

the journal

Saint Mary's University's Independent Student Newspaper

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Malaysia is Where It's At
Explore through Samantha's tips on navigating through Malaysia
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How Safe are We On Campus?!

FERDOUS MASHIAT SHARIF

Section Editor

Every year, many international and domestic students travel to different provinces throughout Canada for their university degree, and most freshmen choose university residences as their first home. University residences are said to be safe, but do we know how safe it is to actually live on campus?

At Saint Mary's University, there are three residences: Loyola, Vanier and Rice. Many international and Canadian students from

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The "Non-Accessible" Accessibility Button

NAZIA SAZNEEN

Section Editor

It's a good thing that Saint Mary's University has quite a lot of resources and benefits for individuals with physical and mental disabilities, such as the 1988 Campaign Scholarship for Disabled Students; the ZoomText, Kurzweil and JAWS software applications in the library; the Fred Smithers Centre of Support for Students with Disabilities; and last but not the least, the accessibility button on (almost) every entrance and exit at the

university. That being said, how many of these accessibility buttons are really accessible? It would not take too long for anyone to hunt that out because by the time I had started my second year of studies, I found that not all the buttons actually work.

Taking the Edmund Rice building as the first of many examples, it seems as though the only accessibility buttons that are usable are the ones located at the exit of the main lobby, and the one located in entering the building. Now, the one located at the entrance has been non-functional since forever probably (at least since my arrival to the university in 2016). There are also two at the exit of the Loyola residence building, which are visibly damaged, as well as one on the second floor of the same

building. The damaged one on the second floor is actually supposed to be used as an entryway between the Loyola academic portion of the building and the Loyola residential premises. More importantly, the accessibility button at the bottom floor of the O'Donnell Hennessey Student Centre building (yes, yes, the very building where the Fred Smithers Centre is located in) does not work. It never did, and there are several students, faculty and employees to vouch for that. It is baffling as to why the very building that holds all resources like the Student Health Centre clinic, the Counselling Centre, International Student Centre, Student Employment Centre, SMUSA, and most importantly the Fred Smithers Centre itself – which was solely established to aid and support our disabled university members – doesn't

have functional accessibility buttons. To make matters worse, some of these buttons around campus have been non-functional for years now and it is also confounding as to why Facilities Management has not taken any action for their repairing. Perhaps if SMUSA, or the Fred Smithers Centre employees themselves looked a tad bit further out of their cozy office rooms and showed minimal concern towards the (in)conveniences of students, perhaps all of this would be fixed up by now.

It is slightly difficult to understand how and why such important issues have been and are still being treated with such negligence. We are all born equal, but it is also very important we remember every day that some of us need certain resources at our disposal.

Letter from the Editor



ZAHRA DHUBOW

Editor-in-Chief

Here we go! Our 4th publication. That is definitely a cause for some celebration. Dontchyathink? We've had quite a bit of buzz surrounding our last print publication and especially with regards to our front cover piece on Carol's departure. Oh, and where do I start when referring to the interest surrounding our online elections publication. That stirred quite of bit of engagement and we're incredibly happy about that.

As promised we asked Lawson Morassutti about student criticisms regarding the implementation of gender-neutral bathrooms, and this is what he had to say:

"The reason that the majority of the washrooms changed – five out of the six – were female bathrooms, was because of the cost-effectiveness. In order to change a female washroom into a gender-neutral washroom, we only needed to change the sign outside the washroom and add a lock to the door. Whereas changing a male washroom would include changing the facilities such as removing urinals, etc. This

would have taken much longer to facilitate and the budget to make such changes was not there. This is why it was decided that changing the female washrooms was in the best interest of the initiative. That being said, there was one male washroom changed as it did not have a urinal in it, but had two stalls. This is the one located on the second floor of the Homburg Centre. Furthermore, I understand that only changing the female washrooms limits the number of female-only washrooms on campus and that this poses obstacles for certain students. In saying this, we ask students to be accepting and understanding of the changes as they provide washrooms for students who previously did not have ideal accommodations. The lock on the washroom allows students the privacy they need, regardless of the gender they identify with."

We at The Journal can understand student concerns regarding the implementation of gender-neutral bathroom, but ultimately, we see that the benefits certainly out way any issues that might arise.

Now, with this publication we decided to focus our material solely on on-campus issues. We saw the necessity of honing down on issues surrounding what we could do to improve our university community, as well as the opportunity to highlight some positive things to come out of SMU. All in all, we hope you have a great read! And make sure to check out the website for our April 1st Urinal online publication. Stay studying.

Behind the Scenes

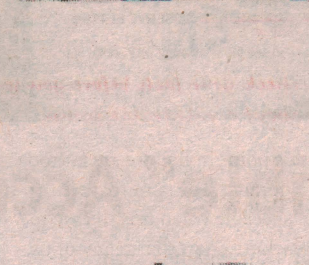
ZAHRA DHUBOW

Editor-in-Chief

That time of the year is coming up and we're on our way to looking for a new set of staff to join The Journal. Now, as the Editor-in-Chief I have to say it's been quite a great couple of months working with these folks! Simone, Mashiat and Nazia have been incredible in brainstorming with me and being the eyes and ears of The Journal. And Beatriz has been a Knightress in shining armour with her countless 3:00am last minute edits for layout. I don't think I would be sane without these gals, so here's a big THANK YOU to them! Honestly, never thought that a group of badass women of colour would ever be the sole makeup of a media outlet (even though it's just an on-campus publication), but we have got to celebrate our successes, right? Even if they seem small to ordinary folk. Anyways, much love to these ladies! And stay tuned, we have a couple more long, sleepless nights to come.



