

HUCSC STRATEGIC PLAN



2021-2025

INTRODUCTION

The Huron University College Students' Council is a democratic, not-for-profit organization designed, managed, and run by students in order to serve students. In over six decades of operation, the HUCSC has sought to amplify the students' collective voice, build community, and create opportunities for students to cultivate leadership experience. Over the last two years, in the face of the Student Choice Initiative and now in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Council has faced unprecedented challenges that have required us to re-examine what we stand for and adapt our operations to meet the changing needs of the student body. Through these crises, we have come to recognize the necessity of grounding the work we do in a vision that articulates who we are, what we do, and our goals for the future. This will ensure that regardless of the unexpected conditions in which our community may find itself, the HUCSC will uphold consistent priorities and values.

The nature of our constantly-changing leadership makes the HUCSC a structurally dynamic organization with the flexibility to attend to the shifting needs of the student body. This document, HUCSC's first-ever Strategic Plan, is intended to outline our long-term values and goals as an organization. We have created this Plan in order to complement the dynamism of our Council with broad consistency as circumstances and leadership change.

Our Strategic Plan was created in consultation with undergraduate students across Huron's campus. The feedback, ideas, and input of our student body are embedded in this document and thereby inform the direction and operations of the HUCSC. I want to express my gratitude to every student whose voice, time, and effort has shaped this vision; the finished document represents our commitment to you and our promise to place your needs and wants at the core of everything we do. This is the vision of Huron students for their Council, and it is our responsibility to honour it as we continue to represent the student voice, develop community, and create opportunities for our students. Our Strategic Plan will be a tool of transparency and accountability as the HUCSC advocates and innovates on behalf of all Huron undergraduate students.

Special thank you to Nick Davis, Associate to the President, for his hard work through every step of the strategic planning process.

Ziyana Kotadia



HUCSC President 2020-2021



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Huron undergraduate students make up a diverse community, and, as a result, our students have varying relationships with Indigenous land and have benefited from the colonial process in different ways. We recognize that the diverse experiences of our community have informed our understanding of how we learn in a Westernized space on Huron's campus. In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that our campus at Huron University College is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenapeewak, and Attawandaron peoples, all of whom have long-standing relationships to the land of Southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The First Nations communities of our local area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation.

With this, we respect the long-standing relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers of these spaces. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous peoples endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and reconciling miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.



OUR ROLE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Huron University College Students' Council (HUCSC) strives to enhance the educational experience and quality of life for all students in the Huron University College community. The HUCSC achieves these ends by organizing transparently and democratically, advocating on behalf of students in all areas affecting the student experience, supporting engaging programming and student initiatives, providing meaningful involvement and development opportunities and seeking to ensure that the student voice and input are the basis of all endeavors.

WHAT WE DO

In order to carry out our mission statement, the HUCSC has identified three broad areas of focus:

1. We amplify the collective student voice through advocacy on student issues, concerns, and priorities to Huron administration, faculty, and other community stakeholders.
2. We provide programming to students in the form of social and academic events, as well as services like our clubs system, intramurals, and the Beaver Dam.
3. We create opportunities for our students through service-learning, leadership development, and meaningful involvement in the Huron community.

VALUES & CALLS TO ACTION

We are connected as a student community by certain shared beliefs and intentions. This section articulates what values are central to the work of the HUCSC and how we should operate as student leaders. It is idealistic and serves as a call to action. Rather than focussing on buzzwords and vague promises, we demonstrate our values through action in the real world. This list attempts first to describe and guide the principles under which action takes shape, and then articulate a related area we are committed to focussing on and improving at.



PLURALISM

WE VALUE PLURALISM

Our organization values pluralism – the ethic of respecting diversity. Beyond merely recognizing and celebrating our differences, we believe in the importance of active engagement with diversity. The Huron undergraduate student body is made up of a diverse collection of voices and a variety of unique identities, and, as a result, our students have different lived experiences and needs. Our unique identities and experiences create opportunities for us to learn from one another. While we strive to create an inclusive community, we also acknowledge the colonial underpinnings of our campus and the structural barriers that disproportionately disadvantage marginalized communities at Huron and beyond. We strive to dismantle discriminatory systems of oppression and work towards decolonizing our campus.

CALL TO ACTION: INCLUDE EVERYONE

One of the most transformational aspects of a university education is exposure to new ways of seeing the world. Nothing encourages this more than encountering peers of different identities, backgrounds, and cultures within a diverse student community. However, when we do not engage with differing beliefs and experiences in the spirit of respect and open mindedness, harm and division can surface. We commit to addressing all forms of discrimination faced by our students and working to eliminate hate in all its forms. We must amplify the voices of marginalized groups in our community and work to make our campus a safe space for each member of our community. We must apply an intersectional lens to all programming we offer and advocacy priorities we pursue. We must fully engage with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and respect different cultures and ways of knowing. Finally, we must re-examine our own positionalities as student leaders and of our organization as a whole.



COMMUNITY

WE VALUE COMMUNITY

As students of a small university, we are bound by our shared experiences. There is no right way to be a Huron student, but from social events, yearly traditions, and academic study, there is a bond we all share. The identity that connects us as students is unique and represents lifelong opportunities for friendship, learning, and growth. At the HUCSC, we place this community at the centre of our work and recognize our duty to help facilitate the strength of our student culture. Ultimately, our organization is composed of students who want to connect with others and give back to a community that has already provided us so much.

