



BROCK UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan marks the beginning of an exciting new era for Brock University Students' Union. BUSU has long served the needs of Brock students through impactful initiatives such as comprehensive access to healthcare benefits and public transit. Additionally, BUSU offers employment opportunities to hundreds of students on campus, hosts year-round events, and facilitates over 110 clubs.

BUSU has come a long way since its inception in 1970. Throughout its 50-year history, BUSU has grown immensely both in size and responsibilities to the student body. The Strategic Plan offers the next steps to continue BUSU's mission to serve the Brock community.

To determine The Strategic Plan's intentions and goals, BUSU took an honest and holistic look at our organization and identified internal strengths, external realities, and primary constraints. With this information we were able to establish our ultimate vision; to cultivate a generation of students that intently shape our world.

The Strategic Plan will fall in line with our unwavering values of inclusivity, leadership, and accountability. The four pillars of this project are: The Hedgehog Concept, Clock Building, Not Time Telling, 20 Mile March and Preserving the Core while Stimulating Progress. These four concepts will allow BUSU to foster an ever-improving student experience that is transformational, enriching, and empowering in the coming years.

Thank all those involved in making this promising new chapter for BUSU a reality. The Strategic Plan will serve as the foundation for the prosperity and success of BUSU in the coming years. It will ensure that BUSU carries on its legacy as a reputable and effective student union that continues to meet and adapt to the needs of the student body.

Sincerely,
Asad Jalib
2020-21 President
Brock University Students' Union



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A LETTER FROM THE GM

The 2020-2021 year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Brock University Students' Union (BUSU) and the 56th anniversary of having a Student Association on campus.

I am excited that the Brock University Students' Union (BUSU) has developed our first Strategic Plan based on broad-based consultation building on the work of previous executives and staff.

I would like to thank the nearly two-thousand students, faculty, staff and community members that contributed to the development of this document. I would also like to thank Fahd Alhattab and Unicorn Labs for leading BUSU through this process and providing his guidance and insight.

This Strategic Plan provides BUSU with a clear Vision and Mission. The plan also provides five core shared values to live fully each day. Over the next four years our primary focus will be on developing the Brock University Student Experience and on building our internal and external Advocacy efforts.

The Strategic Plan also indicates that BUSU needs to improve Continuity and the BUSU Governance model and BUSU is committed to moving in this direction. The document also calls for BUSU to continue to improve Services and our Businesses, which will be referred to as Social Enterprises moving forward.

We are reminded that we need to march twenty miles each day to build a culture that is welcoming, inclusive and diverse.

Finally, we will build a New 45,000 Square foot Student Centre that will provide the space that students are seeking on campus.

Thank you once again to all those that contributed to this document. I look forward to the next four years!

Sincerely Yours;
Robert Hilson
General Manager
Brock University Students' Union



INTRODUCTION

Brock University is home to over 18,000 students from very diverse backgrounds, coming together to create a vibrant community at the heart of the Niagara region. Brock University Students' Union (BUSU) has been committed to serving this growing population of students since 1964, where it was originally founded as Brock University Students' Association (BUSA).

Founded as a representative body, the duties, responsibilities and challenges of BUSU have continued to evolve with its ever-growing membership. Not without its set of challenges, growing pains and setbacks, BUSU has emerged as a pillar for students in the Brock University ecosystem.

Today, BUSU is home to over 110 student communities and ten food businesses. It offers more than 12 student services, ranging from health and dental plans to universal bus passes and financial aid services. BUSU has become a champion of mental health support and services, propelling Brock University to the top ranks of Maclean's across Canada in mental health services among Comprehensive Universities in 2020. (Maclean's)

BUSU's mandate over the years transformed from one of primarily representing students to one of leadership. The responsibility came to be one that required heavy lifting and work on challenging the status quo. BUSU became a champion of new, innovative, inclusive, and transformative ideas that would reshape the Brock University student experience and once again propel us to the top rankings - #2 to be exact - of Maclean's for student satisfaction in 2020. (Maclean's)

GROWING PAINS

A student union's most significant advantage is the fresh, innovative, and deeply empathetic ideas from student leaders. However, the ever-changing hands of leadership designed a system that rewards reactive, short-term goals that deal with immediate pains but fail to be proactive in shaping our educational institutions' future.

BUSU operated under one General Manager for over 20 years, which allowed for its stability and growth. However, after the General Manager retired, the high turnover in future GM's combined with the helm's annual passing between student executives exasperated to challenges that underpinned BUSU and put the organization in survival mode.

As we look to the future of BUSU, we realize that our rapid transformations have left us without a clear strategic plan that can guide the long-term decision making of our student executives and staff. We need stability and processes that can help weather the storms of change and provide the foundation for creating a phenomenal student experience at Brock.

WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN?