Just your run of the mill bald-headed, snarky, pseudo-intellectual grad student. I'm a connoisseur of great memes and a lover of academia (sometimes).



The worst thing about prison was the Dementors

My passion for writing started at the age of 9, when my dad gifted me a diary and told me "this diary is your best friend." Since then I've made my writings a part of my journey.



*Nap all day.
Sleep all night.
Party never.*

Accountability in the Information Age – Debunking Fake News

SIMONE MUTABAZI

Section Editor

Growing up in the information age is both exciting and exhausting. Just as easily as we can access factual and pertinent information about a variety of topics, we can equally be misinformed and lied to. Welcome to the era of #fakenews. Recently, a post was shared by one of my Facebook friends (soon to be ex-Facebook friend) that reminded me of how easy it is to spread misinformation. This post was not only old but proven to be factually incorrect by several news outlets. If you haven't seen the fake post about refugees being given more money by the Canadian government than old age pensioners, you should thank your lucky stars. Either you are not Facebook friends with people careless enough to share thoughtless posts or they're smart enough to keep their bigotry off social media. This post reminded me of the recklessness with which some people approach social media, and I am tired of it.

First things first: The post about the refugees is OLD, I mean 2015 OLD. Therefore, anyone still posting and circulating it in 2018 is far beyond the reaches of common sense. Here's a general rule to follow: do your research before posting anything that refers to real-world happenings and does not originate from a news outlet. Triangulate. Fact check. Do you understand how irresponsible spreading misinformation is? Especially in the information age, when you can readily have a world and wealth of information available to you at the touch of a fingertip. Another great resource that is free is Google. G-O-O-G-L-E. There is absolutely no excuse to spread misinformation when it is incredibly easy to verify it.

Only in Canada

* It is interesting to know that the federal Government of Canada allows:

A monthly pension of: \$1,890.00 to a simple refugee claimant
plus: 590.00 in social aid

They also are eligible for: **Not true**
\$0

A grand total of: \$2,480.00 monthly
\$29,760.00 annual income - of \$6,960/yr

A refugee receives: \$1,960 below the poverty line a year.

By comparison, the Old Age Pension of a senior citizen who has contributed to the development of Our Beautiful Big Country during 40 or 50 years, CANNOT receive more than:

Amount/Mon Supplement X 12 months
\$12,144.00

IRRELEVANT and Guaranteed Income
Refugee claimants do not receive any money upon arrival. There is NO social aid for refugees.

* Perhaps our senior citizens should ask for the Status of applying for Old Age Pension.

* Let us send this message to as many Canadians as possible, and maybe the allowance of refugees could then be reduced to \$1,012.00, and that of our Canadian pensioners reduced to \$2,470.00 per month (who actually deserve the money that they have been using as income loans for 40 or 50 years).

AN INCREDIBLE NONSENSE !!
OUR CANADIAN SENIORS DESERVE BETTER

ALL PEOPLE should be above the poverty line.

Please circulate this text to see the reaction of your contacts!

...and please check your facts before you spread lies about a vulnerable group.

Secondly, at this point in life, we are far too old to claim ignorance, to claim that we didn't know. Especially when it is so easy to search what we don't know. For many of us, we were taught how to do research projects in high school. Our teachers at least mentioned primary and secondary sources, and they would have told us that Wikipedia was not a citable source. This idea has been reinforced and amplified at the university level. At this level, we should know how to research basic things. We know how to differentiate between credible sources and those not. Beyond this, at this level, we are expected to display and improve our ability to think critically. If you never remember what you learned in first-year biology or macroeconomics, you will at least leave the university possessing some level of critical thinking skills. These skills mean that you can reflect on, discern, and at the very least question the knowledge passed down to you. Perhaps you might even be

Campus Safety...

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different countries and provinces choose one of these residences to explore their safety and comfort. What if I told you that this supposed safety may not actually be the kind of safety we are looking for? I don't disagree with the decision that university and residence authorities choose not to disclose any compromising safety measures in order to keep residents feeling secure. Although, do you actually believe that maintaining current safety precautions are going to be enough to make residents safe? And contrary to what management continually reiterates, visiting counselling or conflict resolution centres won't make that big of a difference!

No matter how much we try to solve or council these issues it seems to be increasing day by day. Either someone's laptop or microwave is stolen, or someone is vandalizing apartment property. And that's not all of it, the level of crime keeps increasing. For instance, there have been reports of harassment, sexual assault, bullying and even murder. When I say murder, I'm referring to Hasan Ali Kheireddine's death. He was supposedly murdered on February 13. Further investigation by Halifax Police is currently underway. A month later, on March the 13th, there were reports of vandalism and harassment on the 6th floor of the Rice Building. It was reported that individuals were throwing potatoes at each other. These individuals have yet to be caught. And unfortunately, because there were no CCTV cameras in the hallways, there was no tracing of any culprits. Instead management opted to use alternative methods, such as monetary rewards, to incentivize people to come forward.

It's important to also look at the lack of current security measures. As a form of protection students can call 911 or the Halifax Police, but if there are no traces of any crime committed, how can anything

proceed? Yes, I acknowledge that students shouldn't have a CCTV in their room, but why aren't any CCTV cameras in the hallways of every floor? I believe that because there are no CCTV cameras on residence, people are more likely to take advantage of this by stealing and vandalizing property. These incidents' increasingly make residents feel unsafe. Inhabitants are getting upset and disturbed, and due to these circumstances, many have already left. That being said, running away from residence won't help in addressing the issue at hand.

Though, there are lots of statistics on these incidents', the university authority is not the only body that can ensure our safety. It's also upon us to ensure the safety and security of our residence. Saying all that, I do see the benefits of living on campus for a student's first year. I would even personally recommend it.

