



2023-2024

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Message from the CBUSU President

Dear Students,

I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits. As the President of our dynamic and vibrant Students' Union, I am thrilled to address each one of you today with a heart full of positivity, gratitude, and boundless enthusiasm.

First and foremost, let me extend my heartfelt gratitude to each student for your unwavering support and trust in our team. Together, we will achieve remarkable milestones and embark on a journey of positive change within our campus community. Your active participation and dedication has been the driving force behind every accomplishment we celebrate today. In times of challenges and uncertainties, it's essential to remember the strength we gain from standing united. This collective spirit is what sets us apart and enables us to overcome any hurdle that may come our way.

Your hopes and dreams matter deeply to us, and we are committed to providing the necessary support and resources to help you achieve them. As your elected representatives, our goal is to enhance your overall student experience, ensuring you have the best environment to thrive academically, professionally, and personally. Our goals and commitments for this year will be outlined in the strategic plan 2023-2024 where we thrive to advocate for quality education, better transportation, enhancing student engagement and bringing a sense of trust and positivity among the student body.

In the upcoming months, we plan to foster a more inclusive environment, one where diverse perspective is celebrated and heard. We will actively work on creating spaces for constructive dialogue, empowering everyone to contribute and be heard.

In conclusion, I am honored to serve as your President, and I am genuinely excited about the path that lies ahead. Let's continue to stand united and empower each other to become the best versions of ourselves.

With warmest regards,



Sahilpreet Singh Chatha
President, Cape Breton University Student's Union

Meet Your CBUSU Executive Team



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CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

Mission

Our sole purpose is to serve the students –
your needs create our goals

The Cape Breton University Students' Union serves as the collective voice of students on and off campus. We strive to ensure the best interest of students is kept in mind with every decision that the university makes – this could be financially, academically, or anything in between.

Vision

The CBU Students' Union is the *official representative* for the students at Cape Breton University.

- We advocate on behalf of students.
- We provide a multitude of services.
- We strive to make life better for students by creating a diverse and inclusive environment.
- We listen to the needs of students.

Core Values

Every action taken by the Students' Union, and every event (both educational and purely entertainment) are embodiments of the core values of our Executive Team. These values provide guidance and tools:

We **ADVOCATE** for student life

We hear and voice the concerns of all Cape Breton University students be it domestic or international and reflect the needs and wants of the student body by providing accurate representation to governing bodies and stakeholders around the goal of making post-secondary education affordable, available and of high quality to all those that want it.

We are **TRANSPARENT** in operation and communication

Through engagement with SRC and students' groups, effective and open communication, consistent office hours, and financial stability, we ensure that students are getting a sense of value for their money, and understand how and why decisions are made within the Union.

We are **INCLUSIVE** and represent the **DIVERSITY** of our Student Body

We create with intention, environments where all people can thrive and be successful. We are enjoying, celebrating, and encouraging the differences in all students.

Key Priorities

Advocacy

One of the main functions of the Students' Union at Cape Breton University is to advocate and voice the concerns of the student body, whether that be to the Administration of the university, external lobbying organizations or other community officials. Our main goals through advocacy are to ensure that students' needs are met, their educational goals can be achieved, the experience of students meets or exceeds their expectations, and that it is always an affordable and inclusive endeavour.

Student Services

The Students' Union offers numerous services to the student body, including the Women's Center, Pride and Ally Center, Multicultural Hub, Ekkian Indigenous Center, Food Bank and more. As the 2023/2024 Student Union Executive team, our goal is to keep these services going strong and expand on them in any way possible. We want to do everything that we can as CBUSU executives to ensure that these Student Union services are accessible to all.

In addition to the pre-existing student services, the 2023/2024 executive has implemented a new executive position of Vice President Student Services and we plan to implement other services such as a Drive-Home program and advocate for a U-Pass.

Transparency

The Students' Union commits to holding monthly town hall style meetings where students' voices will be heard, and on-campus and off-campus concerns are addressed directly. Our goal is to have much more open and practical conversations with students, and we would like to create a trusted and safe space for students to speak up. The relationship and involvement of student bodies are built on trust and accountability, which is pursued by an easily accessible budget and activity publications on our websites/social media pages.

Goals



Re-engaging and enhancing our services



Emphasizing inclusivity, diversity, and positivity.



