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# Strategic Communications Plan

Fall 2016

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November 2016

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## Executive Summary

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The Strategic Communications Plan was created with the objective of providing specific communication recommendations to the current scenario (November 2016). The NBSA just launched the Annual Advocacy Document, Post-secondary A Pathway to Prosperity. This is the perfect time to have a strategy on how to communicate the message of the document to reach specific audiences and promote the document. Findings include four sections: audience identification, communication objectives, develop of strategies and vehicles, and a time frame of execution. We are providing four specific communication objectives and a plan on how to achieve each one, as well specific measuring tools on how to measure objective effectiveness.

### Post-secondary: A Pathway to Prosperity

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The New Brunswick Student Alliance presents an annual advocacy document identifying student's priorities and the areas where action is needed. This year's advocacy document includes eight specific policy recommendations. The document shines light on several issues faced as students, such as: the Tuition Access Bursary, under resourcing mental health services for students, financial aid, health care benefits for international students as well as the debt cap. From November 7-10th, MLAs, university representatives, and student leaders from the four campuses the NBSA represents, gathered in Fredericton to discuss this document. The Advocacy Week is NBSA's most important week because they are trying to persuade different stakeholders to take action on the recommendations. The following communications plan seeks to reinforce the efforts of the policy document.

## Mission

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The New Brunswick Student Alliance will conduct effective advocacy informed by evidence-based policy, build relationships with decision-makers in order to advance the collective agenda of its members, and provide opportunities for students to lead its efforts to create an accessible, affordable, high-quality post-secondary education system in New Brunswick.

## Vision

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A post-secondary education system in New Brunswick where any qualified student can attain a high-quality education while enjoying an exceptional quality of life.

## Step One: Audience Identification

1. Government Officials and Politicians
  - a. They are the ones that can generate more impact/changes in the NBSA's efforts.
2. University Representatives
  - a. Can facilitate and pressure government related issues.
3. PSE students (18-24)
  - a. Audience affected by the action and un-action of NBSA efforts
4. General Public
  - a. Society as a whole, including private and public institutions.

## Step Two: Communications Objectives

1. Communication Objective 1
  - a. Target Audience: Government Officials and Politicians
  - b. Desired Action: Extend provincial healthcare to international students in New Brunswick
  - c. Target Date: January 2017
  - d. State Objective: **Inform the public and government about the impact international post-secondary education students make in the province**
2. Communication Objective 2
  - a. Target Audience: Every stakeholder related to the NBSA including but not limited to: Government Officials and Politicians, Students of PSE, and University Authorities.
  - b. Desired Action: Promote the brand of the NBSA
  - c. Target Date: January-April 2017
  - d. State Objective: **Expand our Web Site traffic and improve our online image/presence.**
3. Communication Objective 3
  - a. Target Audience: Every stakeholder related to the NBSA including: Government Officials and Politicians, Students of PSE, and University Authorities.
  - b. Desired Action: Give a face and promote PSE students' presence

- c. Target Date: Starting January-February 2017
- d. State Objective: **Emphasize the presence of PSE students**

#### 4. Communication Objective 4

- a. Target Audience: Government Officials and Politicians
- b. Desired Action: Engage politicians in a discussion about the eight policy recommendations.
- c. Target Date: August 2018
- d. State Objective: **Promote the next 2017 Advocacy Document**

# Step Three: Develop Strategies and Vehicles

## A. Vehicle Selection

From 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest) for the effectiveness of each strategy against the seven criteria.

1. Responsive to Audience: 1 unresponsive, 5 highly responsive
2. Appropriate Relationship: 1 inappropriate, 5 build on our strengths
3. Strategy Affects Perception: 1 emotional, 5 rational
4. Strategy Affects Message: 1 no control over message, 5 we control message
5. Cost to Implement: 1 least expensive, 5 most expensive
6. Impact on Others: 1 no impact on others, 5 allows us to reach other targeted audiences

Strategy	Responsive to audience	Appropriate relationship	Strategy affects perception	Strategy affects message	Effort to implement	Cost to implement	Impact on other audience	Total	Rank order
1	3	5	2	5	5	2	5	27	4th
2	4	4	3	5	4	4	5	29	3rd
3	4	4	4	3	3	3	1	22	1st
4	3	4	5	3	3	5	4	27	2nd
1	3	5	2	5	5	2	5	27	4th