Breaking down the national budget – from a student perspective

ZAHRA DHUBOW

Editor-in-Chief

In picking apart our recently published national budget, I kept asking myself: what is it that students really care about? And, everything that I thought about revolved around money.

Whether that was making money, feeling secure with money, finding a fulfilling job that paid well. Any option really drew back to finances. Current students, recent graduates, and those interested in pursuing post-secondary schooling, are all relatively interested in the condition of the present job market. Skimming through this 300+ document, I found a couple of beneficial components of the budget for students. The government's new budget proposes a couple of interesting developments for increased investment into the creation of summer job placements. They're proposing an investment totalling the amount of 448.5 million, over the course of 5 years. The federal government is also interested in funding and improving job knowledge access. Their objective is to invest about 27.5 million over the course of 5 years to ensure individuals looking for work have increased access to "labour market information."

When it comes to assisting future post-secondary students financially, the government reiterated their investment into the Canada Learning Bond (CLB). This initiative was originally proposed by the Liberal government back in 2004 as a continual contribution towards a low-income family's Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP). It was basically scrapped by the Conservative government in 2006, but the current government hopes to make use of this resource again in order to ensure that children from low-income families have some form of support when they graduate high school and look to pursue further schooling.

A major lacking component of the budget was any talk of increasing monetary support for students going into university to help offset the costs of education. With increasing tuition costs, you would think it would be a priority for the government to somehow strategize to increase federal grants for low-income families. The budget did mention grants for a select group of students, including adults in the workforce returning to school, but nothing in regard to general increases in grants to assist the majority of post-secondary students.

One particular pleasant emphasis by the Liberals

that echoes throughout the national budget, is the emphasis for gender inclusivity in all aspects. Whether there's mention of improvements in education and skills development, economic participation, leadership and democratic engagement, poverty reduction and many other important components of our economy, the government made sure to recognize the need to invest in a gender-based framework. The government even used an analytical tool, known as GBA+, to try and decipher how certain policies implemented may impact genders differently. Seeing that is insurance in knowing that the government is making a priority to see through a certain lens that will affect how certain objectives will be applied nationally. All in all, I think having a quick look through the national budget, which can be found online, is definitely a worthy way to spend your time. Make sure to stay informed!

he's seen a dentist, as the bills were simply non-payable out of pocket, and his university health card was not accepted at that particular dentist. "[The pain] was killing me, and it was seven in the morning. I had no money to pay with and nobody to ask", trauma faced by Jessica, a talented second year student and stage performer who broke her ankle, was denied proper medical attention as her health card was not being accepted at the hospital. Such cases, some more severe than others, have arose innumerable times among many students around campus.

Another issue is the length of time it takes for the money to be reimbursed to the students who have paid out of their pockets. It is understandable that the reimbursement process takes a lot of verifications, and there must also be a long queue of students who need to have their money returned, but the fact that students have already paid this amount out of pocket and now they have to wait a lengthy amount of time just adds to it all. To be ignited by a delay in returning our money is just overdone. Nonetheless, the financial support and coverage we receive from our university should not be overlooked either. Even if the hassle and delays bother us, the benefits of the coverage do make up for it. And rest assured, as SMUSA is in charge of advocating for and against such issues. Hopefully we can put our faith in them and expect it to be resolved. Perhaps? As we are constantly moving forth and trying to make our lives better, both for ourselves and other students, we hope that the sooner someone looks into this the lesser torment it will be for students.

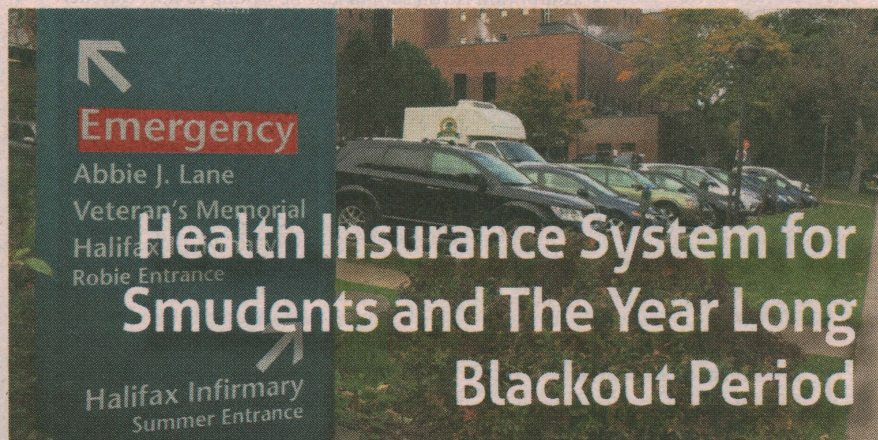
"Blackout Period". The Blackout Period, as defined by healthcare providers in Canada, is the period when hospitals, clinics or pharmacies choose not to accept a student's health card, and requires students to pay upfront. The receipt of payment needs to be taken to the university's Student Health Plan Office and reimbursed to the individual who had obtained the healthcare service. That being said, the Blackout Period is not exactly a period. It lasts almost the entire year and every time a student seeks medical help, they mostly have to end up paying out of pocket. Now, even though the money is reimbursed, most students, at times of acute crisis, do not have the required amount owing in order to receive the healthcare they are seeking – which often results in the individual being excluded from receiving the proper and

"[The pain] was killing me, and it was seven in the morning. I had no money to pay with and nobody to ask"

timely medical attention that they need. For instance, Amr (a 22 year old student), a bright young man attending his senior year, has expressed genuine disappointment over the system as he has had to delay immediate attention towards his dental health. It's been six months since

expenses, as it costs an awful lot to pay for healthcare in Canada. Regardless, it really is great, not to mention the convenience for all students living here. Our coverage extends to health and medical needs, dental, and travel medical. This extended coverage we get from our school covers most of our healthcare requirements, if not all of it.

