



**2021-2022 Executive Report**



## **Dawson Student Union (DSU)**

The Dawson Student Union's mission is to organize students on a democratic, co-operative basis for advancing students' interests, and advancing the interests of the students' community;

To bring students together to discuss and cooperatively achieve necessary educational, administrative, and legislative change wherever decision-making affects students;

To facilitate organizing services for students;

To achieve the goal of a system of post-secondary education which is accessible to all, which is of high quality, which recognises the legitimacy of student representation and the validity of Student's rights; and whose role in society is clearly recognised and appreciated;

To organize activities promoting the social, recreational, and cultural interest of the students at Dawson College;

To represent the interests of Dawson College students to all levels of the administration of Dawson College and to appoint all students required to represent the membership of their Union to all constituted or informal bodies of the College in accordance with an Act Respecting the Accreditation and Financing of Students' Associations.

## **Introduction to the Executive Team**

The 2021-2022 Executive Officers are as follows:

- President: Alexandrah Cardona
- Vice-President Internal Affairs & Operations: Abril Meza
- Vice-President Finance: Yves-Jusslin Maniratanga
- Vice-President Academics & Advocacy: Mia Scroggins-Hadley
- Vice-President Student Life: Yimaj Baharun
- Vice-President Services & Sustainability: Shirin Hinojosa Violante
- Vice-President External Affairs: Arwen Low



## **End of Year Report**

### **Representation on College Bodies**

#### **Senate**

- The 2021-2022 Senators caucus is composed of the President and VP Academics & Advocacy in accordance with the constitution and the VP Internal Affairs & Operations and VP Services & Sustainability were appointed by the Student Council.
- Fall 2021: The main initiatives of student Senators included advocating for a Climate Strike day, advocating for the implementation of a Fall Study Break for the 2022-2023 academic year, and initiating subcommittees of Senate and ISEP.
- Winter 2022: The central focus of advocacy on Senate related to two key subcommittees initiated by the DSU with an aim to improve long-term systemic student representation on College bodies. More information on the Bylaw 6 and Academic Grievances & Grade Reviews subcommittees can be found below.
- Miscellaneous: Starting in late Winter 2022, the DSU President is provided a report on the agenda of regular Senate meetings. This will allow for students to provide regular updates to the various academic constituencies of Dawson College and improve overall relations between student representatives and other members of Senate.

#### **Bylaw 6**

- The Bylaw 6 subcommittee was created by Senate to review the composition of Senate with a principal task of considering student representation. The subcommittee is composed of 1 Dean, 1 member of faculty, 1 support staff member, 1 professionals member, 1 student (the DSU president) and the Chair of Senate (non-voting).
- The creation of the subcommittee was the result of almost 12 months of DSU directly lobbying the College administration to expand student representation.
- In May 2022, Senate will deliberate the recommendations of the subcommittee

#### **Institutional Student Evaluation Policy (ISEP)**

- The ISEP Committee hadn't scheduled meetings during the 2020-2021 academic year due Covid restrictions. DSU presented their demands and recommendations to Senate in Winter 2021 concerning student representation, equity and fairness, particularly in regards to the sections of ISEP concerning Academic Grievances and Grade Reviews.



- In Winter 2022, the subcommittee for Review of Academic Grievances and Grade Reviews formally convened. The subcommittee is composed of 2 students, 1 member-at-large (community), 1 faculty, 1 dean and the Chair of Senate (non-voting).

### Review of Academic Grievances & Grade Reviews

- The subcommittee considers reviews to the ISEP section for Academic Grievances and Grade Reviews.
- DSU representatives main recommendations include peer accompaniment for students, advocacy services for students, additional mechanisms that deescalate the Grade Review process and further transparency from the faculty committees regarding decisions.
- Grade Reviews mechanisms are outlined in the collective agreement of faculty (Dawson Teachers Union). Student representatives have therefore evaluated options and provided feedback to the subcommittee regarding proposed mechanisms that would not interfere with the faculty agreement.
- The Academic Grievances procedure is unique to Dawson College.