Our 2021 - 2025 Strategic Plan represents our first formal, significant effort to identify a strategic level understanding of the future that lay ahead and how BUSU will pursue future opportunities. A strategic plan will ensure continuity for critical initiatives. It will ensure we consciously create the future versus merely surviving. It will allow us to laser-focus our resources to ensure the maximum impact in high-value areas. It will give us a framework to regularly evaluate, consult stakeholders, and report on.

This BUSU Strategic Plan is intended to cement BUSU's shift into leadership, maintain its excellence in transformative student experiences, and provide a trajectory for the future leaders of our beloved BUSU.

The Strategic Plan describes BUSU's history and its current state, including the challenges and opportunities that this entails. It paints a vision for the future and the tangible reality we are moving toward by outlining BUSU's vision, mission, objectives and guiding values. The strategic plan will lay out the four core concepts—The Hedgehog Concept, Clock Building Not Time Telling, 20 Mile March, and Preserving The Core—with strategic priorities and goals that support each core. All in pursuit of fostering an ever-improving Student Experience that is transformational, enriching, and empowering.

OUR CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Strategic Plan was developed based on conversation and dialogue. Members of the university community—including University administration, BUSU Staff, club executives, undergraduate students and graduate students, and community partners—collectively shared their perspectives about BUSU’s values, strengths, and aspirations. The BUSU Strategic Plan is the work and input of these stakeholders. Since November of 2019, there have been numerous individual consultations, focus groups, surveys, and workshops. This includes:



18 ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



LITERATURE REVIEW AND ORGANIZATIONAL AUDIT



NINE COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE AND FOCUS GROUPS (OVER 72 PARTICIPANTS)



REVIEW OF BUSU’S INTERNAL GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC DOCUMENTATION



1415 BROCK STUDENT PARTICIPANTS IN GENERAL MEMBER STRATEGIC SURVEY



REVIEW OF BROCK UNIVERSITY’S STRATEGIC PLAN 2019. (BROCK UNIVERSITY)



25 BUSU STAFF & BOARD PARTICIPANTS IN VIRTUAL CROWDFUNDING ACTIVITY

OUR CONSULTATION PROCESS

ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATIONS

We conducted 18 one-on-one interviews and consultations.

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Bilal Khan - BUSU President, 2019-20

Heidi Sticko - BUSU VP Student Services, 2019-20

Nivi Sethumadvan - BUSU VP External Affairs, 2019-20

Asad Jalib - BUSU President, 2020-21

Rafay Rehan - BUSU VP Finance and Administration, 2020-21

Raadhiyah Zowmi - BUSU VP Student Services, 2020-21

Alexa Leitch - BUSU VP External Affairs, 2020-21

Robert Hilson - General Manager

Marie Murphy - Director, Finance

Heather McLean - Director, Food & Beverage Operations

Ron Bauman - Senior Manager, Student Engagement

Kate Swiatek - Director, HR & Operations

Jordan Hallawell - Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications

Kayleigh Rossetto – Director, Governance and Advocacy

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Dr. Gervan Fearon - Brock University President and Vice-Chancellor

Christopher Yendt - Graduate Students' Association, Brock University, 2020-21 President

Tom Price - Niagara College Students' Administrative Council, 2020-21 President

Steve Kosh - Niagara College Students' Administrative Council, Executive Director

OUR CONSULTATION PROCESS

ROUND TABLES AND FOCUS GROUPS

Brock University Administration
BUSU Clubs Executive Members
Brock University Students' Administrative Council (BUSAC)
BUSU Full Time Employees
Brock University Students' Union Board of Directors
BUSU Student Executives

GENERAL STUDENT SURVEY

The objective was to validate the hypothesis around BUSU's key challenges and areas of growth, as identified in the stakeholder consultations and workshops. We gathered data according to the following process:

- Brock student participants in general member strategic survey
- 40 questions
- Survey utilized the 5 points Likert Scale
- Paired against staff survey to identifying prospective gaps

OUR CONSULTATION PROCESS

VIRTUAL CROWDFUNDING WORKSHOP

The objective was to prioritize the different areas of interest that emerged from stakeholder conversations regarding the strategic plan. This collaborative virtual crowdfunding platform allowed BUSU staff and Board to essentially place virtual dollars to fund the different projects they believed were most important. This allowed BUSU to add weights and costs to different priorities, creating a sense of real trade-offs, which increases our decision-making ability.

We gathered data according to the following process:

- All BUSU full-time staff and student executives participated
- 25 total participants
- Everyone received a mock \$13,750 to invest in priorities. The value was decided based on 11 priorities in total, and the actual organizational costs required in both time and funds.
- A total of \$317,200 Virtual investments were made through 237 investments as part of the Crowdfunding activity, showed great engagement. The highest funded projects were used as signifiers for prioritization.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

OUR VISION

To cultivate a generation of students that intently shape our world.