However, the setback in question is the terms in our insurance known as the,



NAZIA SAZNEEN

Section Editor

The health insurance system for students at Saint Mary's University – or basically any competent educational institution in Canada – is actually pretty convenient, saving students the big bucks, because we all know how expensive healthcare is. You could have something severe going on and it may need immediate medical attention, but without valid health insurance the next thing you may be handed over is a heavy bill of almost a thousand dollars, if not more. Now, as an international student, I know that health coverage saves us a humongous wad of



The Food

The food in Malaysia is known as being some of the best around, largely because of such a great mix of cultures! Indian food is a favourite for many, and you will get very delicious and authentic Indian food here. There are also many options for Chinese food, traditional Malay dishes, and even western food if you're feeling homesick. I tried a little bit of everything, and definitely did not go hungry! Street food is also very popular, but I would advise you to avoid meat and only eat things you can see being made in front of you, rather than things that have been sitting out. Another plus for Muslims who want to visit, is that virtually everything in Malaysia is halal!

It's Affordable

Bussing between cities never cost me more than around \$15, and accommodations are also very affordable, usually in the range of \$10-20 per night, which is pretty on par with many countries in Southeast Asia. This is if you stay in hostels, which I think is the best way to do it especially if you're travelling solo! A lot of activities are often free or very cheap, such as visiting places of worship, local parks and hiking, or cheap day tours around. Of course, the most expensive part of the trip is the flight from Canada, so I've always taken advantage of travelling when I'm there – like when I studied abroad in China, I also visited Thailand!

The Culture

The amazing thing about Malaysia is that it is an incredibly culturally diverse country. Malaysia is about 60% Muslim, and has large populations of Indian and Chinese people, as well as indigenous Malay people. Feeling and seeing this kind of diversity everywhere reminded me of Canada, and I immediately felt more at home already.

One of my most memorable experience in Kuala Lumpur was getting to visit the most famous mosque in the city, which is located where two large rivers converge. Me and my friend actually had to cover up from head to toe to enter the mosque in order to observe the customs. We had an excellent guide who told us all about Islamic culture, and the history of the mosque, which is still actively used today! At the end of our tour, he had to rush in to pray upon hearing the call of the muezzin, and showed us how he prepares to pray by washing himself in the stream. Being able to learn so much more about a culture I didn't know too much about was an amazing experience, and it was so fascinating to meet so many open-minded people who were interested in sharing their stories.

Hi there!

My name is Samantha, and I'm a recent SMU Alum spending a year interning in China. Thanks to a generously long Chinese New Year Break, I was able to recently backpack through Malaysia and learned so much about myself and the world around me. Malaysia is a great place to visit, especially as a solo traveller, and here are the reasons you should make it your next travel destination!

The People

During my time in Kuala Lumpur, or as it's locally referred to, KL, I decided to try couch surfing for the first time! For those that don't know, couchsurfing.com is a website and community where travellers can look for places to stay for free all over the world! The purpose of the community is to promote cultural exchange, and if you stay with hosts, the assumption is you should also be willing to host travellers in your own home when available. It's not just a free bed to sleep in, it's so much more: it's a new friend, new relationships, and a unique way to experience a new city with a local. I stayed with an amazing Malaysian local named Eric, who is 70 years old and hosts many travellers at a time! He is very committed to a co-living lifestyle, and loves to meet people from all over the world and share ideas. I got to meet two fellow Canadians also staying with Eric, as well as a Mexican girl, and we all ended up spending some time together there.

I hope you'll consider visiting Malaysia in the future! It definitely pleasantly surprised me, and was a country I never considered visiting before, but I would already love to head back. If you want to read more about my year living abroad in China, you can check out my blog at samanthaelsewhere.wordpress.com.

Happy travels!



Student Apathy or Communications Failure?

Photo credit to Ashley Blenkhorn

SIMONE MUTABAZI

Section Editor

The 2018/2019 academic year will have 6 fresh faces on the SMUSA Board of Directors. Within SMUSA they have a lot of governing power, this is because they decide on the policies that the organization pursues. In addition to that, the Board oversees risk management, assesses budgets, and monitors the authority of the President.

As the student body, it is easy to feel detached from the daily activities at SMUSA. Beyond Welcome Week and Gorsebrook events, there is a lot more that goes on behind the scenes than most students are aware of. This can feel alienating in certain aspects, especially since a select few students are privy to sensitive information and get to decide on issues that pertain to us all.

Part of it is necessary, sometimes we do not need to know each and every detail of the decisions made by the board. After all, we elect these students to the board with the expectation that they act in our best interests. Another part of it however speaks to the fact that communication could be better. Accountability and transparency are very important in fostering and building good student engagement and healthy relationships between the student body and its student association.

A common sentiment mentioned throughout the election period was that there was a communication gap between the student body and the board. The Board of Directors' forum that took place on February 13th highlighted several things, principal of which was that perhaps information and awareness of the actions and function of the board was not

widely known by the students.

For example, quite a few candidates and perhaps the student body in general are unaware that board meetings were public. Board meetings have always been open to the students, yet few students were aware or even exercised this right. Barring discussions and decisions that are made in camera (not in public view), all topics discussed are available to students on the SMUSA website.

The Board is elected to represent the interests of students, yet very few students know or are made aware of the processes and decisions that govern the Board of Directors. While information is available online, there is no denying the information could be made more accessible. In terms of the Board, information is provided but the students really have to search for this information in order to be aware. This speaks to a need for the lines of communication between the Board and the students to be more open, accessible and transparent.