Strengthening Advocacy



Enhancing and Maintaining Transparency

Goal No. 1

Reengaging and Enhancing Students' Union Services

Legal Assistance

We provide to each of our fee-paying students a one-time appointment with a lawyer free of charge. It includes different services provided by the lawyer for students including notarizing documents, appointments and consultations, immigration queries, tenancy-related issues and rules and regulations related to work and the rights as an employee. Students can send an email to us and we will book their appointments with the lawyer.

Contact us at su_ssc@cbu.ca

For more information visit: cbusu.ca/free-legal-services

Caper Convenience

Caper Convenience is the only store inside the premises of the campus which is owned and operated by the CBU Students' Union. We have a variety of snacks available for students. Considering international students, we also have a variety of options. Also, we have started with some healthy grab-and-go food items for students. The store has extended its hours and is always trying to meet the needs and requirements of students. The store is managed and run by the students. Bus tickets are also available at the store.

Food Bank

Foodbank is a service provided by the Students' Union wherein we help students with food insecurity. No student coming in for foodbank assistance is sent back empty-handed. The food packets are available on a regular cycle to students in need after a record check and filling out a form online an appointment date and time will then be provided. All the data is kept confidential.

Reach out for foodbank assistance at su_foodbank@cbu.ca

For more information visit: cbusu.ca/foodbank

Goal No. 1

Reengaging and Enhancing Students' Union Services (CONT')

Games Room in The Pit

Exams, assignments, and many deadlines may make student life stressful; and as a result, the Students' Union has a place to provide a soothing location specifically for students! This space hosts a variety of games, ranging from old arcade games to Nintendo Switch, as well as group activities including a pool and pingpong table. It is a great way for students to meet up with old friends or meet new ones while taking a break from their academics.

myWellness

myWellness is a primary resource that connects students to mental health and wellness information and support. The knowledge and tools provided by myWellness were created to help students achieve and maintain optimal health so that they can continue to live a productive and positive lifestyle while completing their studies.

myWellness is a virtual service that is available to CBU students 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The program includes stress reduction, helping yourself, helping others, mental health essentials, mental health problems, and care providers/therapies, as well as an online video counselling.

Students can find out more about this service by going to mywellnessplan.ca.

Student Wellness

Student Wellness provides students with free, confidential access to a professional counsellor anytime, anywhere, via phone or Internet. Staffed by a team of highly trained and qualified professionals who are experts in fields such as well-being, family matters, relationships, debt management, employment issues and more.

Students can find out more about this service at studentbenefits.ca/studentwellness.

Goal No. 1

Student Centres

Women's Centre

The CBUSU Women's Centre provides a safe and accessible space, which is welcoming, non-judgmental, and open to self-identified women of all ages and backgrounds. It's an environment where activities, programs, and services are developed by and for women, on and off-campus, in addition to providing feminist resources. The center is operated by a student coordinator and volunteers trained in crisis intervention and women's issues. The center is strictly a referral service and resource center which is completely confidential. In addition to providing one-on-one support, the CBUSU Women's Centre has worked with the CBU Library to offer a wide and varied collection of books, eBooks, journals, and magazines - both academic and popular - focusing on women's interests, issues, and concerns. Within the physical and virtual walls of the library, you'll find resources and information meant to educate, support, challenge, and entertain.

The Centre also offers the Hello Baby program which provides free baby supplies to new or expecting parents on campus. These items include things like diapers, bottles, baby food, formula, clothes, blankets, wipes, or anything else a baby or pregnant mother may need. In the past academic year, we saw 35 students register for the program, and with rising costs of living, we expect our numbers to further increase. It is also important to note that our supplies and program help all students on campus, not just women. We have both mothers and fathers who take part in our program.

For questions, concerns, or virtual consultation, please reach out to the Women's Centre Coordinators at: su_womenscentre@cbu.ca



Goal No. 1

Student Centres (CONT')

Pride & Ally Centre (PAC)

The Pride & Ally Center, located in the Students' Union building, is open to any student who wishes to join a safe and inclusive space on campus. The center is operated by a student coordinator, assistant, and volunteers who assist in making the center as welcoming as possible. The center is strictly a referral service and resource Centre which is completely confidential.

For its students, the PAC provides advocacy, confidentiality, a resource library, referral service, and workshops, as well as events on and off campus for students of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community and Allies.

