

**SAITSA**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

2014 - 2015



**SAITSA'S MISSION**

*A community where students are inspired to learn, lead, and be exceptional.*

**SAITSA'S VISION**

*SAITSA improves the student experience at every opportunity.*

# Introduction

Elections results were in! Our names were announced! We cheered on stage! We were so excited that we jumped right to work with new ideas and passions for our student association and our student body. As the excitement settled and we began to learn our roles and how things operated we began to realize that some things were achievable, and some ideas...well let's call them pipe dreams. When we started hitting a few walls and then a few more obstacles, that is where we first started to realize we had symptoms of what is quoted to be 'the seven most expensive words in business: "We have always done it that way!"' We realized then that it was time to update our strategic direction to better serve our membership.

SAITSA is one of the most successful self-built students' associations for many reasons. The 2014/2015 year was about evaluating our success from the past, keeping the good, and improving upon the weaker areas. Our motivation lied in becoming the most successful students' association and the only way we can define success is by seeing the success of our student membership. So ask yourself, how can SAITSA help me? Now, walk over to your nearest leader to share your idea. My advice after a year in the role, is to have a plan to lead your idea, because ideas are nothing without execution and ownership.

We know that your SAIT education is going to set you up with the technical knowledge and ability to do the work. In today's world, education has become the norm to have and, therefore, you must have additional skills and talents that make you more appealing as a potential candidate. That's where it is up to you to take the extra initiative to get involved and work on your people skills and that's where it is up to SAITSA to supply you with an opportunity to show or grow those areas of your life. It is SAITSA's goal to make it the year of "YOU!" We are here to help you make the best decisions to lead to your success.

Preparedness + Opportunity = Success.

We are forever grateful to the student body for the votes and trust they instilled in us as leaders.

Thank you,



Jared Stock  
SAITSA President 2014/15



# SAITSA's Governance



The SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA) operates under the direction and leadership of the Student Legislative Council (SLC) and the Student Executive Council (SEC); each year SAITSA holds elections to fill the 15 SLC and the 4 SEC positions. SLC and SEC members gain valuable experience during their time as elected officials, and play an integral role in the governance and oversight of the organization.

In the 2014 SLC Elections SAITSA's voter turn-out was 6.64%, and the successful candidates were: Christopher Diaz, Katerina Dulay, Connor Goodfellow, Aaron Kadatz, Jonah Peters, Claudia Siller Vargas, Lisa Sterr, Alysson Torres-Gillett, Jame Vy, Karan Wadhvani



The 2014 General Elections, whereby the four SEC and the six Summer SLC positions were filled, had a voter turn-out of 10.72%. The successful SEC candidates were: President - Jared Stock, VP Academic - Kimmi Nguyen, VP External - Joshua Bettle and VP Student Life - Thao Jenny Nguyen. Successful 2015 Summer SLC candidates were: Peter Guan, Kaitlyn Harris, Mauricio Jimenez, Israel Maya, Suzanne Ngo Likaa, Nitin Parswani.

Each year the SLC and the SEC work together with SAITSA staff to make sure the organization is adhering to its bylaws and best serving its members. In 2014/15 the SLC and SEC developed a three-year strategic plan; SAITSA's strategic plan outlines our goals and targets for the next three years and will help with the transition SAITSA naturally experiences with its governing body every year. In the spirit of transformation and growth, the SLC and SEC decided in 2014/15 to change the name of the governing bodies; from this point forward in SAITSA the SLC will be known as the Board of Directors (BOD) and the SEC will simply be known as the Executive Council (EC).