## B. Develop New Strategies, Vehicles and Methods of Evaluation

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- **Communication Objective 1: Inform the public about the impact international post-secondary education students make in the province.**
- Strategy 1: International students video about their impact on NB's economy
  - Vehicles:
    - Video
  - Proposal:
    - Create a thirty second video about one of the recommendations of Postsecondary: A Pathway to Prosperity document promoting the idea of extending provincial healthcare to international students in New Brunswick. The video will include an international student leader, Fernanda Damiani the current STUSU president and NBSA Board Members, talking about the impact of international students in the New Brunswick economy. Some of the possible interesting facts that Fernanda can share are:
      - International PSE students have one of the highest return of investment in the community
      - International students health care range can from \$630 to \$1,392 per year for a single student
      - International students enrolment has grown 80 percent in the last decade in the province
      - International student population in NB represent 13.2% of the post-secondary institution's population
      - International education in Canada is a \$12 billion industry with \$9.3 billion in direct GDP contributions
      - International student's education constitutes 11 percent of Canada's total service exports and 2.2 per-cent in all merchandise exports
      - International education creates 157.700 jobs in Canada
      - Int. students generate \$115.7 million of new spending in New Brunswick and \$55.5 million in labour income with a total of \$180 million in GDP outputs
      - For every dollar invested in international students, they contribute \$1.78 back to the New Brunswick economy.<sup>29</sup>
      - There are three times as many international students in Nova Scotia as there are in New Brunswick.
      - 15-24 constitutes 12.1 percent of New Brunswick's population.

- Provincial health care coverage to international students is provided by the government of:
      - BC
      - Alberta
      - Saskatchewan
      - Manitoba
      - Quebec
      - Newfoundland and Labrador
      - Nova Scotia
    - A second three-minute video will be ready by January 2016. This video will include more facts about the impact of international PSE students. International student leaders from UNBSJ, UNB Fredericton, Mount Allison University and STU will appear on the video.
    - The first 30 second teaser video will be posted on NBSA's social media channels: Facebook, Twitter and our Web Page. We might also incorporate short bios about the life these students and where they come from. Another key message that we would also be persuaded with this video, is how investing on international student recruitment can fix New Brunswick economic and demographic problems. We believe this is a good strategy because videos are proven to be the most effective way of visual persuasion.
    - Government will see the faces of the next generation of New Brunswickers that can make the economy grow again. Using the video, we also want international students to understand they are a part of the New Brunswick community. University representatives will see how important is to work on the retention and investment of international students.
  - Methods of Evaluation:
    - University representatives: Measure if the international PSE student recruitment increases in the province compared to previous year. If possible find information about the investment of international student recruitment throughout the last years.
    - Government Officials and Politicians: See if by the end of next academic year (April 2017) international students have access to provincial health care. Assess if there are any changes in the permanent residence procedure for international students in New Brunswick.
    - Compare data from past years versus current year about international student retention after graduation if possible.

- **Communication Objective 2: Expand our website traffic and improve our online image**
- **Strategy 2: Upgrade in regards of style and increase the amount of content in our website**
  - Vehicles:
    - Website
  - Proposal:
    - Our recommendations are included in the following link <https://book-sadprasad-2zd7.squarespace.com/config/>.
    - We think NBSA's Web Page has a good format but needs more content. We suggest adding more images about PSE students. Using *faces* to make a visual connection about the people that the NBSA represents is important to engage the public in our causes. The content we can use in the Web Page of students can be gathered by asking each student's union media/communications officers. It would be ideal to have pictures of the four different campuses the NBSA represents. Having a section for the "Students of NB" would be ideal. Links and sectors for information about each student's union would facilitate the reader to know more about the unions.
  - Methods of Evaluation:
    - To evaluate the traffic of the website we can use Google Analytics. We believe it is important to use first Google Analytics before the Web Site upgrade project happens. With this data we can compare the numbers with the new ones after doing the website upgrades.
    - Another recommendation to measure our efforts and try to identify which of our target audience visits more our website. We suggest having a small survey question every time a new user access our main Web Page just simply answering what they identify the most: a) Government Official, b) University Representative, c) Post-secondary Student, d) Student Organization, or e) other.
- **Communication Objective 3: Emphasize the presence of PSE students**
- **Strategy 3: Students of NB project**
  - Vehicles:
    - Visual images and visual content

