

# Report of the Vice President External of the Dalhousie Computer Science Society, Fall 2009 Semester

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## 1 Summary

This document shall serve as the report of the Vice President External (VPE) of the Dalhousie Computer Science Society (“CS Society”, or simply, “Society”) for the fall 2009 semester. The activities of the VPE focused on external advocacy at the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) as the councilor representing Computer Science students. The VPE sat on the DSU committees for referendum review (RRC), website proposals, and nominations/hiring. The VPE worked actively on referendum policy, the RFP for the new DSU website, and DSU sponsorship policy. The VPE also worked broadly to insure the interests of computer science students were strongly represented at the DSU. The VPE also collaborated with other members of council and members of the Faculty of Computer Science to plan the new university mentorship program, a Dalhousie High School Programming Competition, and a student seminar series.

## 2 Dalhousie Student Union

The bulk of the VPE position is spent dealing with advocacy at the Dalhousie Student Union. This semester was no exception. The VPE sat on the DSU referendum review committee, and actively participated in drafting the new policy for C-level societies, which collect a direct levy from every student (e.g. NSPIRG, CKDU, Dal-OUT). The proposed policy changes would have ensured that Dalhousie students would never go more than 5 years with a say in the fees they pay to these societies. Unsurprisingly, C-level societies near-unanimously rejected the proposed policy, and work on the committee stalled near the end of the term.

The VPE sat on the DSU nominations committee, and participated in the nomination of several posts, including the Executive Director of the DSU Sustainability Office, the DSU Secretary, and several DSU members at large. The VPE emphasized fiscal responsibility and pragmatic, as opposed to idealistic,

decision making when making recommendations as a member of the committee, in order to maximize the value received for the fees paid by CS Students.

The VPE sat on the DSU website committee, which drafted requirements for a new DSU website, and solicited proposals from several external firms. The VPE ensured that the requirements were designed to allow CS students to plausibly submit a bid, and will emphasize fiscal responsibility when considering which proposal to accept in the coming weeks.

The VPE represented the interests of CS students directly to the student union council, emphasizing fiscal responsibility, meritocratic principles, pragmatic policy decisions, and accountability to students.

The VPE developed a network of support within the student union council, and continues to be actively consulted on pending motions to the council, concerns of councilors, and other issues. The VPE has developed a strong working relationship with representatives from graduate studies and engineering in particular. Future holders of the VPE post are advised to continue to foster relationships with these natural allies.

The VPE kept students informed regarding issues at the DSU in a weekly report to the CS Society council, and through 1-on-1 conversations with concerned CS Students.

### **3 Dalhousie High School Programming Competition**

The VPE worked with organizers in the faculty to start a Dalhousie High School Programming Competition, comparable in design to the Saint Mary's University High School Programming Competition. The first competition is planned for the coming winter semester, and would aim to promote Dalhousie as the school of choice for talented Nova Scotian High School Students.

### **4 Student Seminars**

The VPE worked with other members of council and the Dalhousie chapter of the ACM to start organizing student seminars, similar to those held several years ago. Students would present information on topics of interest including, but not limited to, instruction in technical tools (e.g. programming languages, IDE's , Content Management Systems, etc.). Such talks would be open to both undergraduate and graduate students.