

ANSUT Strategic Plan - adopted May 19, 2012

MISSION

The Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT) advocates for the quality, accessibility, and academic integrity of Post-Secondary Education; it believes that such education is a right, not a privilege; and it represents its members in maintaining and improving the autonomy and diversity of their individual institutions to those ends.

HISTORY

ANSUT was founded in 1997, following the dissolution of the Nova Scotia Confederation of University Faculty Associations (NSCUFA). By 1999 its membership had expanded to include the academic staff associations of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Francis Xavier University, Université Sainte-Anne, and what was then the University College of Cape Breton. As a result of this increase in membership, the initial provision that ANSUT members would include both academic staff associations and individual members from non-member associations was eliminated. Subsequent applications for membership from the associations of the Atlantic School of Theology, Acadia University, and Saint Mary's University were approved, and in 2001 ANSUT was admitted to membership of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) as an officially recognized provincial association. It currently represents over half the academic staff in the province.

ANSUT maintains a strong commitment to lobby all levels of government in the areas of funding teaching and research activities, allowing the recruitment and retention of highly qualified academic staff. To that end, ANSUT has consistently advocated funding policies that insure Nova Scotia universities will increase their competitiveness as world-class academic institutions. ANSUT, often in association with CAUT, regularly engages in activities such as the organization of workshops on various aspects of working conditions, and supports its member associations in defending their collective agreement rights. The organization also sponsors research projects that advance knowledge of PSE, and is responsible for disseminating all relevant information to its members. Further, ANSUT is committed to working with students and student organizations to promote ways of making post-secondary education both affordable and accessible.

VISION

ANSUT's aim is to provide its member Associations with the strongest possible voice on Post-Secondary Education issues in the province of Nova Scotia, and to advance its mission by engaging the active participation of its members, both individually and institutionally, to achieve that end.

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SWOT SYNOPSIS

Following lengthy discussion by ANSUT Council over the course of the past year, this is a summary of the “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats” identified as most important:

STRENGTHS

- Providing a collective voice for faculty across the province
- Facilitating collective support for individual member institutions
- A membership with a wide range of relevant expertise on PSE issues
- Co-ordination of collective bargaining among member institutions

WEAKNESSES

- A lack of adequate financial and human resources to provide members with effective representation
- Insufficiently broad engagement of membership in ANSUT’s work
- Insufficient communication with the membership regarding ANSUT’s goals and its work toward achieving them
- Relatively low public profile

OPPORTUNITIES

- Broad public support for post-secondary education as an essential social need
- Public concern over erosion in government funding for education
- Evidence of increasing institutional expenditures on administration, as opposed to the core functions of teaching and research
- Public concern over barriers to access created by government funding policies
- Notwithstanding the lack of adequate financial resources identified above, the possession of sufficient financial reserves to facilitate restructuring initiatives

THREATS

- Cuts in government funding leading to diminished full-time faculty complement
- Resultant increases in workload leading to greater difficulty in securing membership involvement and renewal
- Government acceptance of the “too many universities” view, with resultant pressures to amalgamation
- Membership acceptance of an austerity agenda as a given, with a resultant decline in expectations and militancy

GOALS

Strategically, we must close the gap between where ANSUT is and where it wants to be, and define *how* we close that gap. We must clearly define and prioritize our goals so as to communicate with our members more effectively, and pull us together around a single plan for execution. We also need to monitor progress towards achieving our goals, and to this end ANSUT Council must conduct regular review of the Strategic Plan, and adjust the plan, goals, and accompanying initiatives as required. To this end:

1. We will restructure the organization so as to optimize communication, responsiveness, leadership, and member engagement;
2. We will partner with other stakeholders and organizations to better meet the needs and concerns of our membership in accordance with our mission statement; and
3. We will continue to manage our resources with fiscal responsibility and efficiency through a transparent, comprehensive, and accountable process aligned with our Strategic Plan.

Through quality and accuracy of service, both internally and publicly, we will structure ourselves to optimize communication, responsiveness, and leadership.