For questions, concerns, or virtual consultation, please reach out to the Pride & Ally Center Coordinator at su_pac@cbu.ca



Goal No. 1

Student Centres (CONT')

Multicultural Hub

On and off campus, the Multicultural Hub strives to deliver a varied range of cultural events. All students, domestic, indigenous, and international, are welcome at the Multicultural Hub. The center also has a lounge space where students can socialize with other students, or simply relax while watching TV or listening to music.

Throughout the year, a student coordinator and volunteers administer the center.

Please contact the Multicultural Hub Coordinator at su_mhc@cbu.ca with any questions, concerns, or volunteer possibilities.



Goal No. 1

Student Centres (CONT')

Ekkian Indigenous Centre

The Ekkian Indigenous Office helps align the CBUSU's Organizational goals with the "Call to Action" of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015 to spread awareness among the student body on the history and importance of indigenous cultures.

The Ekkian Indigenous Liaison Office works closely with Unamaki College and provides a safe space for students. The office organizes events and activities on and off- campus to spread awareness and appreciation for indigenous culture.

For questions, concerns, or virtual consultation, please reach out to the Ekkian Indigenous coordinator at su_ilo@cbu.ca



Goal No. 1

Reinvigorating Societies

Different departments, schools, and student groups create societies every year. They must get their societies approved on a prior basis and then they get funding from CBU Students' Union for different events. We had 28 active societies last year and have 5 active throughout the summer. We also employ a Society Coordinator who manages and helps societies. We hope to work with various University departments, as well as our own staff to establish a more significant presence of societies on campus.

This year we want to improve many aspects of societies to help drive engagement to reinvigorate our societies and bring them back to being the lifeblood of campus.

Accessibility

We will be looking into the policies surrounding societies to make it easier for students to join and form them. We hope to make the experience less daunting and streamlined to encourage the formation of more societies; bringing them back as an integral part of the student experience.

Visibility

Working with our Societies Coordinator, promotions team, as well as the university, we hope to place our society events and promotional material in more visible and advantageous places to inspire interest in the student body.

Opportunity

We plan to work with various departments and bodies on and off-campus to foster more opportunities for societies to showcase their interests to a wider audience as well as, gain experiences to bolster their resume.

If you are interested in societies reach out to our Societies Coordinator at su_societies@cbu.ca

Goal No. 1

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Except for our 4 full-time staff – Alex MacNeil, General Manager, Dawn MacDougall, Executive Director, Stacey Ryan, Administrative Assistant, Ruth Feng, Caper Convenience Supervisor, and Courtney Jennex, Finance and Operations Assistant– the CBUSU primarily employs students. In doing this, we can put student dollars back into the pocket of our students, in addition to providing the experience of full or part-time employment in their field of interest.

By employing students, we can hold an entirely student-based perspective.

Active job postings can be found at cbusu.ca/jobs

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Union Fee Increase

Every student at CBU, with the exception of MBA students (who must opt-in manually), is a member of the Students' Union by default. With this automatic membership comes a fee attached to every 3-credits taken at CBU. Due to classes being back to in person and students being able to better utilize our services to their fullest potential we felt it was a good time to return our fee to its pre-pandemic rate of \$24.00 (CAD) / 3-credit course, from our 2022/2023 rate of \$22.50 (CAD) / 3-Credit course, this change is set to take place beginning Fall 2023. Within our fee we collect is \$23.00 that goes directly to the Students' Union and the remaining dollar is a fee collected by the union for Caper Radio.

Emergency Bursary Fund

The Emergency Bursary Fund (EBF) A Students' Union service that helps current students through short-term, unforeseen, financial difficulties. The EBF is intended to help students purchase supplies required to complete their courses (such as food or housing) but is not intended to help pay tuition expenses. For more information, or to apply for an emergency bursary through the Students' Union, please visit cbusu.ca/emergency-bursary-fund

Questions regarding the EBF can be directed to Colton Burke, VP Finance & Operations, at su_vpfo@cbu.ca

Goal No. 1

FINANCIAL ISSUES (CONT')

Scholarships & Bursaries

Each year, the Students' Union allocates funding for various scholarships to CBU students demonstrating financial need. These scholarships include:

- **6 CBUSU Future First scholarships** valued at \$1500 each.

