expectation. Most of them felt that they don't get enough from what there are paying.

Communication is always my strong extra personal skills. I was doing my best to help students either directly or indirectly. I am actively communicating with DEGS to be a prime focus for me. If I have not yet contacted your society to arrange a meeting, please be on the lookout for a request to meet. If you would like to meet with me sooner, please send me an email to director1@dags.ca and I will arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

This year, there is a particular focus to work with the DSU Food Bank to raise awareness about food insecurity –especially for graduate students and engage students with this vital service. I had find some of the volunteer's who is ready to serve DSU Food Bank if DSU offered something in sexton campus during summer time.

Services

Please send an email to me or Victor, or come to the Office, if there is anything you or your society needs. Feel free to include me on any correspondence, and I will do my best to provide further support in which you think you can add me in the loop and that has to be taken care of.

Programming and Events

A Main focus has been to participate in the planning of orientation events relevant to graduate students, especially for the international students' orientations. I am trying my best to help the Dalhousie communities as well as any interested societies that seek DAGS support and engagement. I am

planning on sitting on the Graduate Student Experience Advisory Committee Meeting to focus as well as getting the feedback of the Dalhousie Graduate students experience.