CALL TO ACTION: ENABLE CONNECTION

As Huron continues to develop as an institution, it will be both increasingly challenging and increasingly essential to maintain the strength and cohesiveness of our community. We have a central role to play in establishing the student culture of Huron, not just through organizing events and services but also cultivating a space for new relationships and connections to form. In light of this, there are several things we must commit to in order to deliver an accessible and united student experience. First and foremost, it is important that we strive to maintain the connections and relationships that make our community great and improve them wherever possible. We must continue to provide high-quality events that enable group belonging and maintain traditions central to our identity. We must work to increase our organization's financial and organizational sustainability and reduce our environmental impacts so that the Huron community can have the same ability to flourish in the future as it does today. With this in mind, we must also be adaptable in handling changes to our university experience and the student body. As demographics shift, we must work to reduce the social gaps between international and domestic students and integrate this into how student leaders are trained, what events we implement, and how we approach diversity at a structural level. We must work to facilitate better relationships clubs to expose students to new people and ideas. Internally, we must foster better communication and cross-portfolio collaboration and provide more mentorship and social connection opportunities between our members.



BOLDNESS

WE VALUE BOLDNESS

Huron attracts young people who take initiative and are passionate about creating change. We reflect this through operating with boldness and authenticity in our work. We take clear and proactive stances on issues that matter to students and are willing to challenge conventional norms or systems to best serve students. We seek to set an example for other organizations and fiercely protect the interests of our students. We are driven to realize the university experience we desire and to challenge unjust, undemocratic, or unsustainable practices.

CALL TO ACTION: PRIORITIZE ADVOCACY

As students ourselves, we are best positioned to be able to understand and articulate the needs of the Huron student body. This places advocacy as a central facet of our work and is one of the characteristics that sets our organization apart from other student teams. As the world rapidly changes, it is key that our organization remains connected and observant of student desires and responds quickly to meet student needs. In executing this, we must work to foster strong and collaborative relationships with relevant parties, including Huron University College administrators, Western and Affiliate College students' councils, and other community stakeholders. We must strive to represent the voices of our students to the best of our abilities and communicate clearly and frequently to external groups. We must foster relationships of reciprocity and support with other groups, but never lose sight of the fact that our commitment is first and foremost to Huron students. When outside groups interfere with what is best for Huron students we must quickly and assertively take action and create firm boundaries. We must also work to communicate about how we are engaging in advocacy-related issues to our fellow students, especially when issues are important to students or pose significant challenges to their lives.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

WE VALUE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through events and opportunities, the HUCSC gives students the ability to set the rules for their environment as they navigate academic and social pathways. Students come to university to improve themselves both as scholars and individuals, and getting involved in student leadership can be one of the most rewarding ways to deliver this personal growth. We provide students with opportunities to challenge their abilities, fund their education, and develop real-world experience, all while making an impact in their community. Through this work, we provide all students at Huron with opportunities to have fun, make powerful memories, and have their voices heard.

CALL TO ACTION: PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

We strive to provide students with opportunities that allow them to bring forth their best. With a rapidly changing job market, students can greatly benefit from opportunities to challenge themselves and expand their capabilities. We must do what we can to enable students to learn leadership skills and gain experience. Within our organization, we strive to provide opportunities that are accessible to all identities and years of study as well as provide guidance that facilitates the development of new skills and competencies. In enabling our members to experience these benefits, we must work to increase member commitment by assigning roles that are clear and which come with sufficient responsibility. Finally, we must support other groups that provide similar opportunities, such as clubs and orientation programs, to maximize the different ways students can engage in personal growth and community engagement.



TRUST

WE VALUE TRUST

As a representative organization, our success depends upon our ability to connect with students and develop relationships of trust and reciprocity. Because of this, we place honesty and integrity at the centre of our work. We listen to the voices of the student body and operate in an adaptable way to reflect this effort. In our day-to-day operations, we communicate how we are acting on this role to students and seek to be as transparent as possible about the work we are doing and why we pursue particular priorities. Our events, positions, and opportunities are designed to allow all students to feel welcome and foster strong and healthy connections.

CALL TO ACTION: MAKE COUNCIL ACCESSIBLE

While we place an emphasis on leadership at the HUCSC, we acknowledge our role is not to represent the interests of the most engaged, social, or academic students at Huron; it is to represent all students. Our job is to give students ownership of our work. We want students to feel that this is their Council because we're here to serve them. In order to ensure students feel connected to our work, we must strive to make the HUCSC as accessible as possible. All of our students, regardless of interests or identities, must feel welcomed and heard. When doing consultation work, we must seek out the opinions of students not typically represented and we must communicate clearly so that there are as few barriers as possible to get involved. We must be accountable for our mistakes and areas of weakness. We are democratic, and our elections must exemplify principles of fair play and legitimacy. As Huron continues to evolve, our success will depend on our ability to allow all types of students to feel encouraged to participate.



COMPASSION

WE VALUE COMPASSION

Throughout the HUCSC and Huron, student leaders continue to step up to make change happen and help positively impact the world around them. In class, we are given the tools to deepen our understanding of the world we live in so that we can better engage as citizens and individuals. Outside of it, we take deliberate action on materializing the world we wish to live in and fostering a culture of compassion. When confronted with new ideas, we seek to understand and learn how we can all work together to build a better university community. As an organization, we seek to be a resource to our student body as they re-envision what it means to be an ethical leader.

CALL TO ACTION: PUT INTENTION INTO ACTION

For many Huron students, our institution's focus on ethical leadership connects at a core level. University equips us with the tools that we need to tackle challenges and engage ethically in our future careers. However, we can't just talk about making the world a better place – we have to act on it. By stepping up as student leaders, we accept a call to action to take advantage of the opportunities we all have to make the world a better place. To meet this challenge, we must bring together all of the values we hold as a Council. We must come together as a community to foster relationships that bring out the best in us and keep us connected. We must treat all people equally and make them feel included. We must speak and act boldly in defence of what is right. We must push ourselves to continually grow and develop as better people. We must work with integrity and show up authentically in our work. And, above all, we must work to leave our university and our world better places than how we found them.





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