However, the onus does not fall on the board alone. The student body also needs to take initiative and be more engaged with decisions and policies that are made. For SMUSA to be transparent and accessible to all students, there needs to be a lack of apathy. As the student body, we have the ability to hold the Board accountable, but that power is useless when we do not exercise our rights.

In an interview with current and returning board member, Mitchell Archibald, he expressed the fact that the Board exists to make informed decisions that benefit the students. Therefore, while students may not always be aware of what goes on behind the scenes, much of the work done is there to ensure student wellbeing. However, students do have the ability to challenge decisions made by the Board and speak to policy decisions.

Our Provincial and Federal Lobby Groups – CASA, CFS and StudentNS

ZAHRA DHUBOW

Editor-in-Chief

Tuition, tuition, tuition. Where does one even begin to emphasize this ginormous sum? StudentsNS, a network of post-secondary associations working together to address the concerns of students in Nova Scotia, estimates that on average each Nova Scotian graduate has a debt totaling \$30,200. With an incurrence of debt that is equivalent to a new car, it makes one question what exactly we are doing to help offset these costs and make sure the level of tuition does not incrementally rise every year. On the federal level, student bodies are represented by interest/lobby groups that aim to ultimately advocate for student issues with a predominant interest in addressing tuition.

SMUSA, as well as other student associations, is affiliated with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), an institutional interest/lobby group that aims to work alongside the federal government to develop policies that favour students. CASA represents more than 300,000 students nationally. On the other hand, the Canadian Federation of Students

(CFS), which is well known nationally for mobilizing students, represents 650,000 students. These two student organizations, focus on defending the needs of students through differing frameworks, but ultimately in hopes of acquiring the same objective.

CASA adopts a more round-table approach in lobbying. Which means that CASA chooses to see the government as an entity that will help facilitate student financial needs, therefore their pragmatic approach aims to engage with government officials in helping to come up with alternative to ensure benefits for students. CASA sees that the best way to provide opportunity for students is to create strong relations between policy makers and the student body in hopes that there is an advancement in mutual understanding.

CFS's central aim is to tackle tuition hikes, but also maintains attempts in addressing the multifaceted problems faced by students. On the society website, under the banner "issues", one can see a list of pertinent concerns that range from water rights to sexual violence. CFS believes that it is fundamental to represent all student matters on the federal level, whether or not these issues are associated with tuition. Critics of CFS's manifold approach claim that it is in students' best interest for representative bodies to stick to the issue of tuition as opposed to dividing up the objective in attempts of addressing multiple issues. CFS is also well-known for its highly optimistic goals that include the implementation of public and free post-secondary education. These goals have reflected into active initiatives on student campuses that range anywhere from protests to various social campaigns.

The consciousness raising and more passive aggressive method of CFS versus the pragmatic and balanced method of CASA, really sets a divide amongst student national representatives. Ultimately, both have the same central tenets and objectives, but the approaches are what differentiates them. It would be a great idea for SMUSA to work towards implementing some form of information session about these federal and provincial lobby groups, in order to highlight the and work towards making it a lot clearer for students.

Speaking on his personal experiences as a student, Archibald stated, "as a friend of democracy, as a student, I always like to see other students engaged in the process."

Looking to the next academic year, returning students should be aware of the power they hold as the student body. In addition, student engagement with SMUSA and the board can only lead to better experiences and policies that benefit current and future students. There can be no transparency and accountability if students do not ensure it.



The Price We Pay for Living in Residence

NAZIA SAZNEEN
Section Editor

I've been living in residence for almost two years now and it has been a journey of many highs and lows. The advantages of living on campus seem almost endless. Rain or shine, cold stormy days or warm summer nights, you will remain unfazed because how on earth will any of that get to you? It won't, because there isn't even a necessity to have to step outside much. I feel as though people living in residence are lucky in a sense that they do not have to deal with the harsh mood-swings of Canadian weather. Living here has many other perks too, our residences are supposedly quite secure with most services available during the day and some during the night.

On the other spectrum, many are led to believe that they are more likely to make friends while staying on campus, which can be quite untrue because making friends and staying on campus residence aren't necessarily correlated. The rooms in residence are well furnished and have beds, study tables, and open closet spaces at the very least. Also, by spending theoretically a 'little bit more' cash (in thousands, specifically), you could have a good breakfast and a satisfactory lunch and dinner any time from 7 a.m. till 7 p.m. (presumably because no one should be getting hungry past 7 p.m.), at the

Dockside meal hall. That being said, living on-campus is great (are you sensing sarcasm?! It's convenient and fun...till you realize the amount of money you are actually paying in return for all of these services. All of the conveniences mentioned above are actually just as easily attainable if you're living off campus, but for roughly thousands of dollars less.

As someone who has had the opportunity to look-into and compare the benefits of living on campus versus off campus, it is quite obvious that the cons largely outweigh the pros of living on campus. Sure, it is closer to the university, (realistically, it's in the university). Though, when you calculate the sum of what we pay during the school year for a bedroom, a shared bathroom, and a kitchen (if one's lucky enough to get one), it's outrageous. One could get an entire apartment on a 12 months lease for that amount if not less! Then comes the option of taking a meal plan – which is an 'option' only to students residing in Rice residence (because most of its apartments have a kitchen), whereas students living in Loyola (unless one is living in a senior apartment) and Vanier are mandated to have a meal plan, which is quite costly. If the floors in Vanier and Loyola had one common kitchen in each pod, the 'option' for a meal plan would have been an actual thing.