### Academic Calendar

- The Academic Calendar Committee convenes regularly each year to design and recommend to the Senate the calendar for the following academic year. DSU representatives advocated for a Fall Study Break for the second consecutive year. Senate ultimately ratified the 2022-2023 Fall Study Break following months of advocacy from Student Representatives.

### Board of Governors

- The Board of Governors held a special meeting in June 2021 to modify the academic calendar for 2021-2022 and remove the scheduled Fall Study Break. The DSU President presented a motion to maintain the break during the Fall 2021 semester but the Board of Governors voted the motion down and approved the modified calendar.
- In June 2021, the Board of Governors approved the modified Bylaw 8 which changed criteria for academic probation and program expulsions.
- In November 2021, the Board of Governors approved the revised Sexual Violence Policy.
- The Board of Governors took an active stance along with DSU representatives to oppose the cancellation of the SMSE Pavillon campus expansion.



### Sexual Violence

- DSU Representatives are appointed to the College's Standing Committee on Sexual Violence Prevention and Sexual Violence Policy Committee.

### Health & Safety

- The Health & Safety Committee is the main body which enables Student Representatives to provide feedback regarding safety concerns or potential health hazards experienced by students on campus. The College did not allow students to sit on the Covid-19 Space Access Committee which meant that Covid-19 complaints or concerns were reported to the Health & Safety Committee instead.

### Budget Consultation

- The Budget Consultation Committee meets twice per academic year to review the College's annual budget as prepared by the Finance Department and Executive Committee of Dawson College. The committee includes 1 seat for a student representative.

### Sustainability Advisory

- The Sustainability Advisory Committee exists to discuss recommendations for improved sustainability projects at Dawson College. The committee includes 1 seat for a student representative.

### EDIA Work Group

- In Winter 2022, Dawson College launched its first work group tasked with evaluating the overall scope of potential EDIA initiatives needed on campus. This consultation-based work group includes 3 seats for Student Representatives.



### Strategic Plan Academic Work Group

- Dawson College is currently undertaking preliminary consultations for the upcoming five-year strategic plan. The Academic Work Group began meeting in late Winter 2022 and includes 2 seats for Student Representatives.

### Dawson College Foundation

- The Dawson College Foundation is a civic non-profit organization established in 2005 with a mandate to aid in funding the Dawson community. Since at least Winter 2020, a student representative has been appointed to join the foundation board for a mandate no longer than 1 year. In 2021-2022, the foundation board resumed regular meetings.



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
**Alexandrah Cardona, President**

**Bill 96**

By June 2021 when I took office, Bill 96 had already become a significant concern of the union. I discussed with the Director General of Dawson College, in consultation with the union's Vice-President of External Affairs, what the year ahead might look like for the DSU in the face of this new bill. We immediately began outreach with other student associations to educate our memberships and promoted mobilizations throughout the Fall semester. In February 2022, the government announced that the bill would include modifications to the anglophone college curriculum and that further restrictions to English CEGEPs would be introduced. The DSU responded with heavy media outreach regarding the bill amendments and began fostering relations with organizations beyond only student associations to help broaden the support network for college students. As part of these efforts, I participate in the coordination group against Bill 96 with large organizations and provide a voice for students at these tables as much as possible.

I've also collaborated extensively with the labour unions and administration of the College to coordinate mobilization efforts and media presence surrounding the issue. Notably, numerous politicians, primarily provincial election candidates and members of the National Assembly, have reached out to the DSU to partake in our efforts against Bill 96. I work diligently to ensure that the Union fosters and maintains positive relationships with political figures while remaining non-partisan so that our membership benefits from the Union's public advocacy efforts.

**Dawson College Building Expansion**

The SMSE Pavillon was a long-awaited addition to the campus that the community worked for many years to bring to life. It was truly terrible to receive the news from the Minister of Higher Education that the building had been cancelled (pending confirmation from the 2022-2023 provincial budget). DSU immediately jumped to action on several fronts, including mobilizing students and the public to support our petition which eventually gained 20,000 signatures. In February 2022, we met with the Liberal Party of Quebec on campus to discuss our concerns and subsequently received an invitation to visit the National Assembly the following month. This wasn't the first time we had wished we could speak directly to the government in Quebec City about what was going on back home on campus but it was the first time we actually had an opportunity to make it a reality, so we quickly sprung into action once more.