In addition to these financial need bursaries, the CBUSU offers the following:

- **Dave White Bursary:** five awards valued at \$1000 each.
- **CBU Students' Union Executive Scholarship:** two scholarships granted annually to an out-of-province student entering full-time direct from high school, based on the highest academic average: valued at \$1250.
- **CBUSU Employee/Volunteer award:** granted by CBUSU for an employee/volunteer each year at graduation., valued at \$1000.
- **Tapiwa Gate Memorial Award:** granted annually by CBUSU at graduation to an international student in memory of Tapiwa Gate from Zimbabwe, who was a BBA student at CBU. Tapiwa lost his life at the young age of 22 and although he was only here with us for a short time, his impact on CBU was immense. This award is presented to express appreciation for the recipient's contributions to the Cape Breton University community through student life activities, leadership, and engagement of fellow international students. Valued at \$1000.

Goal No. 1

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs)

Many students spend hundreds of dollars per semester on textbooks. A focus of this year's Executive team will be access and development of Open Educational Resources (OERs), which are textbooks available free of charge to students. CBU recently allocated \$50,000 to invest in OERs. This year's Executive team would be advocating for an increase in funding while also ensuring that the funds are allocated in a responsible manner and that development could potentially provide an opportunity for student employment. Also, reaching out to faculty to ensure that OERs are being implemented is crucial, we would also like to ensure that those courses are added to the Zero Textbook course list (ZTC).

Goal No. 1

Planning Inclusive and Fun Events

Planning inclusive and fun events is essential for creating memorable experiences that cater to our diverse student body. Whether it is a dance, a festival, celebration, or week-long events; careful planning ensures that everyone feels **included and engaged**.

The first step in planning an inclusive event is to consider the needs and preferences of all participants. This involves taking into account factors such as age, cultural background, and physical abilities. By conducting surveys or engaging in open discussions with potential attendees, organizers can gather valuable insights that will help us tailor the event accordingly.

Another crucial aspect of planning inclusive events is providing accessible facilities and accommodations. This includes ensuring wheelchair accessibility, offering sign language interpreters for the hearing impaired, and providing alternative areas for those who may experience sensory overload. By making these accommodations readily available when possible at our events, we can ensure that everyone can fully participate in the event.

In conclusion, planning inclusive and fun events requires careful consideration of the needs and preferences of all participants. By providing accessible facilities, accommodating various abilities and cultures, and offering diverse entertainment options, organizers can create memorable experiences that are enjoyable for everyone involved.

Goal No. 1

DRIVE HOME PROGRAM

The CBUSU Drive Home Program (DHP) aims to provide a safe and free alternative drive home for students who stay on campus to study during hours when regular CBRM Transit is restricted. The DHP will be operating seven nights a week, ensuring our students' comfort and security while staying on campus late hours, contributing to their well-being and overall experience.

OBJECTIVES

- Enhance the efficiency and reliability of the transportation service.
- Increase the utilization and awareness of the drive-home program.
- Ensure the safety and security of students travelling home during late hours.

DETAILS

- Drive Home project will be rolled in phases with each phase expanding routes and adjusting schedules.
- DHP is available to current CBU Students only.
- All students need to be pre-registered.
- No intoxicated people are permitted in the van.
- All passengers must have a valid CBU ID
- Students will be only driven home to the address they registered with.

BOOKINGS

Bookings will be completed via email

Su_drivehome@cbu.ca

Goal No. 1

Furthermore, incorporating diverse entertainment options and activities helps create an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome. This may involve showcasing different cultural performances or offering a variety of games and interactive experiences suitable for all ages.

Showcasing CBU's Diverse Cultures

Culture Fest will be a vibrant celebration that honours our diverse community and cultures at CBU. Embracing our multi-national cultural heritage, this festival invites students, faculty, and community members to unite in appreciating the beauty of traditions and artistic expressions of multiple cultures.

We aim to showcase our students' diverse traditions, artistic expressions, and the unique identity of our region by incorporating this into CBU's 50th anniversary. By organizing this festival, we promote inclusivity, appreciation, and a sense of belonging among our community members.

Goal No. 2

Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity

One of the main things we aim to encourage on campus is inclusivity. Every person is valued and able to build a sense of identity within the CBU community. We still support providing free personal care items in the restroom and the placement of baby changing stations all over campus. In order to increase their influence, 2SLGBTQ+ advocates in the system record and attendance list, preferred names and pronouns this is accessible via Microsoft Teams, Moodle, and Compass. Recognizing the diversity in our society, CBUSU has continued to expose and promote the distinctiveness and variety of cultures, and nationalities, through our Multicultural Hub, we bridge the gaps between different cultures, genders, and backgrounds. Also activities at the Pride & Ally Centre and work on building awareness of the history and importance of the Indigenous community in our student body through the Ekkian Indigenous Centre and its Indigenous Student Centre Coordinator. We want to increase diversity awareness in the communities where fear of missing out is left behind and finally vanishes as happiness and connections spread throughout the university. Additionally, we will try to host our events in areas that have a gender neutral bathroom and have a quiet place set up during events where someone can get away if they experience sensory issues.