*SAITSA is a member of two organizations that advocate on issues that affect students; the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) and the Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC). In 2014/15 CASA lobbied the federal government on behalf its members with seven 'asks'; CASA was successful in having five of those 'asks' addressed! Also in the 2014/15 academic year, Mayor Naheed Nenshi came to speak at SAIT; Mayor Nenshi was invited here by SAITSA's Governance & Advocacy department. SAITSA's Executive Council and our Governance & Advocacy department strive to ensure the needs of SAIT students are being addressed and their concerns are being heard not only across campus, but across the country.*

SAITSA encourages our members to get involved in their student government by either running for a position, becoming involved in a fellow student's campaign, or simply just by voting and encouraging others to vote! SAITSA members are welcome to sit-in on BOD (SLC) meetings, simply email [saitsa.info@edu.sait.ca](mailto:saitsa.info@edu.sait.ca) to be placed on the guest list. For more information on SAITSA's governance structure and elections please go to [www.saitsa.com](http://www.saitsa.com).





# SAITSA Services, Clubs, Awards & Programs

## Resource Centre

This office is where the fun happens! Our dedicated and friendly staff support students in a variety of ways; their door is always open and they're happy to answer any question you have. The Resource Centre's main goal is to support students however possible by providing things like free access to emergency food hampers, income tax filing, Good Food Box, and more. The Resource Centre is the heart of SAITSA and strives to provide balance and support for students during their time at SAIT.

Outside of the Resource Centre students can find a job-board that is regularly updated with both on and off-campus postings; SAITSA has many employment opportunities for students at our operations, however, SAITSA also has many volunteer opportunities within the association.

In 2014/15 the Resource Centre organized over 200 volunteers who donated more than 2,850 volunteer hours! SAITSA also provides students with a Campus Safewalk, which is run by volunteers. Safewalk volunteers are provided thorough training and help to make SAIT's campus safer; in 2014/15 Safewalk had 36 volunteers that dedicated 658 hours to helping students feel safe on campus.

While school, work and volunteering are important, life can't be all work and no play, right?! The Resource Centre is the place to go for discounted tickets for Calgary Flames and Stampeders games, student friendly prices for movie passes and Gateway concerts. Love hitting the slopes? The Resource Centre is known to have the cheapest ski-lift tickets in town; 2,798 lift tickets were sold in 2014/15 at the Resource Centre, which saved SAIT students over \$89,800!

Ever find yourself using a microwave on campus? Did you know that SAITSA's Resource Centre manages 39 freely accessible microwaves on campus? Well now you do! Student feedback indicates that the microwaves are highly utilized and appreciated as they provide an option for students to bring their own food to school. Data indicates that SAITSA's microwaves are used over 300,000 times in an academic year; happy re-heating!

From helping students find their way around campus to supporting students in tough times, SAITSA's Resource Centre staff are there for you. Visit them anytime Monday to Friday from 8:30am-4:30pm in MC107. For more information go to [www.saita.com](http://www.saita.com).

## Student Support Centre

Life can throw some tough stuff your way, and if you throw the demands of assignments, essays, group projects and classes into the mix it's no wonder some students may find themselves feeling overwhelmed. SAITSA supports its members in a variety of ways, and our Student Support Centre (SSC) is one of them.

Located in the Senator Burns building, NJ105, the SSC is an inclusive, non-academic space designed for students to gather, socialize and actively participate in initiatives that promote mental health and personal well-being. Students are encouraged to come and go as they please to the SSC; whether it's for five minutes or five hours, all students are welcome. In 2014/15 the SSC served 6,766 students, that's an average drop-in of 845 students a month during the academic year.

In 2014/15 the SSC held a variety of events and programs geared towards supporting the mental and emotional well-being of our members. Some of the activities and events that were organized include: Destress Fest, Pride Night, cooking classes, meditation space, puppy rooms, movie screenings, a caregiver support group and a peer support group.