Unfortunately, the Minister re-affirmed her earlier statements to the College in April 2022, and the building project is considered officially cancelled by the current government. It remains imperative that the DSU continue to advocate publicly around this issue so that the hard work of the community of the previous decade is not forgotten in vain.

### **Collective Insurances and L'authorite des Marches Financiers**

Following the DSU referendum in May 2021, I immediately began working to make the insurance plan for Dawson students a reality. Unfortunately, Dawson College itself had other ideas. They had delayed discussions with our insurance partners throughout Summer 2021 and later denied us the opportunity to discuss implementation altogether.

In December 2021, l'Autorité des Marchés Financiers notified insurance providers that they would interfere in students rights by imposing regulations on student associations invoices. In an incredible act of solidarity, over 40 student associations came together in January 2021 to form an interassociation coordination committee. I was humbled and honoured to partake in this committee with so many other college and university associations and without any linguistics divisions. In February 2022, my team and I travelled to Quebec City for the interassociation press conference concerning the AMF's actions.

Despite the lack of insurance coverage for Dawson students being incredibly unfortunate, I am proud that the Union will be taking part in consultations with the AMF and other student groups. It is important that the DSU remains on the front lines of this issue, even if it is not a popular topic in anglophone media, because it affects the core wellbeing and public health of our community.

### **Student Representation and Bylaw 6**

I have been advocating for the expansion of student representation across the college and on Senate for over a year. Finally, I am overjoyed that the Union's efforts have come to fruition and that the subcommittee on Bylaw 6 will be presenting the matter for discussion this coming month. I look forward to a future DSU Senators Caucus with 8 members!



## **OFFICE OF FINANCE**

**Yves-Jusslin Maniratanga, Vice-President**

### **Annual Audit**

One of the first projects that I undertook after taking office was the completion of the Financial Audit from the previous financial year. Thus, I engaged in regular consultations with our auditing firm Fuller Landau to ensure their strong understanding of the Dawson Student Union's corporate functioning to further support the auditing process. The result of the procedure was satisfactory as our auditors declared that our financial statements and our procedures were satisfactory.

### **Financial Governance**

Ever since I took office, I put a strong emphasis on according to students a larger voice in how the Union's finances are handled. I achieved that goal through multiple steps. The very first consisted of increasing the manpower of the Office of Finance by selecting and training the volunteer who would become the Union's Finance Coordinator. Over the year, the Finance Coordinator provided support when it came to evaluating certain financial decisions and their implementation. The Finance Coordinator contributed to the building of the Finance Committee. The Committee united students from different academic sectors with the main goal of building strong financial regulations. Thus, we had members in the Business Management program, the Commerce program, the Enriched Health Science program much more. We were able to build consistent financial regulations with the help of the committee. The diversity of background contributed to the versatility of the Committee's activities. This permitted us to install a solid procedure to process special projects funding applications in a manner consistent with the will and expertise of a varied part of the Dawson Student Union membership.

As for Student Awards, I worked in collaboration with the Vice-President of Academics and Advocacy to set up selection criteria for the Awards. After that, we successfully organized a committee, made exclusively of council members, to prepare them to process and select award applications. Right now, we are in the process of preparing how we are



going to hand the awards to the recipients in a special ceremony.

In brief, under my mandate, financial governance was organized to give a voice to a wider range of students to guarantee that financial decisions truly represent what Dawson Students stand behind.

### **Recommendations**

I would advise the next Vice-President of Finance to recruit a Finance Coordinator within the first month of their mandate and hand them the responsibility of preparing regular financial reports. I believe that those reports, provided on a more regular basis would be a step in the right direction as it would entail even more Financial Transparency.