The ultimate work of BUSU is the realization of our vision. All our efforts, objectives, and resources aim to foster generations of students with the mindset, skillset, and tools to be transformative global citizens. During their time at Brock and much after, students continue to intently create a positive impact on the world that echoes into future generations.

OUR MISSION

To foster an ever-improving Student Experience that is transformational, enriching, and empowering.

Our singular focus at BUSU is to create the best student experience ever. However, the word best leaves us undefined, so we will instead improve the student experience every day to achieve being the best. The student experience encompasses the personal, social, and educational journey we all go through at Brock.

Our BUSU Student Experience will transform students to be active change-makers in our community. It will enrich their lives through engaging events and programming while providing the necessary resources for empowered advocacy, public involvement, and active participation in internal governance. Lastly, the BUSU Student experience will empower students to pursue personal and professional growth to create life on their terms.

OUR OBJECTIVE

We achieve our mission by:

- Deeply understanding the evolving needs of students
- Enhancing the educational, social, and personal lives of students
- Advocating on behalf of and with students, internally and externally
- Providing resources, services, and support to enrich the student journey
- Fostering welcoming and inclusive student communities

OUR VALUES

We're inclusive. Rely on us to build diverse communities where you belong, with equitable opportunities for everyone.

We are diverse, inclusive, & equitable. We understand that people have unique lived experiences, seeing and thinking about the world through different intersectional lenses. Instead of letting these differences divide us, we embrace and celebrate these differences while providing equitable opportunities. We foster communities that are welcoming and create a deep sense of belonging.

We're fun. Expect us to bring the excitement and show up with enthusiasm every day.

We bring fun to our work, our services, and most of all to our students. Fun isn't the purpose, but joy is integrated into all that we do. We ensure that we show up with enthusiasm and excitement at our work and approach all challenges with that same optimism and energy level.

We're leaders. We set the pace, stand up for what we believe, and won't settle for mediocrity.

We see leadership as the responsibility to operate by principles and push against the status quo. We advocate for what our students need. We don't lower the bar as leaders; we maintain standards and provide coaching and support to meet whatever challenges we may face

We're accountable. Trust us to be transparent and always prioritize the needs of students.

We hold each other rigorously accountable and recognize that tough love is both the hardest and the most important type of love to give. We prioritize students' voices by deeply understanding their needs through our democratically elected officials and data-driven polling.

We're here to do good. We do the right things for the right reasons and uphold the highest of integrity.

We exist to do good in this world. We prioritize impact, and we act with the highest of integrity, and with good reason in our daily work. We do what we say we are going to do and demand that from those around us.

OUR CURRENT STATE

A strategic plan is an opportunity for the BUSU communities, in collaboration with external partners and stakeholders, to set forth a vision for the future. We must develop strategies with the full awareness of all of our current and future challenges.

While BUSU has seen numerous successes over the years, it did not go without strife. Challenges faced by staff, executives and board members. Some remain within the daily workings of the organization, and some became public affairs. We understand that we must face our shortfalls to create a plan that truly prepares us for what is to come.

The factors below include challenges faced internally by BUSU and environmental challenges facing Brock as a whole:

INTERNAL STRENGTHS

Highly Active Student Events & Programming

Our focus at BUSU over the last five years has been about providing high quality and high numbers of events for its students. From the Fall Orientation Week to trivia nights, events held a significant role in the BUSU strategy. Of the students who completed the BUSU General Member Survey, 35.29% had attended 6+ BUSU events in the academic year, and the majority of the remaining attended 1 - 5 events. With a collective engagement and satisfactory score of (4/5). Student engagement has always been a pillar of BUSU, and events and programming were the primary vehicles in achieving that.

Strong Brand Awareness

A vibrant marketing strategy has strongly supported our high student engagement efforts in events and programming. Recent digital marketing investments have created a robust online presence and have put brand awareness at an all-time high. However, our students may not fully grasp the complexities of BUSU, the understanding of who and what we do have tremendously grown. Survey results showed students scoring (4.2/5) for BUSU having a strong brand on campus. From reaching over 10,000 students in followers on Instagram to running full online events and competitions that garner the entire student community's attention, our BUSU brand and marketing vehicles have become a pillar in our student engagement strategy.

OUR CURRENT STATE

EXTERNAL REALITIES

Technological Change

As outlined in the Brock University Strategic Plan, students entering university today are part of the first generation of learners who have always viewed the internet and information technology as a given component of their learning experience. This technological shift provides ample opportunities to rethink student engagement as blended art between the in-person and online communities. Like other student unions, BUSU must see the online technologies and platforms as a tool that plays a fundamental role in the social, personal, and educational experiences.