Defining and Accomplishing Success with Goals (12 Month Objectives):

- internal restructuring within a volunteer model to better define and distribute tasking and new responsibilities.
- increasing member engagement through restructuring to facilitate the delivery of public service information, lobbying, and tactical political action.
- connecting with other stakeholders and organizations to share information and strategize, to forge alliances, and to partner in action.

Defining and Accomplishing Success with Goals (5 Year Objectives):

- establishing ANSUT as the primary voice for the provincial post-secondary education sector
- providing demonstrably improved representation for our membership through restructuring efficiencies, improved member engagement, and strategies for continuity and renewal

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ANSUT Strategic 5-Year Plan				
Year 1 – 2010/11	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 – Sept. '14
↔ Annual Budget and Auditing				
	↔ Workshop 2 (Collective Bargaining)	↔ Workshop 1 (Grievance)	↔ Workshop 2 (Collective Bargaining)	↔ Workshop 1 (Grievance)
↔ Special Workshop (IP, Contract Academic Staff, etc.)				
↔ PSE POLL			↔ PSE POLL	
↔ Research Project on PSE				
↔ Annual meeting of Association Presidents, Senior Grievance Officers & Chief Negotiators with ANSUT Executive				

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Year 1 – 2010/11	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 – Sept. '14
↔ Annual Provincial Lobby Day				
↔ Website/Newsletter/increased ANSUT infrastructure				
	↔ ANSUT Policy Planning meeting			
↔				
		↔ Mid-term Review		↔ Full-term Review

Appendix I

Description of activities listed in 5-year plan

1. Annual Budget and Auditing

ANSUT will present an Annual Budget to be adopted at the Annual General Meeting. ANSUT will have its financial statements audited annually at the conclusion of the fiscal year.

2. Workshops

ANSUT will organize alternating annual workshops on Collective Bargaining and on Grievances. ANSUT will also organize occasional special workshops on topics such as Intellectual Property and Contract Academic Staff. These workshops will continue to draw from our strengths and ability to share information and experience.

3. PSE Poll

In conjunction with its PSE coalition partners ANSUT will contract a polling firm to conduct a poll on post-secondary education every three years. Results from the poll will be shared with ANSUT members and made public. The poll results will continue to provide valuable information for ANSUT's lobby activities.

4. Research Projects on PSE

ANSUT will contract research projects on topics of interest to ANSUT and its members. Results from the research will be shared with ANSUT members and made public.

5. Annual Meeting of Association Presidents, Grievance Officers & Chief Negotiators with ANSUT Executive

ANSUT will organize an annual meeting of the Association Presidents, Grievance Officers & Chief Negotiators with ANSUT Executive. This meeting is to provide an opportunity for associations to network with other associations, share their experience in collective bargaining and grievances, and help the Executive to identify PSE priorities and to coordinate its lobby efforts. This activity will partly answer the need to increase the network capacity of ANSUT and its members.

6. Annual Provincial Lobby Day

ANSUT will organize an Annual Provincial Lobby Day where associations will be invited to send representatives to meet with members of the NS Legislative Assembly representing ridings of their region. This will provide an opportunity for associations to lobby their MLAs on issues that are important to all associations as well as issues that are more specific to their association. This activity will increase the visibility of ANSUT province-wide.

7. Website, Newsletter, ANSUT Infrastructure

The ANSUT website will provide up-to-date information on ANSUT activities and on PSE topics. ANSUT will produce an annual Newsletter to keep its members informed about union activities taking place at each member association. ANSUT will look into the possibility of increasing its infrastructure to allow it to effectively deliver its Strategic Plan. This may include renting permanent office space and the hiring of permanent staff. The Website and the Newsletter will draw from our ability to share and exchange information with a membership that covers all regions of the province. The increase in infrastructure may answer a reported weakness that limits the ability of ANSUT to deliver efficiently its mandate as a lobby association.

8. Mid-term and Full-term Review of Strategic Plan

ANSUT Council will conduct a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan and adapt the Strategic Plan if needed. The review will be shared and communicated to all members. A full-term revision of the Strategic Plan will be conducted at the conclusion of the 5-year cycle.