## **OFFICE OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS & OPERATIONS**

**Abril Meza, Vice-President**

### **OPERATIONS**

#### **Clubs and Services Spaces**

Starting from Fall 2021, I had presented my ideas of having a communal club space as there were several different concerns with the previous set up. Clubs were designated either a room or cubicle space in rooms. I proposed having three communal rooms where they would be shared between all clubs on rotation, so they could maximize the use of the rooms and would future proof the inevitable expansion of student life at Dawson. After consultation with club members and receiving feedback, I had finalized my plans and a clean up of the entire spaces began.

Volunteers helped clear out the space and things were thrown out, recycled or donated to different charity organizations. I had made a floor plans on how the rooms would look, having certain rooms encompass DSU services and other rooms be dedicated club spaces.

In December, Student Services at Dawson College offered the DSU a great opportunity to help fund the club space furniture. I sent them the floor plans I had done and we would begin to receive the furniture over the winter semester . Currently the spaces are half open as we are still awaiting more furniture to arrive. This huge project could not have occurred without the help of volunteers and the patience and collaboration of clubs and services.

#### **Events and Activities**

Being co-chair with VP Student Life in the DSU Campus Events & Operations Committee in the Fall semester was an extremely exciting experience. The committee was composed by very enthusiastic volunteers who provided ideas and insights into what events to bring to Dawson. We would meet weekly, sometimes twice a week to bring these events to fruition. Collaboration with Campus Life and Leadership helped me gain knowledge on what steps must be done to throw a good event, especially regarding work orders and being realistic in planning. For Fall, we



worked on Welcome Week, Frosh Week, Orange T-Shirt Day, Club Fair, Geek Week, Halloween Week, Stress Free Days, Volunteer Appreciation Day, and Volunteer Orientation Day. For Winter, I collaborated with VP External in a valentine event called Datamatch where Dawson students and other English CEGEPs would be matched together if they took a survey. More than 1000 students were matched. I also helped organize a fundraiser to raise funds for Ukraine, where volunteers and I would be tabled in the Upper Atrium and sold art and donuts. We raised over \$2000+.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Working on posts for social media has been a creative endeavor as each post has been worked on to be appealing and have a level of consistency to represent the DSU. This involved making posts have a theme: a shade of green, the logo placement was always on the left bottom corner--technical aspects that were planned for. Keeping up with the large workload was facilitated by the introduction of office volunteers specifically helping me out with Communications. I was able to delegate graphic design to these extremely talented students for all the myriad of posts that needed to be posted. In addition to social media, I have worked on the DSU website which has received a lot of modification and has become significantly more user friendly (especially for mobile users).

## **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

As a DSU representative, I was able to represent the union in multiple committees, such as: Senate, ISEP, Grade Review and Academics Grievance Committee, Academic Calendar Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Standing Committee – Policy on Sexual Violence. Being a representative involves holding the student's interests as a priority and making sure their voices and concerns are heard. The best example for this was in the beginning of the fall semester, students emailed the DSU and expressed concern regarding returning to school and COVID anxieties. I brought every concern up in the Health and Safety Committee meeting. I reported back to the Student Council the measures the College would take to ensure their safety. Keeping conversation open between students has aided me represent their interests, and the College committees appreciate all student feedback.



## **VOLUNTEERS**

The biggest victory for the DSU has been expanding the Volunteer Network. Having volunteers is integral for operations. We started off with 0 volunteers in the beginning of August. Posting an Instagram post recruiting volunteers for Welcome Week helped start the foundation of the network. During Welcome Week, we had a sign up (physical and electronic) for people to join the Volunteer Network. As weeks passed and up until now, the number of volunteers signed up with the DSU is over 300 members. For students who want to come in to volunteer to help once

in a while and have no commitment, we named them “Event Volunteers”. The next tier of volunteer is for more active students who wish to help executives and is more of a commitment. This tier of volunteer is called “Office Volunteers”. Every DSU executive has office volunteers who help them complete their tasks. I would estimate the number of active office volunteers for all executives ranges from 20-30. Some office volunteers help more than one executive at a time.

Having office volunteers is mutually beneficial for DSU and students as volunteers help relieve the huge workload as a DSU executive and volunteers get hours and valuable experience in a student governance environment.