Online University - COVID-19 Pandemic

The abrupt end of in-person University during the 2020 winter semester, and the uncertain start of the 2020 Fall semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has impacted all of University life. As we understood it, the student experience has gone under rapid change, and online university is the norm for the foreseeable future. With the student experience moving entirely online, BUSU must not lose its focus to transform, enrich, and empower students but adapt its methods to accomplish those objectives. (Harris)

Attitudes Towards Student Unions

In January 2019, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced the Student “Choice” Initiative (SCI). This ‘Initiative’ removes collective membership dues for student-run groups and organizations and makes fees that students have voted on through democratic referenda optional. The result can reduce students’ unions’ ability to represent and provide services for their members. On November 21, an Ontario court unanimously struck down the provincial government’s controversial Student Choice Initiative (SCI), writing in the decision that the policy’s directives “are not authorized by law and are inconsistent with the autonomy granted universities.” While we may have felt that the battle was won, we cannot underplay the broader damage such a policy may have caused. It put to question and challenged the value a student union brings to its membership. BUSU’s membership was not majorly affected by opt-outs, The Average BUSU Student Choice Initiative Opt-Out Rate was 17%. This indicates that BUSU’s strong student engagement and brand presence may have contributed to the value students perceive. (McGinn)

OUR CURRENT STATE

PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS

Lacking Continuity

In reviewing past strategic long-term planning, we only came across one attempt at a strategic plan written by a student executive, with a limited scope and very little stakeholder engagement. While we have regularly grown to meet our members' needs, we have done so without the benefit of a long-term plan to help guide our decision making processes. BUSU has been operating primarily on each executive cycle's vision, which is at the mercy of changing after every election cycle. It was evident that BUSU currently lacks a clear strategic road map with priorities. The current process has also led to a lacking sense of continuity or consistency between executive terms. Finally, this lack of continuity leads to less than ideal internal team dynamics between staff, management, and executives. Without a clear set of norms, values, and operational processes, the BUSU organizational culture was fragmented and, at times, toxic.

Ambiguous Governance Structure

Governance structures are created and maintained to ensure that the organization members are empowered to serve at their best and fulfill their purpose. The governance structure includes organizational structure, finance, HR, and membership policies. However, at times these structures have gaps that are exploited or barriers that get in the way of the best of intentions. The issues of governance structures are less witnessed by the membership but far more apparent to the staff, management, and student executives. The ambiguous governance structure was evident in our surveys.

Our survey insights:

- Students have a poor understanding of the current governance structures 3.3/5 but don't take issue with it, feeling that governance effectively promotes BUSU members' values 3.7/5.
- On the other hand, staff have an average understanding of the current governance structure 3.8/5 and feel strongly that the existing governance structure does not promote its members' values 3.0/5.
- Students scored BUSU's financial transparency below average 3.4/5.
- Staff scored BUSU's financial transparency just above average 3.9/5.

Inadequate governance structures in student unions can lead to ambiguity, lack of transparency, lack of accountability, internal competition, office politics, power dynamics, and inefficient leadership. These symptoms, while not all pronounced, were present in the BUSU's everyday operations.

OUR CURRENT STATE

PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS

Advocacy Shortcomings

BUSU has had a long history of advocacy. Advocacy began as a fundamental function of BUSU, and it's the representation of the student body. However, advocacy tends to ebb and flow with the hot topics and issues at hand. There has been a shift across student unions away from advocacy as the primary function to more events, programming, and services. This shift comes as universities adopt a more "student-first" approach—at least in name—and have dedicated student experience officers and more. The change also comes culturally as student unions continue to fight for relevance, after Ontario Premier Doug Ford in 2019, spotlights the automatic opt-in fee structures. While BUSU has strong brand awareness, its ability to communicate its value to stakeholders has consistently underperformed beyond events and programming. BUSU's relationship with the University's administration has increased in strength over the past number of years; the complexity of maintaining healthy relationships while advocating has weakened BUSU's overall effectiveness. BUSU has been unable to leverage its influence and power to successfully challenge University Administration and has underutilized its most practical vehicle, the senate. Among all the shortcomings identified in workshops and consultations, there was a general perception in the student population that BUSU ranks on average for their advocacy effectiveness.

Our survey insights:

- Students believe that BUSU, on average, is effective in advocating and representing their membership to the university and the community at large 3.9/5.
- Students rank BUSU slightly lower on their effectiveness for advocating on the contentious issues of transportation 3.7/5.

OUR CURRENT STATE

PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS

Inadequate Physical Space

The current student centre was built in 1990 for a growing Brock undergraduate population of about 5,500 students. Brock's student population has since grown to over 18,000. Students cited the need for more study, lounge, and multi-purpose spaces.

Our survey insights:

- Students feel strongly that BUSU should be responsible for providing space for lounging, events, and studying (4.3) but is falling short of currently providing such spaces (3.2). Staff scores followed this same trend.

