

CASA'S

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR

2018-2021



Canadian Alliance of Student Associations
Alliance canadienne des associations étudiantes

Introduction

Over twenty-three years ago, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations was founded to give post-secondary students an effective, responsive and adaptive voice in federal politics. At the organization's core was a commitment to ensuring that elected student leaders would remain central to the decision-making processes of the organization. That is why every year a new group of student leaders take control organization, and CASA must respond to meet both their needs and the needs of post-secondary students at large.

While remaining responsive and adaptable is key to CASA's operations, it is also crucial that the organization initiate and execute long-term plans and achieve long-term objectives. CASA has a responsibility to improve post-secondary education for today's students and for tomorrow's. To achieve this, it is critical that CASA strives for an organizational culture that thinks strategically, measures its progress and effectiveness, and engages in self-reflection for continuous improvement and innovation. Through this process, each generation of CASA's membership, Board of Directors, Executive Director and staff can assess, reflect, develop and improve the organization.

The strategic plan seeks to unify CASA's membership around broad objectives, strategic goals and metrics to track progress toward those objectives. These are organized under organizational pillars. Organizational pillars are the core competencies of CASA, as identified by the membership. They reflect broad areas of focus and resource allocation for the organization. Each pillar has core objectives, which are the articulation of the member's expectations over the term of the plan. Internally, CASA's Board of Directors and Executive Director will develop and track metrics for each core objective.

Five distinct organizational pillars were identified during the 2018 strategic plan review process. They are:

Policy and Research

Membership

Public Relations

Advocacy

Governance

Mission

Through its member-driven structure and grassroots approach, CASA's mission is to advocate for students through policy development and research, awareness campaigns, government relations, and partnerships with other stakeholders.

Vision

Canada will achieve an accessible, affordable and high quality post-secondary education system, whose students enjoy an excellent quality of life.

Values



- CASA will focus exclusively on post-secondary and student related issues
- CASA will remain a strictly non-partisan organization
- CASA will be member-driven, with opportunities for all members to contribute to and be heard by the organization
- CASA will have a membership structure that will remain easy to join and easy to leave



Planning Process

CASA is an organization that experiences tremendous turnover at the staff, board, and delegate levels. The strategic plan is a tool for maintaining direction and progress throughout this turnover. The strategic plan must be re-visited regularly, measured carefully, and integrated into the daily activities of the board. The strategic planning process must be consistent, systemic, and allow for sufficient opportunity for discussion and debate with membership.



LONG TERM STRATEGIC PLAN:

Every three years, members must draft a strategic plan. The strategic plan is an overarching document that seeks to put tangible goals and metrics in place for how CASA will move toward achieving its mission and vision as an organization. The mission, vision, values, and core objectives of the organization do not change from year to year or plan to plan, unless it is the will of the membership at the time of the three-year reviews.

ANNUAL BOARD ACTION PLAN:

The strategic plan will not succeed if it is not implemented in the daily activities of the staff, board, and membership. On an annual basis, the Board of Directors create an annual Action Plan that identifies specific projects, performance targets, resource and personnel allocations, timeframes and reporting metrics. The Annual Plan is developed by the Board of Directors in conjunction with the Executive Director after Foundations. The Board Action Plan is presented to the membership at Policy and Strategy for discussion and approval.

PROGRESS REPORTS:

On a regular basis, the Executive Director and Chair of the Board are responsible for delivering a written and oral report to the membership on the progress that has been made toward the Annual Board Action Plan.

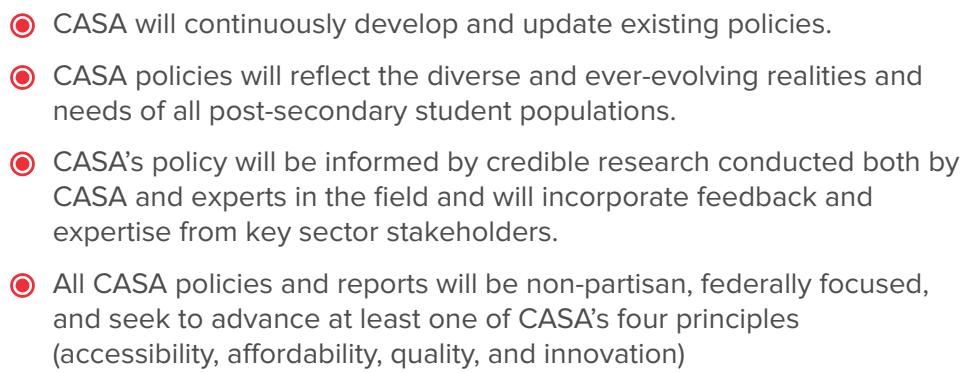
YEAR-IN-REVIEW:

At the end of each year, the current strategic plan and the Action Plan are reviewed to assess overall progress in a formal written report to the membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Policy and Research

Policy and research refers to the process by which CASA formulates its organizational stance on student issues related to post-secondary education in Canada. All of CASA's policy positions are grounded in extensive research and stem from member and student experiences. Policies represent CASA's official position on a broad range of issues with the goal of proposing realistic solutions that form the basis of CASA's advocacy efforts.