## **New Initiatives and Projects**

Reviewing my Annual Plans, I had not been able to complete everything I had hoped to but I was able to complete a reasonable amount. These include producing a detailed guideline for event planning, DSU space renovations, social media calendar, newsletter (which will be released in a few weeks) and recruiting volunteers. Some other projects have the groundwork but need more planning before execution.

## **Recommendations**

As being the first VP of Internal Affairs and Operations, the role included many responsibilities. Even with great time management skills, support from the team is essential. Making sure there is lots of promotion and recruitment of volunteers will help all DSU executives be able to function more efficiently. Training of the volunteers would be help in both parties understanding their roles and boundaries. Having a functional way to book rooms and work



orders is also extremely important. Continuing to communicate with all DSU club execs, services and volunteers will help future executives understand what needs have to be met. Strengthening relationships with Student Services, CLL and FAMA will ensure smoother operations as well as more collaborations. I also recommend an easier way to reach volunteers such as a group texting app where they get text message announcements when they're needed. There was some difficulty reaching volunteers via email. Discord worked to a degree but perhaps having students have a Discord orientation webinar would make the application feel less intimidating and approachable. Overall: just making sure DSU always listens to their members and maintains constant contact will help improve trust and relations.



## **OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

### **Arwen Low, Vice-President**

#### **Election Initiatives**

The start of my mandate coincided with the 2021 Federal Elections. As September 15, 2021 was the 15 year anniversary of the Dawson College mass shooting, it was important for the Union to take a stance on the issue of gun control during the elections. Throughout September, I collaborated with gun control advocacy organization PolySeSouvient and spoke in favor of gun control at a press conference they organized. National media organizations\* were present at the conference. In order to increase awareness about the upcoming elections on campus, I collaborated with teachers and administration to organize a debate on climate change and the environment between the candidates for the riding of Ville Marie-Sud-Ouest-Iles-des-Soeurs. For both the Federal and Municipal (November 2021) Elections, I worked with volunteers and the Events Committee to prepare voting information packages and help students register to vote.

#### **CASAQ and General Assembly**

One of my responsibilities as VP of External Affairs is to serve as a voting member at the Coalition of Anglophone Student Associations of Quebec. Our monthly meetings and work primarily focused on sharing events and collaborating on joint political stances. This year, it was the Dawson Student Union's turn to host CASAQ's annual General Assembly. The GA allotted time for networking, speeches from presidents and student insurance provider Student Care, a conversation on the future of CASAQ, following last year's VP of External Affairs' recommendations, discussions between executives who occupy similar roles within different unions. The GA was attended by 60 student leaders, and we received positive feedback from both attendees and the Dawson administration, as this was the first intercollegiate event the DSU had hosted in a while.

#### **Petitions and Social Awareness**

In September, the Union worked with the First People's Center, the Peace Center and other groups at Dawson to mobilize students to attend the march on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. In November, the Student Union and a coalition of departments across the college came together to raise awareness on Bill 2 and collect signatures on a petition against it. The success of this initiative encouraged the use of similar strategies. In February, the Union collected donations for relief in Ukraine by tabling in the Upper and Lower Atrium. Also in February, the Union launched its own petition requesting that the government reinstate the Dawson expansion project. The involvement of the volunteer network has been crucial in collecting signatures on petitions and raising awareness about social issues.



### **External Partnerships**

I co-led an intercollegiate donation campaign with the President of LaSalle College's student association, the AGEL. The student unions of Dawson, LaSalle, Marianopolis and Vanier joined to collect donations to various community aid organizations during December. At Dawson, there was a joint effort between the Green Earth Club to collect winter coats for Resilience Montreal as well as food, clothes and personal products for Chez Doris (these last three types of donations were doubled by the student union). In February, the English Cegeps partnered with the Harvard-based service DataMatch to offer students a light-hearted way to meet one another leading up to Valentine's day, an event which 1468 students participated in.

### **Dawson Expansion**

Near the end of January, the Minister of Education decided to cancel the planned Dawson expansion project, which would have rectified a 20 year space deficit and had been in the works for 7 years. The DSU started a petition to reinstate this project, and we collected almost 20 000 signatures! With help from our administration, the Quebec Community Groups Network, and a few politicians, we visited the National Assembly in Quebec City when the petition was filed. The President and I spoke at a press conference after the question period ended to defend the necessity of maintaining the expansion project.