With more students to serve, an increasingly engaged student population, and a growing number of needs for diverse communities, the space available has lagged behind the demand. In March of 2019, BUSU Executives led a referendum campaign to introduce a new student centre levy of \$36.50 per credit, equaling \$182.50 per year for those with a full-time course load. The referendum passed in the spring of 2019, and the Student Centre project is underway, aimed at completion for the Fall of 2023.

OUR SOLUTIONS

The BUSU Strategic Plan establishes four strategic themes, associated priorities, goals, and actions to advance BUSU's vision and accomplish its mission over the next four years.

These themes are concepts that can exist long term, paint a picture of organizational excellence, and be communicated with great vivid imagery. They all aim to foster an ever-improving Student Experience that is transformational, enriching, and empowering.

Note: The bolded terms are defined in the following sections.

We begin by understanding what BUSU will be the best and its core contribution, otherwise known as its **Hedgehog Concept** - BUSU will cultivate a transformative student experience through enhancing engagement and empowering advocacy.

Secondly, BUSU must move towards institutionalizing its best practices, by **Clock Building, and Not Time Telling**. It is working towards the systemization of long-term planning and the institutionalization of continuity. It is about optimizing our governance to create a balance of power and accountability. And finally, about increasing the overall organizational excellence.

Once we understand what we can be the best at and the systems to ensure long term success, we begin our **20 Mile March**, where we consistently chip away at big goals with ferocious discipline and focus. The 20 Mile March will consist of two core focuses, creating welcoming and inclusive communities and supporting high-quality services with clear impact.

Lastly, BUSU will engage in the duality of **Preserving The Core While Stimulating Progress**. This encompasses the on-going work of integrating and expanding its spaces across our campuses while transforming our existing businesses into social enterprises.

Our four core concepts and strategic priorities set the path towards a more robust BUSU that truly transforms the student experience, providing enriching opportunities, and empowering our members to create good in the world. The plan will institutionalize our great ideas, improve our services, and provide a space for innovative solutions to thrive.

OUR SOLUTIONS

OUR HEDGEHOG CONCEPT (TRANSFORM)

Are you a hedgehog or a fox? In his famous essay “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” Isaiah Berlin divided the world into hedgehogs and foxes, based upon an ancient Greek parable: “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.”

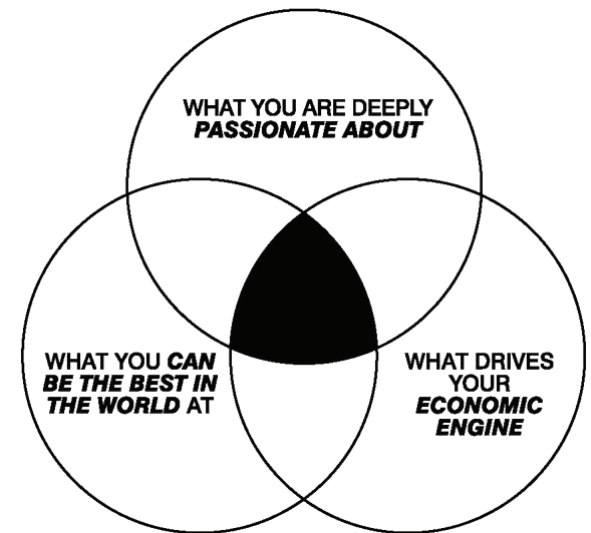
High performing organizations used their hedgehog nature to drive toward becoming the best at one thing. In contrast, low performing organizations tended to be foxes, never gaining the clarifying advantage of a Hedgehog Concept, being instead scattered, distracted, and inconsistent.

A Hedgehog Concept is not a goal to be the best or a strategy to be the best, or an intention to be the best, or a plan to be the best. It is an understanding of what you can be the best at; the distinction is crucial.

Every company would like to be the best at something, but few understand—with piercing insight and egoless clarity—what they have the potential to be the best at and, just as important, what they cannot be the best at. This distinction stands as one of the direct contrasts between the good-to-great companies and the comparison companies.

A simple, crystalline concept that flows from deep understanding about the intersection of three circles: 1) what you are deeply passionate about, 2) what you can be the best in the world at, and 3) what best drives your economic or resource engine.

The Hedgehog Concept is developed in the book Good to Great, written by Jim Collins.



OUR SOLUTIONS

OUR HEDGEHOG CONCEPT (TRANSFORM)

We will Cultivate a Transformative Student Experience.

We will cultivate a social, educational, and personal experience that transforms students from when they step foot into Brock to the moment they cross the graduation stage. We will positively transform students' abilities, understanding, and impact on the world; they will become highly engaged civil actors who are community change agents. BUSU can create a Transformative Student Experience by engaging and empowering students.