First and foremost, one should have their own liberty to choose where they want to

eat from and whether they want to eat at the Dockside meal hall, and it shouldn't matter which residence they live in and whether or not there is a kitchen. Secondly, we may or may not have the ability to cook our own meals out of thin air, but that really doesn't matter because we could potentially be assigned to a floor in a residence that has no built-in kitchen. We should not be forced to spend money for a meal plan that serves less-than-ordinary food. It may not be 'our problem', but it becomes our problem when we have to pay an unwillingly extra amount because of the shortcomings of our residence staff. Last but not least, the saddest con is the \$200 we must pay for our stay-over, between the winter and fall semesters. During the winter break, we don't necessarily all have the privilege to go back home, reunite with families, and celebrate Christmas and New Year's holiday. Many international students, like myself, come from countries that are halfway across the world from Canada and not only does it take thousands of dollars to go back home, but it's quite the hassle as well. With majority of students leaving for the holidays, the university gets eerily deserted and it all adds up into an emotional twinge. The Dockside meal hall remains closed till the school reopens in January and until then it's just a bad time for all of us living without a kitchen on campus. Winter blues doubled with not being able to go home to our families for the holidays, and surviving

around 20 days without Dockside, can cause our hands to be tied. In all honesty, it's all pretty awful as it is, but paying \$200 on top of all of that makes matters much worse.

It is hard to tell how far my words will go from here. Maybe nowhere or maybe in the lap of someone who can actually make a difference but in this circumstance, I can say that it's about time we start reconsidering our expenses and the benefits that we are getting in exchange. It is unlikely that much will change or that the rents will ever go down, but there are plenty of other factors that can still be looked into and changed. And any change would still do heaps for all the students living on campus residences.



Spring and Travel Essentials



EUNICE YIDANA

Contributor

Hello lovely SMUdents! I guess by now most of you might know me, but if you do not know me, allow me to re-introduce myself to you. My name is Eunice Yidana, a final year student majoring in International Development Studies, with a minor in French. I am also a Fashion & Lifestyle Blogger at www.chicbeautyinandout.com as well as a YouTuber at "ChicBeauty In & Out TV".

Spring is fast approaching and I bring to you my six must-haves to get you prepared for the season.

- 1) A striped dress or t-shirt.
- 2) Gingham: it comes in shirts, coats, shoes, etc.
- 3) Trench coat: spring comes with rain so get a trench coat to keep you warm.
- 4) Rain boots to keep your feet warm.
- 5) Sweaters: it's still going to be a bit chilly, so just keep the sweaters handy for days that are cold!
- 6) Florals, florals, florals!! Spring and florals walk hand in hand. You can choose to either get them in skirts, tops or dresses.

P.S: spring is also about getting colour blocking items which can range from orange to blue to pink etc.

"Dress effortlessly while staying chic"-
ChicBeauty In & Out

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

We are also in the period where the winter semester is about to be over and people will be planning to travel. To make things easier for you, I've curated some carry-on essentials!

- 1) An up-to date passport: this should be the number one thing that you pack.
- 2) Have a few hundred bucks with you.
- 3) Ear plugs and ear buds: ear plugs are needed when you are taking a plane. Ear buds come in handy when you want to listen to

music or news, etc without disturbing the person sitting next to you.

- 4) An adapter plug: when you're still waiting for your flight, you can at least charge your phone whilst waiting.
- 5) Travel document holder: in order to ensure an organized trip and not try to be looking for things haphazardly, you will definitely need this to keep your passport, boarding pass, itinerary and hotel confirmation.
- 6) Re-sealable plastic bags: keep your liquids (lotion, liquid soap etc) in this.
- 7) Snacks: have some cookies, chips, energy bar or a pack of peanuts if you don't want to pay the overly expensive charges for room service or the minibar. My favourite snack to bring is the Nature Valley granola bar "oats and honey".
- 8) Pain reliever: time differences whilst traveling can cause headaches, talk to your doctor first before you buy any pain reliever.
- 9) Travel sized toothpaste + toothbrush: it's the most forgotten item according to research, so please don't forget to include it.
- 10) Magazines/books: if you love reading like me, then throw in the latest copy of your favourite magazine/books in your bag.
- 11) A pen: most people forget this and then bother their fellow passengers when they are filling their customs and arrival forms. Make sure that you are not one of them.
- 12) Anti-bacterial wipes to the rescue + Nail clipper

If you have any questions, be sure to reach me via chicbeautyinandout@gmail.com and follow me on Instagram (@chicbeauty_inandout & chicbeauty_inandout_tv) and Facebook (ChicBeauty In & Out). Until then, be the change you want to see in the world!

Eunice

Affordable Restaurants, Ideal for a Student-Friendly Budget

EMILY CHIAN

Contributor

Are you a foodie? I am too! There are many great places to eat in Halifax, but sometimes it is hard to enjoy yourself when you are on a budget. Being one of those busy university students who can be a picky eater, let me share with you some of my favorite restaurants to eat in that are both delicious and affordable. Culinary tourism is growing to become one of the most popular trends in the world; thus, I have included international food here. I picked restaurants that leave you feeling like your time there was a memorable experience.

Ko-Doraku

This is my go-to place for a sushi fix. A six-piece plate of California rolls is only \$4.50 and a small salad \$2.50. They have soba (buckwheat noodles), oyakudon (savory chicken and eggs on top of rice), and tempura (deep fried shrimp and veggies). They have a wide variety of truly authentic Japanese dishes for you to try if you just want to sample. Additionally, they sell a variety of snacks and drinks from Japan. The service is quick, the interior is clean and brightly coloured, and the food is delicious. Eating at Ko-Doraku feels like you are suddenly in Japan. It is also one of the most reasonably priced sushi restaurants in the city. Very close to SMU, it is located at a basement on Spring Garden.