### **Bill 96**

Throughout my mandate, I have worked with Union executives and multiple groups to address Bill 96. At the start of the year, I worked with CASAQ to write an open letter against Bill 96. As the Bill re-emerged in public dialogue nearing the time of the vote, the Dawson Student Union collaborated with the Quebec Community Groups Network and organizations across Quebec to plan a large protest, scheduled to commence at Dawson and that will be attended by groups impacted by various aspects of the Bill. Inspired by John Abbott College's planned rally, the DSU, as well as other English and bilingual CEGEPs, hosted twin rallies against the bill on May 5th in anticipation of an earlier vote.

### **Recommendations**

Firstly, I recommend that the next VP of External Affairs start up the Socio-political committee at the start of their mandate. This committee will be able to help the VP address any social or political issues that arise over the course of the year, and will thus be able to increase the speed of the Union's response time to such issues. A committee tasked with supporting the Union's responses to potential Bills or unanticipated socio-political events that impact the Dawson student body will also allow the VP to continue to focus on their planned initiatives. In this sense, I also recommend that the VP seek out office volunteers at the start of the year to delegate tasks and increase the productivity of the Office of External Affairs.



Secondly, the next VP of External Affairs should anticipate frequent media requests, and would benefit from media training at the start of the mandate (as would the entire team). This year's executives had the opportunity to receive media training, and this was a great asset.

The functioning of CASAQ could be improved by using a service such as Slack that would allow all of the member unions executives to be in contact with one another, rather than solely the voting members. Additionally, the VP should continue encouraging CASAQ to increase its social and traditional media presence and visibility, as well as collaborate on joint responses to socio-political issues that impact the collective student body.

Collaboration with university student associations proved to be very fruitful when developing a response to the AMF's proposed cancellation of collective insurance. I recommend that the VP of External Affairs continue to build on existing partnerships with university student associations, to ally on certain causes and to potentially host events together. Reaching out to French student associations continuing to increase pre-existing relations with groups such as la FECQ would be an interesting opportunity for the next VP to consider.

I also recommend that the next VP help increase the Union's commitment to local community aid organizations, and bring more services on campus (something which was complicated this year by Covid restrictions).



**OFFICE OF SERVICES & SUSTAINABILITY**  
**Shirin Hinojosa Violante, Vice-President**

**Water bottle ban**

This year the DSU collaborated with the Sustainability department in order to raise awareness and continue the standing ban for plastic water bottles on campus. The Dawson Student Union bought more than 2000 bottles this year to sell to students through the water bottle sale held on April.

**Sustainable Happiness**

The DSU partnered with the Dawson Sustainability department to establish a Sustainable Happiness program at the College. This is done through book club, SH journals, 24hr certificates and facilitator training of two of the execs.

**Sustainable Dawson**

This year I have worked to improve the liaison between the DSU and the sustainability department. We have collaborated throughout the year in various events and activities such as earth week, the expansion plan, Sustainable Happiness, the water bottle ban , workshops, and book club among others. A final end of the year sustainable prom was also put in place.

**Services**

The hive :

This year the hive's expansion took place in order to accommodate and broaden its services to more students and provide them with a safe space where to pump, relax, have important calls or a one-on-one meeting with the hive's employees. Not only the hive's space became broader but the team as well.

Dawson Dinin' :

While this year Dawson Dinin' wasn't active as I would've liked due to Covid-19 restrictions, the last week of classes, the DSU collaborated with CLL in order to create an event to give out free



food for students. As a small parting gift and a reminder that Dawson Dinin' is coming back next fall.

**The Swap :**

A small student store was started to take shape called the swap inside Dawson. A place where we could sale water bottles, the SH journals, used books, etc. Although there wasn't enough time to open it.

**The Vine :**

New student run podcast was implemented this year, the first team was formed, the equipment has been bought, and the recruitment process has been started. The Vine will share a common space alongside the the Plant.