*SAITSA cares about its members, and going off the advice of our mothers you shouldn't start your day on an empty stomach, right? In 2014/15 the Resource Centre hosted 16 free breakfasts for students!*



*SAITSA hosts a annual Christmas Dinner for Calgary Community Living Society (CCLS); this grassroots association supports those in the community with developmental disabilities. SAITSA provides CCLS with the opportunity for their staff, members and volunteers to all celebrate the special time of year together as a group. SAITSA has hosted this event for over 15 years; we are happy and honored to support the community in this small way.*

SAITSA wants everyone on campus to have an enjoyable and memorable experience while at SAIT; students can participate in events, volunteer their time to help other students who use the SSC, or simply come in and relax.

### **Student Clubs**

SAITSA had a record number of clubs for 2014/15! SAITSA had a total of 65 registered clubs; 31 academic and 34 social, with 241 Club Executives. Clubs are a great way for students to connect with other like-minded individuals and to enhance their experience while at SAIT. One of the most memorable club events of 2014/15 was the Global Passport Toy Drive; **80 toys were collected and donated to charity!**

SAITSA supports its clubs by providing start-up funds and a full-time staff member dedicated to organizing and assisting club executives. In 2014/15 SAITSA provided clubs with **over \$22,000 in total grants**. SAITSA also provides space on campus for clubs to host their meetings and events, AV equipment rentals, and printing - all free of charge! Enhance your experience while being a student at SAIT and join or start up your own club today.

### **Awards**

SAITSA likes to honour those in the SAIT and SAITSA communities who demonstrate excellence and a commitment to making the SAIT student experience a special one. In 2014/15 **SAITSA awarded 36 students a total of \$17,650 in award funds**; in ELECTIONS addition, 10 SAIT instructors, who were nominated by students, were awarded SAITSA Instructor Awards.

Students can apply for awards by filing out a nomination form online at [www.saitsa.com](http://www.saitsa.com), students can also nominate instructors on the website. Amounts for student awards vary from \$300 to \$1,000; each award has different criteria for applying, please see the website for more information.

### **Health & Dental Plan**

For the 2014/15 year, SAITSA members paid \$255 towards their Health and Dental Plan. SAITSA members are automatically enrolled in the SAITSA Health & Dental plan, but are welcome to opt out if they want to or if they have other coverage through a spouse or their parents. The plan includes coverage for a variety of health related products and services including but not limited to: prescription drugs, medical equipment and supplies, dental, vision, and hospital stays. For more information please go to [www.mystudentplan.ca](http://www.mystudentplan.ca).

### **Publications**

SAITSA's newspaper, The Weal, has been in print since 1926 and is the second oldest college newspaper in Alberta. The paper largely serves to focus on student's interests and needs, and strives to keep the SAIT community abreast on issues that affect students. Each year The Weal provides many student-employment opportunities and hires photographers, graphic designers, fact checkers, and writers; Weal employees are affectionately known as 'Wealies' within SAITSA. Distributed weekly across campus and also available online, The Weal is accessible to the SAIT community.

In addition to The Weal, SAITSA prints and distributes a free student handbook, which contains coupons, a calendar, and information on SAITSA; SAITSA also develops a yearbook and makes it available to all students free of charge.

# SAITSA Operations

## **The Gateway**

The Gateway is proudly SAITSA owned and operated, and is a prime destination for SAIT students and guests to eat, drink and see their favorite live acts perform. In 2014/15 SAITSA worked with 150 artists, bands and comics; The Gateway hosted 45 concerts and 25 events such as variety acts and comedy nights.

Known for attracting fantastic Indy-bands and other great acts, The Gateway is regularly nominated by FFWD Weekly's 'Best of Calgary' in the category of 'Best Concert Venue, 500+'. SAITSA wants to make sure our members have a chance to hear these great bands, that's why in 2014/15 SAITSA provided over 5,000 free concert tickets to students! Whether you come to The Gateway to grab a drink, play some pool or watch the game, with daily drink and food specials, live events, and the best patio in Calgary, there is always something worth checking out at The Gateway!