We will Enhance Student Engagement

Every student at Brock University should have the opportunity to engage in student life, with extracurricular activities that support their passion, interests, and pursuit of personal growth. We will cultivate an engaging campus experience that promotes social, cultural and recreational opportunities.

We will enhance student engagement by:

- Providing more financial resources and support to BUSU Clubs
- Increasing the number of students engaged in BUSU programming and events
- Increasing the quality of events for all students
- Clarifying and renewing club guidelines, policies, and processes

OUR HEDGEHOG CONCEPT (TRANSFORM)

We will Revitalize and Empower Advocacy

Advocacy shall return as a core pillar and be seen as an integral part of the Transformative Student Experience. This is no longer just about BUSU advocating on behalf of students; however, BUSU provides the platform, skills, resources and opportunities for students to carve out pathways to advocate and solve problems they identify in their communities and abroad. Our advocacy efforts have legitimacy when students are aware of, engaged with, and represented by our work. Advocacy is the empowerment of students as civil actors, creating positive change.

We will revitalize and empower advocacy by:

- Improving advocacy on behalf of and with students, internally and externally
- Coordinating conscious effort in to advocate on academic policy at Brock Senate
- Engaging and investing in cross-regional advocacy efforts with neighbouring Student Unions
- Hosting University Administration Open Forums
- Investing in a comprehensive Affordable Transportation Advocacy Plan
- Embarking on collaborative campaigns with the BUSU funded Student Social Justice Centre
- Having an active role in shaping the introduction of new academic programs

OUR SOLUTIONS

CLOCK-BUILDING, NOT TIME TELLING (EVER-IMPROVING)

Imagine you met a remarkable person who could look at the sun or stars at any time of day or night and state the exact time and date: “It’s April 23, 1401, 2:36 A.M., and 12 seconds.” This person would be an amazing time teller, and we’d probably revere that person for the ability to tell time. But wouldn’t that person be even more impressive if, instead of telling the time, they built a clock that could tell the time forever, even after they were dead and gone, and where everyone after them could benefit from the clock?

Having a great idea or being a charismatic visionary leader is “time telling.” Building an organization that can prosper far beyond any single leader and through multiple life cycles is “clock building.”

Searching for a single great idea on which to build success is time telling; building an organization that can generate many great ideas over a long period of time is clock building. Clock Building is a concept developed in the book *Built to Last* by Jim Collins.

Enduring greatness requires clock building. BUSU must start building its clock, looking beyond any student executive term, and institutionalizing its structures, systems, processes and ideas for future generations’ success.

OUR SOLUTIONS

CLOCK-BUILDING, NOT TIME TELLING (EVER-IMPROVING)

We will Institutionalize Continuity

Continuity is not optional for high performing organizations, yet it poses one of the largest threats to BUSU's success. Continuity must move beyond individual leadership and be institutionalized through the governing policies to have the board, executive, and management adhere. For BUSU, this represents the flywheel; it's a system for ensuring long term sustainable growth, with the duality of innovation. It begins with developing a Strategic Plan based on broad-based feedback that guides the organization every four years. BUSU must then collect data from various sources on these students' needs and concerns every year. Utilizing the data and the Strategic Plan, student executives develop Annual priorities in consultation with the Board and staff made widely available to all students. BUSU then develops a tactical plan that operationalizes the Annual priorities and engages staff, students, and executives.

We will institutionalize continuity by:

- Introducing a bylaw that requires BUSU to develop, maintain, and use a Strategic Plan
- Renewing the Strategic Plan is a requirement at a maximum of every four years.
- Introducing a bylaw that requires BUSU Student Executives to develop Annual Priorities that operationalize and align with the Strategic Plan.
- Consult the previous years' annual priorities when developing new priorities
- Making decisions based on a practical research methodology, including data gathering and polling of stakeholders to ensure the validity of strategies for both Annual Priorities and the Strategic Plan
- Developing a yearly Tactical Plan that operationalizes the Annual Priorities with the involvement of staff and students
- Reporting on the Annual Priorities at the mid-term and year-end.

OUR SOLUTIONS

CLOCK-BUILDING, NOT TIME TELLING (EVER-IMPROVING)

We will Optimize Our Governance Model

We must define a governance model that effectively captures students' voices, balances power, ensures accountability, and allows BUSU to accomplish its mission best. This includes the alignment of financial planning with the Strategic Plan and Annual Priorities.

We will implement accountability measures for executives that can be brought forth by management and enacted by the Board. This also includes accountability measures for management that executives can bring forth and acted upon by the Board. Increased student participation in democratic processes and accountability matters will ensure greater buy-in and transparency.

