



International Student Advocacy

ANSUT One World Conference

September 20, 2019

Presented by: **students** 



Agenda

Introduction to StudentsNS
History of Advocacy on Behalf of
International Students
Student Concerns
Upcoming Projects





StudentsNS: Who We Are

- Founded in 2003 as the Alliance of Nova Scotia Students Associations (ANSSA)
- Non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization
- Represent 20,000+ students across Nova Scotia
- University and NSCC representation



Advocacy 101

The StudentsNS Process



Consultation



Research



Presentation (& hopefully, results!)



StudentsNS Mandate

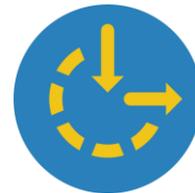
1

Affordability



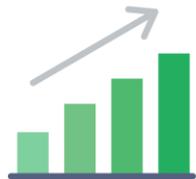
3

Accessibility



2

Quality



4

Student Voice





International Student Concerns + StudentsNS Advocacy



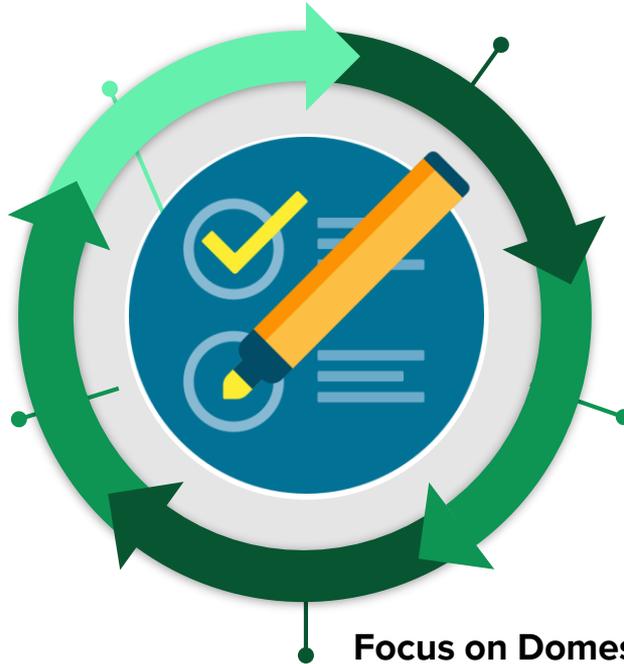
Common International Student Concerns

Access to Healthcare Services

International students typically have to buy expensive private insurance plans for basic needs. MSI eligibility requires a wait period of 13 months, and the student cannot leave Nova Scotia for more than 30 days, cumulative.

Access to Employment

Feedback from both students and co-op offices show international students face increased barriers to interviews and positions. Study permit does not allow working over 20hrs/week.



Rising and Unpredictable Tuition and Fees

Unlike domestic tuition, international student tuition remains unregulated. Increases vary from year to year, campus to campus.

Pathways to Immigration

Difficulty finding information regarding applying for permanent residency-- international student offices unable to provide this information.

Focus on Domestic Students in Policy Discussions

Tendency to develop programs and policies using a domestic focused lens, or grouping all “international” student needs as the same.



Recent Advocacy (Provincial + Federal)



- Introduction of Diversity Bonus for Co-OP, Summer SKILL, Graduate to Opportunity (GTO) and Innovate to Opportunity (ITO)
- International student cohort tuition policy
- MSI Coverage for International Students
- Modifying study permit to include full-time work-integrated learning programs
- Exempt post-secondary staff working in international student support offices from Article 91 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.



Core Funding to Universities



- Due to a decrease in core funding, international student tuition is being used to bolster budgets
- Creates volatility for institutions, promotes aggressive recruitment practices, international students at risk for being exploited
- *State of Post-Secondary Education 2019*: “In 2016-17, for the first time in over 60 years, the proportion of university and college funds coming from public sources fell below 50%. Our system, properly-speaking, should no longer be considered 'publicly-funded', but rather 'public-aided'” (HESA, 2019)
- StudentsNS advocated for 3% annual contributions to university operating grants for 2019-2024 MOU
- CASA advocates for creation of independent Canada Education Transfer



Ongoing projects:

- MSI for International Students
- Work with national partners regarding visa and immigration files
- Tuition regulation
- University funding



Opportunities to Expand:

- Working with existing partners (EduNova, Atlantic Immigration Pilot) to improve international experience
- Build cultural competency and highlight specific needs of international students in broader discussions (ex: consent)
- Campus-based advocacy: working with international student support centres



Helpful Resources

CASA's 2020 Pre-Budget Submission (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, 2019)

Value Beyond the Dollars and Cents: **International Students' Contributions to Canada and Their Need for Supports** (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, 2018)

The Memorandum of Understanding: **Student Recommendations for a Sustainable University System in Nova Scotia** (StudentsNS, 2018)

Innovating Accessibility and Affordability: **A Student Vision for Nova Scotia's Post-Secondary System** (StudentsNS, 2018)

International Students and the Future of Nova Scotia's Universities (StudentsNS, 2014)



students

Affordability | Accessibility | Quality | Student Voice