## **The Odyssey Coffeehouse**

The Odyssey offers students, staff and faculty a bright, relaxing atmosphere to enjoy coffee and espresso, specialty drinks, hot breakfast items, paninis, soups, salads, fresh baked goods and more. The Odyssey specializes in offering sustainable options on campus with healthy high-energy, allergen-friendly food items such as: gluten-free, raw, vegan, vegetarian, nut-free, direct trade, and organics.

The Odyssey also has a killer patio, free Wi-Fi, cool artwork, and an eclectic mix of music to help you relax. Keep an eye out for special events such as: regular art shows, singer/songwriter showcases and more!

## **The Station Market & Station Express**

The Station Market and Station Express are the Students' Association's retail outlets on campus. Although we are famous for our \$2 hot dogs, both operations have healthy options and all the essentials at the best prices. Both Market and Express stock all of your big-brand convenience drinks and snacks, and Station Market has hot/cold beverages at their smoothie and cappuccino bar.

Local businesses are supported through both of these operations; fresh food is offered from Peppino's, Vietnam Fortune, Basic Roots, Fresh in the City, Bento Sushi and more! As with The Odyssey, Station Market and Station Express offers sustainable, healthy, high-energy, allergen-friendly food items. Market and Express are great options for student-friendly pricing!

## **SAITSA Seconds**

SAITSA understands and appreciates that textbooks are expensive, which is why we offer students the option of purchasing textbooks at SAITSA Seconds, our second-hand consignment bookstore! SAITSA Seconds is a perfect stop for students looking for cheaper textbook options and for those who are wanting to sell some of their textbooks they don't plan on hanging on to.

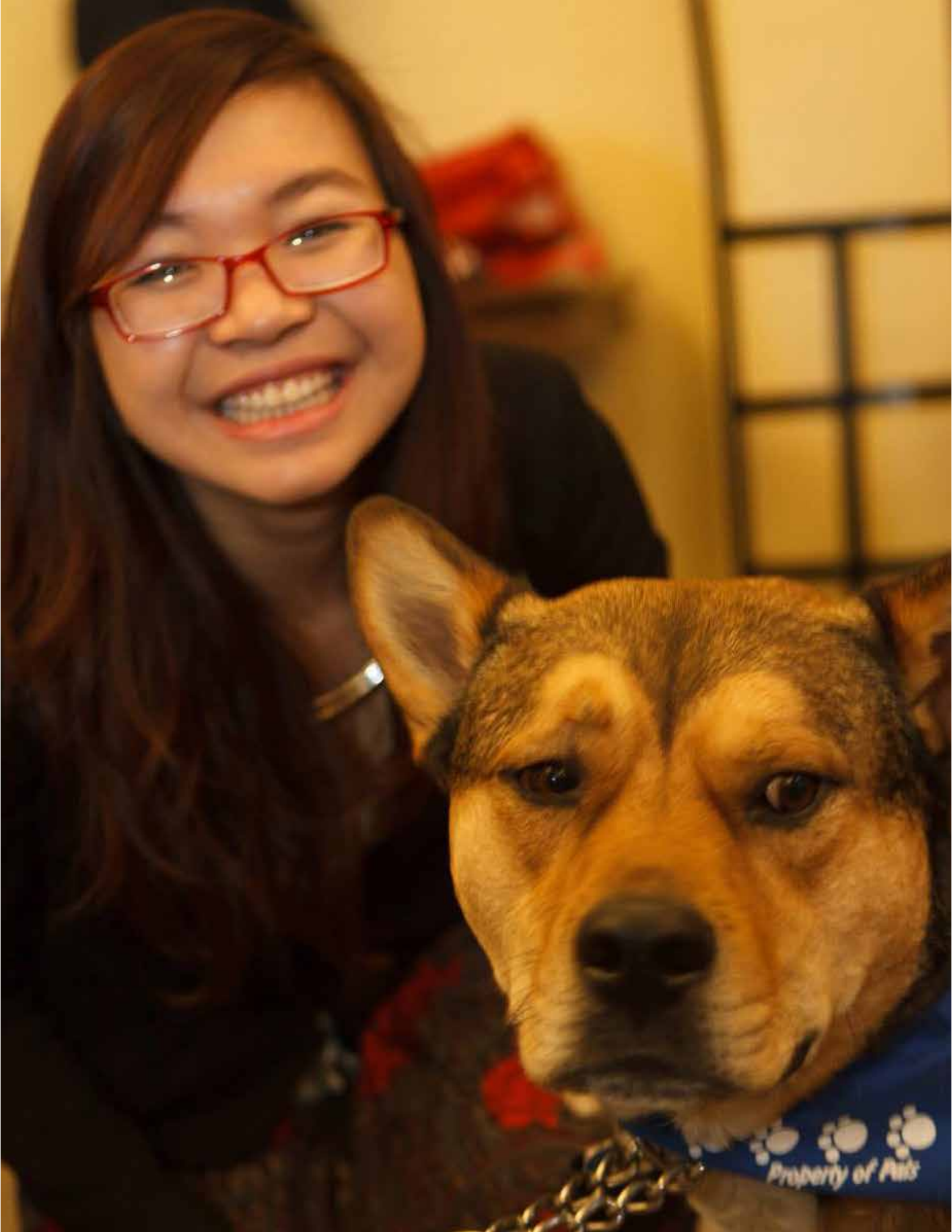
Did you need somewhere to store that mountain of books while you were on campus? If you said 'yes', hopefully you rented a locker from SAITSA Seconds to help ease your burden while you were here in 2014/15; SAITSA is responsible for renting out nearly all the lockers on campus, 8,000 of them!