We will optimize our governance model by:

- Creating yearly financial plans that align with the organizational strategic plan
- Refining existing by-laws and policies to remove ambiguity
- Outlining clear accountability measures for Student Executives and BUSU Management
- Increasing student participation in democratic processes, i.e. voting and running campaigns
- Adopting a Student Consultation Framework to increase overall student participation in organizational priority setting

We will Increase Organizational Excellence

We will create operational excellence by investing in our people first. Improving training and on-boarding will give our team the knowledge and skills to perform effectively in all aspects of work. We will then, with our trained team, build the clock. We will create the necessary processes, systems, and procedures to ensure efficiency and ease of transition for future leadership teams.

We will increase organizational excellence by:

- Investing in training and developing staff's knowledge of high performing teams and best practices for organizational culture
- Improving HR on-boarding process for new employees, including training and mentorship
- Continuing the development of operational efficiencies, processes, and systems
- Rehauling executive transitions, including training modules, formal documentation, and the strategic retreat
- Improving the student executive workload by introducing a course credit (independent study) for BUSU executives

OUR SOLUTIONS

THE 20 MILE MARCH (EMPOWER)

Imagine you're standing with your feet in the Pacific Ocean in Vancouver, British Columbia, looking inland. You're about to embark on a three-thousand five-hundred-mile walk from Vancouver, BC, to Newfoundland's tip.

On the first day, you march 20 miles, making it out of town. On the second day, you march 20 miles. And again, on the third day, you march 20 miles, heading into the uphill and downhill of the mountainous terrain. It's tough, some walks feel like climbing stairs for hours, and the air and weather frequently fluctuate, and you want to rest in the cool of your tent. But you don't. You get up, and you march 20 miles. You keep the pace, 20 miles a day. Then the weather cools, and you're in comfortable conditions with the wind at your back, you could go much farther. But you hold back, modulating your effort. You stick with your 20 miles. When it's tough, you stick to 20 miles a day, and when it's easy, you stick to 20 miles a day. You sustain your pace, marching 20 miles. And eventually, after just 171 days, you get to the tip of Newfoundland.

Having a clear 20 Mile March focuses the mind; because everyone on the team knows the markers and their importance. Everyone can stay on track. Global pandemics are out of your control. Students are out of your control. University Administration is out of your control. Technological change is out of your control. Almost everything is ultimately out of your control. But when you "20 Mile March", you have a real point of focus that keeps you and your team moving forward, despite the confusion, uncertainty, and even chaos.

The 20 Mile March is a concept developed in the book *Great by Choice* by Jim Collins.

The issues that BUSU aims to solve through its engagement and advocacy are no small feat; they take the relentless discipline of a 20 Mile March. We will have to chip away every day. Progress, change, impact are made through small steps, not leaps. To ensure that level of quality in our impact, we must embrace our march.

OUR SOLUTIONS

THE 20 MILE MARCH (EMPOWER)

We will Increase our Impact through Higher Quality Services

It is vital to build and promote programming, infrastructure projects, and spaces that embrace a commitment to social, physical, cultural and environmental wellness. We can fill the gaps left by the university by providing well-integrated student services that meet a diverse student body's needs.

We will improve our services by:

- Adopting an impact measurement framework to assess services
- Striving to enhance personal wellness and health
- Improving the quality and engagement of existing services
- Investing in the improvement of overall 'client-customer service' online
- Connecting students to academic and personal support services in partnership with Brock University
- Becoming a central hub for student experience and services information across the campus

We will Foster a Welcoming, Inclusive and Diverse Student Culture

BUSU's strength lies in its diversity—the diversity of our communities and in the perspectives it engages. We will continue to progress in equity and inclusivity across our organization and campus. We will encourage and nurture inclusivity and a diversity of perspectives and identities to strengthen our communities.

We will foster inclusiveness by:

- Empowering and encouraging diverse programming for underrepresented or marginalized groups
- Engaging in reconciliation and decolonization efforts and partnering with Brock University on the calls-to-action in the Strategic Plan
- Creating and maintaining accessible online spaces
- Developing diversity, inclusion and anti-racism frameworks - policies, procedures, and practises that systematically address on-going challenges

OUR SOLUTIONS

PRESERVE THE CORE AND STIMULATE PROGRESS (ENRICH)

Great organizations exhibit a dynamic duality. On the one hand, they have a set of timeless core values and purposes that remain constant over time. On the other hand, they have a relentless drive for progress—change, improvement, innovation, and renewal. Like a persistent and incurable itch, the purpose for progress in a highly visionary company can never be satisfied under any conditions, even if the company succeeds enormously.

The core ideology enables progress by providing a base of continuity around which a visionary company can evolve, experiment, and change. By being clear about what is core (and therefore relatively fixed), a company can more easily seek variation and movement in all that is not core.

The drive for progress enables the core ideology. Without continual change and forward movement, the company—the carrier of the core—will fall behind in an ever-changing world and cease to be healthy, or perhaps even to exist.