5640 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax, NS B3J 1G5

Pho Hoang Minh

Do you crave pho? I do, and I found this place to be the most affordable, with a bowl of chicken pho at only \$10. For those of you who have never ventured into Vietnamese food before, allow me to explain. Pho is a big bowl of pork bone soup and rice noodles with your choice of meat. It is a refreshing blend of flavors with lime juice, bean sprouts, and basil which you put into the meal yourself. If you've never tried pho before, you're missing out. This huge bowl fills you up and it is the perfect comfort food on a rainy day. A special beef pho at Pho Hoang Minh is only \$11, and their rice combos are popular and affordable as well. The trek to Pho Hoang Minh is just over the Macdonald Bridge north of Dartmouth. The trip is worth it.

172 Wyse Rd, Dartmouth, NS B3A 1M6

Ardmore Tea Room

It is no wonder that this vintage-styled diner has been around Halifax since 1958, and quite pleasing that their breakfast is inexpensive and delicious. The food is freshly made, so it arrives piping hot at your table. I love their pancakes, which is served with NS blueberries. A three-piece French toast meal is only 6.69, and grilled cheese is 2.99. They open in the wee hours in the morning, and their breakfast is served all day. They have a lunch menu too, and their infamous breakfast burger is very popular. This place only accepts cash, but there is an ATM next door. Come visit this place for a homemade plate for some low-cost eats at this old-fashioned, quirky little restaurant on Quinpool Road.

6499 Quinpool Rd, Halifax, NS B3L 1B1



What do you think of this list? Excited to try these spots? I hope you get to visit them, and let us know what you think!



Travel While you Earn

LEA DANAE UMUHOZA

Contributor

My name is Lea Danae Umuhoza, and I am a 21 year old hailing from the beautiful country of Rwanda. I have been in Canada for almost four years now and have enjoyed every second of it. That being said, today I want to tell you about an amazing opportunity that you probably have never heard about. I have always enjoyed traveling, going out of my comfort zone, learning new cultures, tasting new foods and making new friends. And thanks to Scotia Personnel, I got to experience all of that and more.

Scotia Personnel is such a great company that granted me a wonderful opportunity. Scotia Personnel is a, "Canadian company which has been in business over thirty years. Scotia Personnel Ltd in conjunction with its overseas partners, provides a spectrum of personnel services, educational

opportunities, job opportunities and cultural exchange opportunities, nationally and/or internationally".

Summer 2017 was one of the best times of my life. I got to work as an English tutor in Turin, Italy where I taught English and planned after-school activities for kids during the week. On the weekends, I would travel around the country and I got to see different cities like Milan and Noli. I even got some time to visit Champs Elysees and the Eiffel Tower in Paris. I was lucky enough to see the beautiful city of Lyon in France. I visited Zurich and Sion in Switzerland and also Brussels in Belgium. To quote Eleanor Roosevelt, "the purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience." Thank you Scotia Personnel for everything. I've made memories that I will always cherish.

If you are reading this and have not had this experience, I would like to encourage you to participate. You will not be disappointed. Check out their website for more information : <https://www.scotia-personnel-ltd.com/>





Photo credit to Ashley Blenkborn

SIMONE MUTABAZI

Section Editor

Blink and you might've missed it, but SMUSA recently held and concluded its annual election. The elections were a relatively quiet process, despite having a higher voter turnout than last year. Six new members were elected to the Board of Directors and current President Osama Nasrallah was re-elected. However, anyone that voted during the elections may have noticed that there were a few key positions missing from the ballots—namely, the 4 Vice-President (VPs) positions that make up the rest of the executive team. This is because SMUSA does not elect Vice-Presidents', but hires them instead. The VPs are selected by a hiring committee made up of the President-elect and other fulltime SMUSA staff.

Why does SMUSA hire VPs instead of electing them?

The answer to that is in their governance model. SMUSA's organizational structure is modelled after policy governance, the tenets of which stipulate that for any given organization, the existence of a Board of Directors determines and spearheads policy objectives. In plain language, the Board of Directors at SMUSA have a lot of power and they decide what policies and goals are

pursued. In our governance model then, the President is responsible for interpreting the policy prescribed by the Board, as well as day to day operations. Where do the VPs fall into all of this? They make up the rest of the executive team with the President and help with the implementation of these policies. Additionally, they each have specific roles and functions within SMUSA as it relates to the student body. Currently, we have 4 Vice-Presidents in the following positions: Academic & Advocacy, Communications, Student Affairs and Equity & Wellness. The full descriptions of their roles are available on the SMUSA website.

Our student association's way of governance differs from Dalhousie, Mount Saint Vincent and Acadia to name a few. Part of this is because SMUSA is an association and not a student union like those mentioned. SMUSA is incorporated separately from the university, therefore, it is not limited in how it approaches governance. The student unions at Dal, MSVU and Acadia all use a Students' Representative Council—this means that all positions of the executive such as the President and Vice-President are all elected.

Furthermore, representative councils ensure that there are elected positions specified for students belonging to each faculty, and then to students of specific identities such as visible minorities, LGBTQ, Disabled etc.

So, why then does SMUSA follow this system of governance, and are we better off hiring our VPs as opposed to electing them? Arguably, SMUSA's model makes for much better governance and ensures that the executive is a skilled, competent and cohesive unit. Alternatively, the selection process of VPs at other universities allows students the opportunity to choose all their representatives. One can argue that students should have the ability to decide who is the most skilled and competent individual for such an important position. Therefore, which system of governance works best and are we better off hiring our Vice-Presidents?