Core Objectives:

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- CASA will continuously develop and update existing policies.
 - CASA policies will reflect the diverse and ever-evolving realities and needs of all post-secondary student populations.
 - CASA's policy will be informed by credible research conducted both by CASA and experts in the field and will incorporate feedback and expertise from key sector stakeholders.
 - All CASA policies and reports will be non-partisan, federally focused, and seek to advance at least one of CASA's four principles (accessibility, affordability, quality, and innovation)

Membership

Membership refers solely to the internal dealings of CASA, including membership growth and retention, prospective members, and internal processes for communicating with, and engaging and empowering member associations and delegates. The values of member-driven and easy to join/easy to leave are central to the membership pillar.

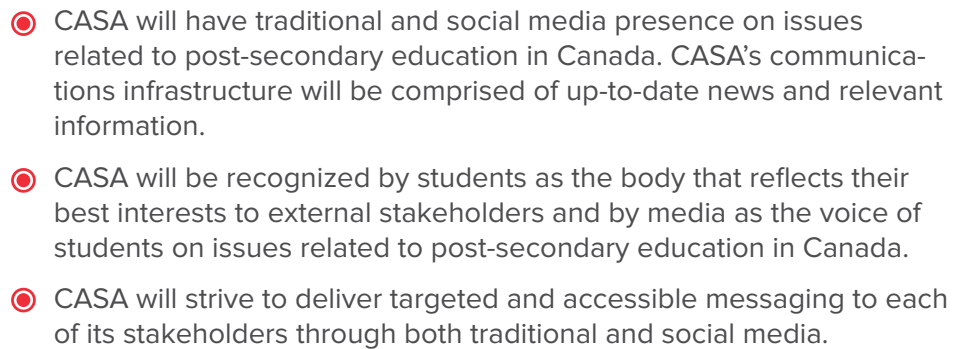
Core Objectives:

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- CASA will create opportunities for members to participate in decision-making and direction-setting processes of the organization.
 - CASA will maintain transparency through high levels of communication with all members, making them aware of what CASA has been doing on their behalf.
 - CASA will draw from its diverse membership and consult externally to educate member association representatives about the needs and perspectives of various student populations and associations from across Canada.
 - CASA will seek to expand its membership across Canada, attracting new member associations through organizational excellence and active outreach to interested parties.

Public Relations

Public Relations refers to CASA's ability to convey its members' objectives to desired audiences through both traditional and social media. CASA focuses on delivering its message to the public, interested post-secondary education stakeholders, elected officials and post-secondary students to foster support and understanding of CASA's objectives.

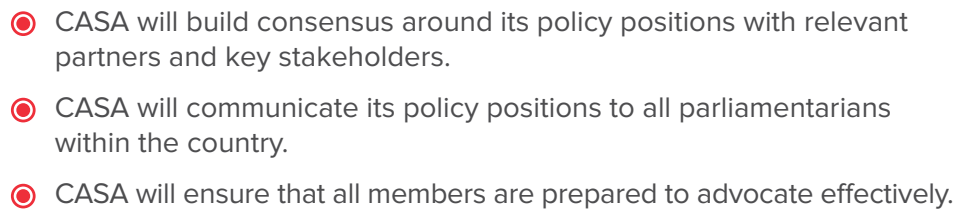
Core Objectives:

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- CASA will have traditional and social media presence on issues related to post-secondary education in Canada. CASA's communications infrastructure will be comprised of up-to-date news and relevant information.
 - CASA will be recognized by students as the body that reflects their best interests to external stakeholders and by media as the voice of students on issues related to post-secondary education in Canada.
 - CASA will strive to deliver targeted and accessible messaging to each of its stakeholders through both traditional and social media.

Advocacy

Advocacy refers to contact with any and all stakeholders that have the potential to further CASA's policy positions and the organization's mission and vision as a whole. Advocacy is viewed as the culmination of all of CASA's other activities. Research and policy formulate advocacy priorities, while members and public relations are the conduits through which CASA's policy positions are articulated to decision-makers and those who influence them, i.e. media & stakeholders. CASA may also draw from its membership to conduct campaigns related to its advocacy priorities. All of CASA's advocacy ventures will remain strictly non-partisan and seek to evoke change through strong consensus building amongst key stakeholders.

Core Objectives:

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- CASA will build consensus around its policy positions with relevant partners and key stakeholders.
 - CASA will communicate its policy positions to all parliamentarians within the country.
 - CASA will ensure that all members are prepared to advocate effectively.

Governance

Governance refers to the processes by which CASA makes decisions and remains accountable to its membership. CASA's decisions are made in the most effective way by utilizing processes and policies that allow members to contribute their comments, questions, or concerns to decisions at hand. CASA also provides the opportunity for members to gain valuable governance experience, further strengthening the student movement.

Core Objectives:

- CASA will ensure that all formal meetings are appropriately structured and provide members with equal opportunity to contribute.
- CASA will ensure that delegates develop their knowledge of governance and can effect change within the organization.
- CASA constituting documents* and operating procedures will reflect not-for-profit best practices in governance.

**Constituting documents: The founding and foundational documents of CASA which include the articles of incorporation and the by-laws.*

Our Members



About CASA

Established in 1995, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, student organization composed of 22 student associations representing 270,000 post-secondary students from coast to coast. CASA advocates for a Canadian post-secondary education system that is accessible, affordable, innovative and of the highest quality.



Canadian Alliance of Student Associations
Alliance canadienne des associations étudiantes

 130 Slater Street, Suite 410, Ottawa ON, K1P 6E2

 casa-acaе.ca

 613.236.3457

 info@casa.ca

 @CASAACAE

 /CASAACAE

 @CASAACAE