SAITSA's operations employ upwards of 40 students during the academic year.









## Closing Statement



*Your post-secondary school experience should be about more than just grades and homework; that's what SAITSA is here for! SAITSA's membership fees and revenues from our operations all go towards providing our members with an experience they won't soon forget. We strive to ensure that each and every member feels supported and able to participate in our events, programs, concerts, elections and more. Let us know what you thought of your 2014/15 experience with SAITSA!*

It has been a busy year for all of us here at SAITSA; in response to the dynamic and ever changing needs of our members, we focused our thoughts and efforts on reforming our governance structure and improving our membership services. Our key themes for this past year have been change, transformation, and innovation. Our constant commitment has been to our mission, which is to build a community where students are inspired to learn, lead, and be exceptional. Throughout the year, change took shape due to the strong leadership of your elected student representatives; they asked the question, "what do we need to do to create a brighter future for SAITSA members"?

To answer that question, the Board of Directors undertook the long and arduous process of developing and implementing a new Strategic Plan that identified SAITSA's mission, values and goals based on the current needs of our members. Grounded in comprehensive data collection and research, the Board of Directors identified three goals:

- Connect students with stakeholders: SAITSA will create a pathway of communication between students and their stakeholders by maintaining and facilitating long-term relationships with key individuals and organizations.
- Student Space Expansion: SAITSA will develop and operate a plan for the expansion of student space on campus.
- Organizational Sustainability: SAITSA aims to operate under a social enterprise business plan in order to promote a sustainable organization.

These goals will be the main priorities of our organization over the next three years and were created to enhance the student experience and increase value for our membership. To implement the goals of the strategic plan, SAITSA began transforming our governance and internal operating structure to ensure that our service delivery is inclusive, beneficial, innovative, and that it allows us to be more responsive to the changing needs of our members.

As we move forward into 2015/2016, the first full year of our strategic plan, we look forward to being an innovative association that builds a strong community for its membership by creating beneficial services, and leadership opportunities, as well as making sure the students' voice is heard through its advocacy work. We are committed to remaining a leader in the students' association sector, and will not be satisfied with "good enough" when it comes to the services we provide our membership.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blair McCormick". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Blair McCormick  
Executive Director



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