Before SMUSA had policy governance, it also used a Students' Representative Council. President and Vice-President's alike were elected to their positions—and the system did not work. What we often

"[It] speaks to the election of a president. When you choose a candidate, you are voting for their platform, their mandate and their vision. When you vote for a President, you put the trust in that person to create a team to successfully deliver that vision"

ended up with was an executive team that had run on different platforms, therefore getting them to make collective decisions was often a slow and arduous process. It was considered by some to be a popularity contest, and the most qualified people were often not elected to these important positions. If you want the clearest example of this, Dalhousie's recent student council elections harboured some of this sentiment. Some students there expressed that their current model breeds a popularity contest.

SMUSA's system apparently avoids this

issue altogether by hiring their VPs. According to the communications Vice-President, Denis Amirault, our system serves to benefit the student body. "[It] speaks to the election of a president. When you choose a candidate, you are voting for their platform, their mandate and their vision. When you vote for a President, you put the trust in that person to create a team to successfully deliver that vision." Amirault says. By extension, the VPs should complement and contribute meaningfully to the executive team.

Additionally, by hiring the VPs, SMUSA can decide who is best qualified for these positions. Individuals applying for positions on the executive should know what the job entails and have the necessary skills to excel in that position. As for the qualities that are looked for when it comes to hiring a Vice-President, that all depends on an individual's portfolio. Ideally, a VP would be an individual who can carry out their duties and mandate, as well as possessing the requisite background and expertise in that specific area.

Perhaps missing from this is how the Vice-President's are accountable to the student body. Given that they are hired and not under the direct mandate of the Board, it appears the person most able to hold them accountable is the President. However, the Vice-Presidents are still accountable to the student body, given that their jobs are to promote the interests and well-being of the students.

"We're all working together, whether the oversight role of the Board or day to day operations of the executive team. We're all working for the students." Amirault says. While we may not elect our Vice-Presidents, they are still, by and large, accountable to the students. Should the students ever feel like a VP is not performing to the best of their abilities, they do have the means to hold them accountable—either through the President or the Board.

Can there be a conclusive answer as to which system of student governance works best? Perhaps. But suffice it to say, our current system works well for SMUSA.

The Importance of Recycling this Past Election



FERDOUS MASHIAT SHARIF

Section Editor

Mother nature is a best friend in every aspect ever since the earth was created. Since the industrial revolution, we tend to hurt and harm mother nature by throwing wastage and plastics in the river banks, seas, and pretty much in any body of water on earth. Alongside deforestation, we are leaving the forest soulless. Every year this wastage and deforestation continually destroys mother nature's soul. All this is leading towards pollution, and putting aqua wildlife at stake, leading to extinction. This wastage not only creates harm in our oceans, but it pollutes the air putting our earth in danger via global warming. It seems as though annually this wastage leads to millions of dollars in losses. And why is that? Due to our increasing demands. In order to save millions of dollars many companies have adopted recycling and better waste management policies. Many educational institutions have also implemented recycling methods.

At this year's SMUSA election, one of the

Board of Directors' candidates, Azhar Rahman, took the initiative to use recycled paper for his campaign posters. Azhar is a nature loving person who prefers to waste less because he sees the benefits in preserving our earth. One of his main goals is to spread awareness surrounding recycling and stopping wastage. Coming from the beautiful Island Mauritius, he believes that if we don't care about our earth, there's really nothing else to care about. It's interesting because every SMUSA election we tend to hear about a focus on mental health, gender orientation, and many more hot topics, yet we forget that we are also wasting countless amounts of campaign posters and pamphlets. Azhar, who recently got elected as a part of the Board, plans to push for a policy to ensure all campaign posters use recycled paper. With regards to plastic bottles, he added that it would be a good idea to implement a reverse vending machine on campus, where plastic bottles can be fed into a slot in exchange for some pocket change.

Initiatives like this will garner awareness, and overall it might save us big bucks. Though it may be expensive initially, at the end of the day it is beneficial. We wish Azhar Rahman best of luck in his upcoming governance year.

Why You so Complacent ?



ZAHRA DHUBOW

Editor-in-Chief

There's been this odd phenomenon at the University that has seemingly evaded our campus. It's called 'disinterest'. There seems to be disinterest in how the university functions or how anything pans out governance wise with regards to our student association. I know this for one because I used to be quite disinterested and not at all in tune with the workings of any on campus activities, but through effort and friendly coercion from my friends, I had come to realize the importance of being aware of what may indirectly affect one's schooling or time at the university in the long run. This slow creeping complacency on campus, that has managed to plague the student body makes me somewhat weary. I totally sound like a nagging maternal/paternal figure right now, but honestly why don't students care more? At both the BOD Forum and Presidential Debate, I witnessed a lot of misconstruction surrounding the way our governance structure should be directed, and on that same note I also saw the urgency of students vocalizing the need to make a difference on campus, which in particular was quite hopeful to witness.

The attendance at both events were decent, but with a student population of approximately 7,000 you'd think that the numbers in attendance would reflect that.

Frankly, the Presidential debate was on the evening of Valentine's Day and that may explain why it didn't have the robust audience one would hope for, but still one can't help but get a whiff that not a lot of students were actually interested in attending. At both the BOD Forum and Presidential Debate, there was buzz and questions surrounding the need to create stronger relations between students and SMUSA, and as understandable as that is, I'd also like to see someone turn the mic on students and ask them what they're doing to be more engaged. It's so easy to complain and be concerned that SMUSA isn't as accessible, and by all means everyone has that legitimacy, but in terms of students taking leadership to actually do something to learn about SMUSA, in bridging the transparency and accessibility gap, now that's a conversation worth having.

SMUSA is representative of us as a student body and reflects our concerns. The association acts as a liaison between us and the administration and therefore it is most important that we prioritize it as a mechanism to vocalize our opinions and thoughts. So, let's take advantage of that and spearhead a more 'woke' and active student body.

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**Carlton the cat wins
SMUSA Presidency**

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