**Recommendations :**

Firstly, I would suggest the next team and more specifically the next VP Sustainability to keep up collaborating with the Dawson Sustainability department. They have a big outreach to the community, a lot of initiatives waiting to happen and are eager to work with the student body, joining forces will create amazing events and initiatives especially now that COVID restrictions are being lifted.

Secondly, I recommend further expansion/development on the current outgoing services. The swap, The plant and Dawson dinin' need further assistance before opening in the fall or winter semester.

Finally, I would recommend doing more free big scale activities to mobilize the students in favor of the environment. This will help more students to get engaged especially after the pandemic.



**OFFICE OF ACADEMICS & ADVOCACY**  
**Mia Scroggins-Hadley, Vice-President**

This past year as Vice President of Academics and Advocacy, I have helped students navigate difficult situations at the college (please note that because my work with individual students is confidential, I cannot go into detail about cases I've worked on).

Because of the pandemic, many students had questions about how COVID-19 would affect their studies. I listened to their worries and provided answers to questions related to safety: symptoms, vaccinations, cleanliness of classrooms and concerns about teachers not following protocols (for example, removing masks during class time). I acted as a mediator and a guide in conflicts involving harassment, racism, homophobia, and other forms of bigotry. I also helped newly immigrated and international students find their footing in a new environment. I chaired meetings of the Student Representatives Caucus, where we discussed student issues such as Academic Grievance and Grade Review processes, the Academic Calendar, admission criteria, equity, academic sectors, and Bylaw 6 (relating to the composition of Senate and student representation). I created a structure for new committees at the college: the Students of Colour Committee, the Indigenous Students Committee, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. After consulting with BIPOC community members and leaders, I proposed this new structure to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment that promotes lively and meaningful participation. They are also the only co-leadership style committees of the DSU. The structure of these committees was deeply researched in order to create a decolonized meeting space for essential exchanges.

Along with VP of Finance, I helped create new student awards. These awards are to recognize the time and effort students put into their studies, communities, and student life. As co-chair of the Student Awards Selection Committee, I've observed this was a big first step in honouring the kindness, perseverance, and generosity of our student body. At meetings of the Senate and of the ISEP committee, I was able to participate in important discussions pertaining to academics and to the college at large.

We were able to fight for a review of the academic grievance and grade review procedures that didn't protect student interests. I was fortunate enough to learn about Sustainable Happiness in a training provided by Sustainable Dawson. Sustainable Happiness is about learning from the



environment, caring for it and for one another, and the interconnectedness of all living things. My work is very interpersonal, and this instruction has informed the way I approach it. The majority of my work has been guiding students through personal and academic issues one on one, directing them to resources and accompanying them however I can. This looks like reading through policies with them, attending meetings with teachers, deans and, on rare occasions, librarians (where questions of academic integrity and research projects are concerned). The most important thing I do in my role is make students feel empowered by an understanding of their rights and recourses when they're faced with challenges.

For the next VP of Academics and Advocacy, I recommend that they hold workshops educating students on their rights and the policies that exist to protect them. It would also be advisable to contribute to organizing large events and mobilization efforts for the student body related to diversity, equity, and inclusion once it is safe to do so in our current pandemic context. Dawson Students need to be empowered by their own voices. I would recommend working more closely with the First Peoples Center. Through training, conferences, consultations, and research, I've learnt that there is so much more the DSU can and should be doing to support Indigenous students. Moreover, this year was big for The Hive and there wasn't much time for collaboration.

The Hive is a tremendous resource to work with as a gender advocacy centre. I can also recommend acquiring identity-related statistics on the student body at Dawson (ex: diversity of languages, religions, LGBTQ identities, etc.). These statistics don't currently exist at the college but could be crucial to acting as evidence supporting the need for new student services. Finally, I implore the next VP to learn about decolonial and social justice frameworks. They should inform and inspire one's work as an advocate.



**OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE**  
**Yimaj Baharun, Vice-President**

**Fall 2021 Plans and Accomplishments**

Coming into the Fall 2021 semester after a full school-year of online learning left the Student Life department with a specifically relevant need to revive Dawson student life activities and the presence of DSU clubs. With this in mind, along with the President (Alexandrah Cardona), VP of Internal Affairs and Operations (Abril Meza), and VP of Sustainability and Services (Shirin Hinojosa Violante), planning commenced for a Frosh Week that would consist of a club fair and other welcoming activities for the student body. While the events went generally well, they were hard for me personally to keep up with as, having had my full first year online, I wasn't as familiar with the school and how things worked (in regards to work orders, where to find departments I might need eg. Security) as other executives were. Something favourable that helped the experience of organising events was working with CLL (Campus Life and Leadership).

In face of my unfamiliarity with the college, CLL aided me greatly in getting accustomed to what was disposable to me and what would work best in terms of event planning. By the end of December, with the help of the volunteer network that Meza had formed during Frosh Week, Meza and I assembled the CEOC, the Campus Events and Operations Committee. With the CEOC, we were able to organise a Halloween Week, Stress-Free Days, and a Geek Week in collaboration with CLL in addition to the Welcome Week, Frosh Week, Climate March (working with the Green Earth Club), and the Indigenous Awareness Week (planned along with the Peace Centre, CLL, and others) that were made before the CEOC. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Athletics department, the Division I Basketball double-header on December 3 was labelled 'DSU Night,' and I got to organise a raffle for attendees. However, due to CEOC dysfunction, a Multicultural Week and an end-of-semester Yule Ball did not end up happening.

Regarding clubs, my inexperience regarding the campus came into play once again: being unfamiliar with the heritage of DSU clubs and club spaces meant that I had to adjust to plenty; moreover, the club spaces were unavailable after having been left abruptly since the pandemic. My unfamiliarity came into play during my first All-Clubs Meeting, which took place on my fourth time on Dawson campus and a relatively early stage in my mandate, as I was facing many club concerns for the first time. However, I was able to adjust and support clubs in adjusting to



the lack of regular club spaces by regularly booking meeting rooms, and I was able to support clubs such as the Film Club in overcoming challenges of figuring out operations as well as club events such as the Legacy's charity basketball game. It was also during this semester that I was able to finalise the Clubs Standing Regulations and have it ratified at the Student Council on November 29.

### **Winter 2022 Plans and Accomplishments**

The winter 2022 semester started with all the concerns of the beginning of the pandemic: with online school, how would active student life be maintained? Luckily, through events such as the online Clubs Fair, Datamatch, and the BLM Montreal Seminar, the presence of student life was maintained online despite restrictions. Upon returning in-person, events were momentarily delayed due to CEOC inaction and inability to come together, at which point I made the decision to advance into planning events on my own: the first of these being the Fashion Without Borders multicultural fashion show, and our most successful event thus far. Since then, the Student Life Department has been working on a graduation party, and working with the Athletics department on stress-free activities.

In regards to clubs, management became more difficult and restrained as the number of clubs grew and as they all aspired to increase activity upon gaining experience. However, clubs such as the Dawson Film Club have been able to continuously organise meetings and events, and with the new reopening of club spaces, club life has started to revive itself.

### **Recommendations**

A recommendation I would give to the next VP of Student Life is to foremost, make a form for room bookings that can be shared with CLL and used accordingly, rather than instead going through a back-and-forth between CLL and each club, as this especially becomes difficult to manage considering class schedules and CLL's own hours. Next would be to organise informative and/or practically useful programming, such as seminars; these can be especially well-organised with support from Law, Society, & Justice or North-South Studies faculty. Finally, my advice would be to express oneself through one's work in events: working with the CEOC and constantly being at odds with members and/or my co-chair did not allow me to organise events that I planned, and as a result the student body missed out. Any disagreements or hindrances on the constitutionally-mandated job of the VP of Student Life should be addressed with the



President and taken care of before they reach the point that they did in my mandate. That being said, the multicultural fashion show was, just as I expected, my most successful event, and had I taken the opportunity, it would have been attempted in the first semester and thus been capable of taking place again, in this case with more attention. Accordingly, I think that while I believe the next VP of Student Life should, as I said, somewhat express themselves through their events, the multicultural fashion show should most definitely happen again.