Goal No. 3

Strengthening Advocacy

Advocacy plays a crucial role in the success of the Students' Union. It is the voice that represents the collective interests and concerns of the student body, ensuring their needs are met and their rights are protected. To strengthen a students' union's advocacy, several key strategies can be implemented.

Firstly, **effective communication** is paramount. The Students' Union must establish open channels of communication with its members to understand their needs and concerns better. Regular surveys, town hall meetings, and feedback sessions should be conducted to gather input from students across various disciplines and backgrounds.

Secondly, **collaboration with other student organizations is essential**. By forming alliances with clubs, societies, and interest groups on campus, the Students' Union can amplify its advocacy efforts. This collaboration allows for a broader range of perspectives to be considered when addressing issues affecting the student body.

Thirdly, **building relationships with faculty members and university administrators** is crucial for successful advocacy. By fostering positive relationships with these stakeholders through regular meetings and consultations, the Students' Union can effectively communicate student concerns while also gaining valuable insights into institutional decision-making processes.

Furthermore, **utilizing social media platforms** can greatly enhance advocacy efforts. Engaging in online campaigns can raise awareness about important issues affecting students while also mobilizing support for specific causes or initiatives.

In conclusion, strengthening a students' union's advocacy requires effective communication strategies, collaboration with other student organizations, building relationships with faculty members and administrators as well as utilizing social media platforms. By implementing these strategies diligently, a strong advocate for student rights will emerge within the university community.

Goal No. 3

Strengthening Advocacy (CONT')

Our current big projects for advocacy include:

Advocating for a U-Pass Program to promote accessible transportation and education, and increase student wellness. All full-time Cape Breton University students will be automatically given a U Pass—full, unlimited access to Cape Breton Transit services for the duration of the academic year.

This convenient program will help students to get where they need to go, without having to search for parking, maintain a car, and pay for gas. Just think of all that studying you can get done while someone else is at the wheel! Implementation of U-Pass will bring down the cost of bus passes for CBU students to less than one-third of the current cost, making transportation more affordable than ever.

We will also advocate with the University for issues surrounding the International MSI policy. We feel as though International students should not have to wait a year before having access to medical coverage for most health care visits and eligibility for Gaurd.Me Plan B, meaning HUGE SAVINGS!

Goal No. 4

Enhancing & Maintaining Transparency.

The Students' Union is an integral part of any educational institution, serving as the voice and advocate for students. We have a growing emphasis on enhancing transparency with students. Transparency refers to the openness and accessibility of information, allowing students to understand and participate in decision-making processes.

The Students' Union commits to holding monthly town hall-style meetings where students' voices will be heard, and on-campus and off-campus concerns are addressed directly. Our goal is to have much more open and practical conversations with students, and we would like to create a trusted and safe space for students to speak up. The relationship and involvement of student bodies are built on trust and accountability, which is pursued by an easily accessible budget and activity publications of our actions on our website and social media pages.

By enhancing transparency through effective communication strategies, open forums, and financial accountability measures, we will ensure that students have access to information and opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

Measure of Success

1. A successful relationship with CBU and community Officials.
2. Increased financial support for students through scholarships and bursaries.
3. Monthly town hall meetings with students to address concerns, questions, and ideas.
4. The student body feels both comfortable and welcome to not only bring forward any and all concerns to the CBUSU, but also spend time participating in what is offered by the CBUSU.
5. Increased domestic student participation and engagement on campus.
6. Steps towards reconciliation with Indigenous students leading the way.
7. A sense of positivity and pride within the student body.

Thank You!

Whether you are new to the CBU community, nearing graduation, or in the middle of your studies, please remember that the Students' Union is always here to support you. We appreciate and thank you for the time you invested in reading the CBU Students' Union 2023/2024 Strategic Plan for the academic year. We wish you all the best of luck in your studies and happy memories to look back on when you remember your time studying at CBU.

Please feel free to contact us at any time, or come by our offices - you are welcome at any time.

A sincere thank you,
Your 2023/2024 CBUSU Executive Team.