A visionary organization does not seek a mere balance between core and progress; it aims to be both highly ideological and highly progressive at the same time, all the time.

Preserve the Core/Stimulate Progress is a concept developed in the book *Built to Last* by Jim Collins.

OUR SOLUTIONS

PRESERVE THE CORE AND STIMULATE PROGRESS (ENRICH)

We will Build a New Student Centre

BUSU will continue to integrate and expand its spaces across our campuses to provide the most value for members. Advocating for and investing in student-oriented spaces improves the accessibility and relevance of BUSU to all its members. With the upcoming completion of the Zone Expansion, BUSU's journey will provide more functional space for students. The New Student Centre is a pillar in BUSU's overall student engagement strategy. It will create new spaces that will encompass study, event, and lounging space for all students. However, physical space on its own does not solve our challenges; the integration of our transformative student experience will bring the space to life.

We will improve the student's physical spaces by:

- Growing the physical presence of BUSU
- Ensuring adequate functional multi-purpose space for students for clubs, studying, and lounging
- Increasing access to "after-hour" spaces on campus
- Optimizing existing spaces for BUSU staff and businesses
- Creating of a central hub for BUSU Services

OUR SOLUTIONS

PRESERVE THE CORE AND STIMULATE PROGRESS (ENRICH)

We will transform our Businesses into Social Enterprises

BUSU operates numerous food and beverage businesses that provide students with affordable food options and student jobs. The goal of a business is to maximize profits for its shareholders and owners, and while that has never been the goal of BUSU's businesses, the lexicon has caused confusion over the years.

A social enterprise should operate in service of its mission and purpose while pursuing profits for the sustainability of its intended goal. The minor shift of the lexicon from businesses to social enterprise represents a broader shift in our thinking of the nine food and beverage enterprises.

Our social enterprise's primary goal is to provide affordable food options for students at a net breakeven cost while optimizing for student jobs, diversity of food, and environmental sustainability. Shifting this focus will give our social enterprise operational staff a clear direction and encourage BUSU to explore additional revenue streams outside the existing enterprises.

We will transform our businesses into social enterprises by:

- The primary objective of our Social Enterprises is to provide affordable food at the breakeven net and then optimize for student jobs, diverse food options and Environmental Sustainability
- Increasing total revenue brought from corporate sponsorship
- Moving towards environmental sustainability in BUSU operations
- Exploring new revenue-generating opportunities

NEXT STEPS

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Strategic Plan is BUSU's collective mandate for change. It invites us to begin a renewed conversation about BUSU and to focus on what we can achieve together.

This Strategic Plan provides direction and destinations for us all. It aligns with existing Brock University strategies and provides leadership for a renewed Student Experience that we can embark on creating.

Create action plans. The next steps will be translating these strategies to actions and creating project plans to guide and align our efforts. Some of these actions will be ongoing, possibly requiring adjustment or different forms of support or additional funding. To support the implementation of the strategic priorities, goals and actions, further plans must be developed, such as the following:

- Student Engagement Plan
- Executive Transition Plan
- Brand and Marketing Plan
- Infrastructure Plan
- Advocacy Empowerment Plan
- HR Operations Improvement Plan
- Financial Alignment Plan
- Governance Optimization Plan
- Social Enterprise Revitalization Plan
- Affordable Transportation Advocacy Plan
- Student Democratic Participation Plan
- Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Plan

Measure key performance indicators. Our project plans will be public with milestones and measures to track progress. Where possible, we will pilot ideas and assess outcomes before making changes.

Improve planning. We will develop department and unit-specific plans that align with this document to further operationalize our students' union's aspirations.

Thorough and rigorous implementation. We intend to be thorough and rigorous in implementation. Our actions will be guided by responsible leadership that is accountable for budgets and progress.

Step up to the challenges of our time. We are a Students' Union with a purpose to transfer information and enrich and empower students. We will bring that spirit into our culture, daily grind, interactions, and programs. We will respond to today's and tomorrow's challenges with ferocious discipline, creativity, and fun. We are a force for good in our community and in our country.

Continue to seek input and feedback. We will continue to seek feedback from our students, staff, alumni, and partners as we move forward. We will track our progress against the objectives of the strategic plan and will revise our direction and focus in response to changes both within and beyond Brock University.

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- Bilal Khan - BUSU President, 2019-20
- Heidi Sticko - BUSU VP Student Services, 2019-20
- Nivi Sethumadvan - BUSU VP External Affairs, 2019-20
- Asad Jalib - BUSU President, 2020-21
- Rafay Rehan - BUSU VP Finance and Administration, 2020-21
- Raadiyah Zowmi - BUSU VP Student Services, 2020-21
- Alexa Leitch - BUSU VP External Affairs, 2020-21

BUSU Community

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