**Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students Questionnaire
DSU 2019 Elections**

The Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) is the faculty society for Dalhousie’s graduate students. There are currently 3538 graduate students enrolled at Dalhousie across 90 Masters programs and 45 PhD programs. Graduate and professional students have specific needs that have historically overlooked. This questionnaire is to provide an opportunity for all candidates to demonstrate how they plan to address graduate student needs.

Please return completed questionnaires to president@dags.ca. The responses will be posted on our website to share with members. **Please return questionnaires before 5pm on Thursday, March 7th to be read at the DAGS AGM (5:30pm, March 7th)**. Late questionnaires will be posted on the website if received before the campaigning deadline. Motions to endorse candidates and Referenda Questions will be brought forward at the AGM.

Candidate Questions

1. What do you see as the top 3 issues for Dalhousie’s graduate and professional students?
	1. High tuition coupled with a lack of decent and fairly compensated employment as well as the decreasing opportunities for funding, grants and scholarships
	2. Food security – Grad students use the food bank at the highest rate compared to other student demographics.
	3. Supervisors/student relations and supports for students who do not have a good relationship as well as mechanisms for redress.
2. How do you plan to engage graduate students to communicate information and get direct student feedback?
	1. It is my main priority as President to pro-actively engage with under-represented groups, including graduate students. Some of the concrete steps I will take include attending DAGS meetings at least monthly and having a seat reserved for graduate students on my new Presidential Working Group, which will provide a direct line of communication to me and, through me, to the University President and other senior admin. I will also make myself available by setting a 2-business day deadline to respond to emails for all executives. Because I also recognize that not all graduate students have the time, capacity, or interest to proactively engage with student union governance, I will be hiring a student on a semester basis to attend graduate student events, talk to graduate students, and prepare a report on graduate student needs and interests that I will present to the Board of Governors. I will also be continuing the DSU survey.
	2. All of the previous commitments hopefully provide an idea of how I will gather grad student feedback on priorities and concerns. As to how I will communicate with students when policy and governance are going to impact them, I will work closely with DAGS on social media and email communications to graduate students. On issues like tuition increases or university policy, I plan to send out emails (written in plain English) to impacted students that explain how the policy will impact them, and what they can do about it.
3. How would you improve the DSU to better serve graduate students?
	1. One seemingly simple but undeniably important problem right now is communication – executives are not responding to their emails in a timely manner, and societies are not getting their disbursements when they should. As President, I commit to timely and open communication with all member groups – including and especially DAGS. I will also look at the types of events that the DSU hosts; many of these currently seem geared for younger students, especially first years, and I would like to make events that are appealing and accessible to everyone. Given that mental health impacts all of us, I will be working both on short term solutions (a nap room in the SUB and a free food calendar) and on systemic solutions (lower tuition, a $15.00 minimum wage at Dal, and building social support networks). Finally, recognizing that graduate students are the biggest users of the DSU food bank, I will increase food bank funding from the DSU with the long-term goal of removing the limit on items that students can take from the Food Bank by working with Feed Nova Scotia.
4. How would you ensure graduate students are a priority for decision makers in Government, Dalhousie University, and the DSU?
	1. One campaign point I have is to get two new seats on Dalhousie’s Board of Governors: one for international students and one for graduate students. I think this is necessary because at the moment these two student groups are relied upon as sources of revenue for the university, without the structure of the institution changing to appropriately address graduate and international student needs. As mentioned previously, I will also present a researched report on grad student needs and priorities to the Board and reserve a grad student seat on my Presidential Working Group.
5. Is there anything else you want to share with Dalhousie’s graduate and professional students?
	1. If you have any questions, email me or text me anytime! You’re all dope!