- Proposal
  - Our third proposal includes the launch of the project “Students of NB.” Similar to idea of “Humans of New York/Fredericton,” this project looks to give a face and tell real story about a student. Our proposal is to have one story per week. Each week it would be one different student of a different post-secondary institution. The NBSA represents students from four different campuses. So every week the stories will feature an interesting fact, a short story, anecdote, or say why they want to stay in NB. Our goal with this project is to create a social awareness in the community about who are these students that the NBSA represents. We want society, university faculty and government be engage in the project so all our policies and recommendations have a stronger impact. We want to foster a connection between student and the policy recommendations. The main communication channel for this project is Facebook, but Twitter will also be used to inform new story releases. The NBSA’s Web Page should also have a section dedicated specifically to the “Students of NB” project.
- Method of Evaluation
  - We plan to measure the success of the “Students of NB” project with the overall website upgrade performance. This project should evaluate followers, likes, and shares every two months to measure success and possible growth. After having this project for a while, if possible we suggest using Facebook Insights to create personas and consumers profiles to see what audience is being reached the most.
- **Communication Objective 4: Promote the 2017 Advocacy Document**
- **Strategy 4: Short videos of each recommendation of the new policy document**
  - Vehicles:
    - Video
  - Proposal
    - We propose to carry on with the same idea as the international students health care issue where there is a video with interesting facts about the topic. International students and mental health where the two topics that are more relevant for today’s date, but we think that it would be a great idea to promote the eight recommendations if we create a video for each one. This video can be promoted in all our social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, and our in our website. Our target audiences are all influenced and convinced more effectively through visual representations. Videos grab all of our audiences attention for couple of seconds and are more persuasive.

- We believe this recommendation should be applied for the next 2017 Advocacy Document that is going to be done during the next summer. Having this project ready at the same time the document is being released is key to have a successful promotion of the next policy document.
- Method of Evaluation
  - We can measure the effectiveness of the videos as promotion vehicles by looking if there was an actual change/impact on the policy formation of the eight recommendations.

## Step Four: Time Frame of Execution

**Objective 1: Inform the public about the impact international post-secondary education students make in the province.**

Strategy 1: International Students video about their impact on NB's economy

Due Date	Action/Task	Person Responsible
December 2-4, 2016	Video recording with international students	Book Sadprasid
December 4-5, 2016	Thirty second video	Book Sadprasid
December 5-10, 2016	Video release in social media (Facebook and Twitter)	Robert Burroughs
January 1-15, 2017	Three minute video editing	Book Sadprasid

**Objective 2: Expand Web Site traffic and improve online image**

Strategy 2: Upgrade in regards of style and increase the amount of content in the Web site

Due Date	Action/Task	Person Responsible
January 1-15, 2017	Conduct a Web Page audit	Nahomi Lopez
January 15-22, 2017	Present results and recommendations to the board	Nahomi Lopez
January 22-31, 2017	Implement changes, upgrades, recommendations to the Web Page	Nahomi Lopez
February 10, 2017	Select and upload any content needed (news releases, in the news)	Nahomi Lopez
February 29, 2017	Use Google Analytics to see if the audience has increased	Nahomi Lopez
*on a weekly basis*	Select, upload, change any content needed (news releases, in the news)	Nahomi Lopez
March 20, 2017	Use Google Analytics to see if	Nahomi Lopez

	the audience has increased	
April 20, 2017	Use Google Analytics to see if the audience has increased	Nahomi Lopez

**Objective 3: Emphasize the presence of PSE students**

Strategy: Students of NB Project

Due Date	Action/Task	Person Responsible
January 1-15, 2017	Elaborate a project strategic plan for the Winter 2017 semester	Nahomi Lopez
January 15, 2017	Report/present project to NBSA board	Nahomi Lopez
January 16, 2017	Make any changes/corrections to the plan and contact Comms. Representatives of the four student unions	Nahomi Lopez
January 16-31, 2017	Prepare content for month of February	Nahomi Lopez
February 2017	Prepare content for month of March	Nahomi Lopez
March 2017	Prepare content for month of April	Nahomi Lopez
April 2017	Prepare plan and timeline for next intern and how to carry in with the project	Nahomi Lopez

**Objective 4: Promote the 2017 Advocacy Document**

**Strategy 4: Short videos for each recommendation of the new advocacy document**

Due Date	Action/Task	Person Responsible
TBD September/October	Plan content for the next seven videos of the advocacy document	TBD
TBD	Present to the board the project	TBD
TBD	Make any corrections and started contacting any stakeholder	TBD
TBD	Video recording	TBD