



2022/2023

**MORE THAN TUITION
CAMPAIGN**

PHASE 1: STUDENT SURVEY

ADVOCACY STARTS WITH YOU

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MISSION

The Students' Union is a democratically elected body, whose mission is to effectively represent and provide services to the students of St. Thomas University. In addition, the STUSU advocates the position of the organization before the University's administration, municipal government, provincial ministries and federal departments. The Students' Union strives to enhance the life and experience of students with a positive educational, social and cultural environment while attending St. Thomas University.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

St. Thomas University Students' Union recognizes and respectfully acknowledges that it carries out its work on the traditional unceded territories of the Wolastoqiyik, and Mi'kmaq peoples. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which these nations first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of territories, but in fact, recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik titles and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. STUSU members and staff respect the elders, past and present, and descendants of this land.

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OVERVIEW

CAMPAIGN MAIN OBJECTIVE:

To dismiss the assumption that tuition accounts for the majority of the costs associated with post-secondary education by highlighting other significant student expenses in order to raise awareness about the real cost of post-secondary education.

POSITION STATEMENT:

The St. Thomas Students' Union believes that advocating for an accessible post-secondary education must encompass more than just affordable tuition. It must also take into account non-tuition-related factors that contribute to the financial burden that students endure while pursuing a university education. STUSU maintains that financial aid for both domestic and international students must be comprehensive and multi-faceted.

SURVEY MAIN OBJECTIVE:

The first step of an advocacy campaign should be student consultation. As such, the survey was the first step to determining the most effective ways to engage students in advocacy and how to better represent student needs.

PROMOTION:

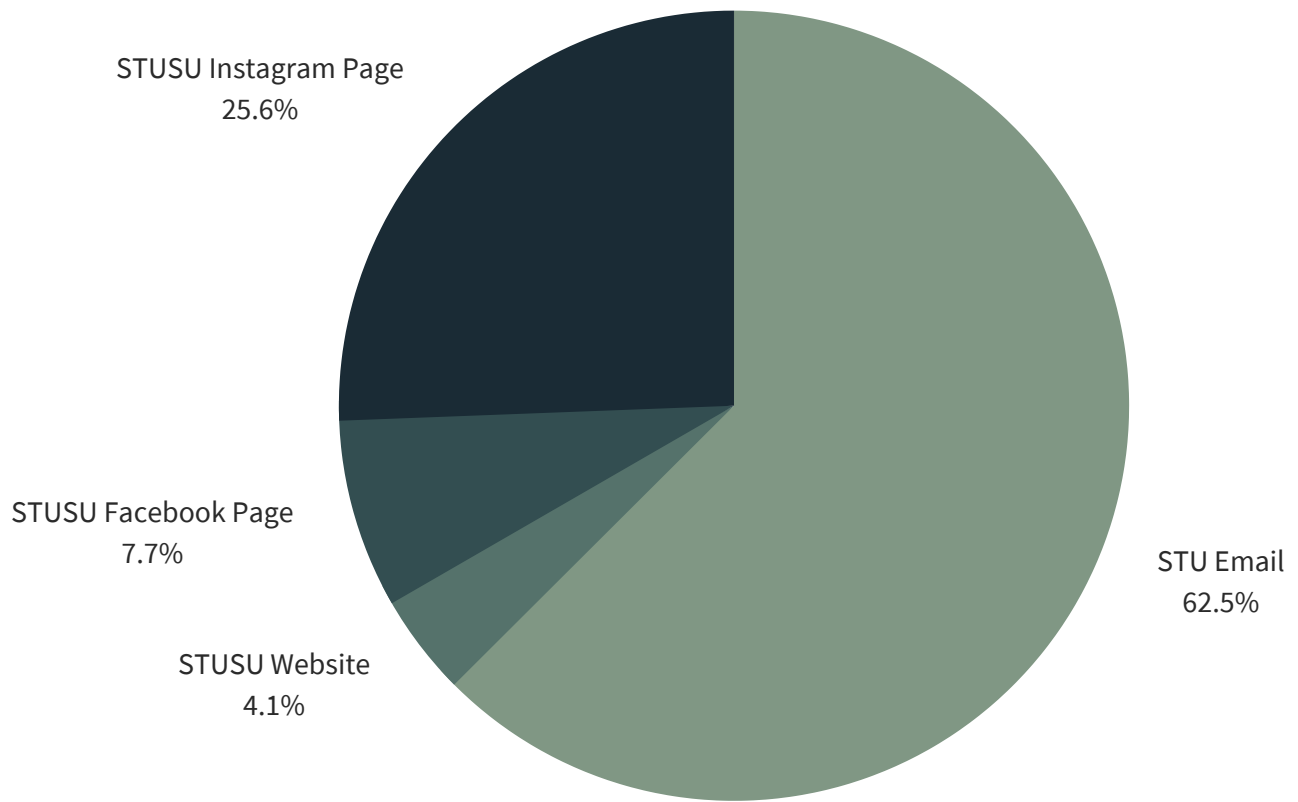
The survey was promoted through Facebook, Instagram, and Student Notices via STU email. Since being launched early August, the survey has garnered 267 responses.

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STUDENT-PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION



What is your preferred method of communication for STU SU updates and information? (You can select more than one).

267 responses

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STUDENT-PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

DATA SUMMARY:

The results reveal a significant preference for STU Email, with Instagram as the leading social media. Only 6% of students expressed interest in communication through the website.

ACTION ITEMS:

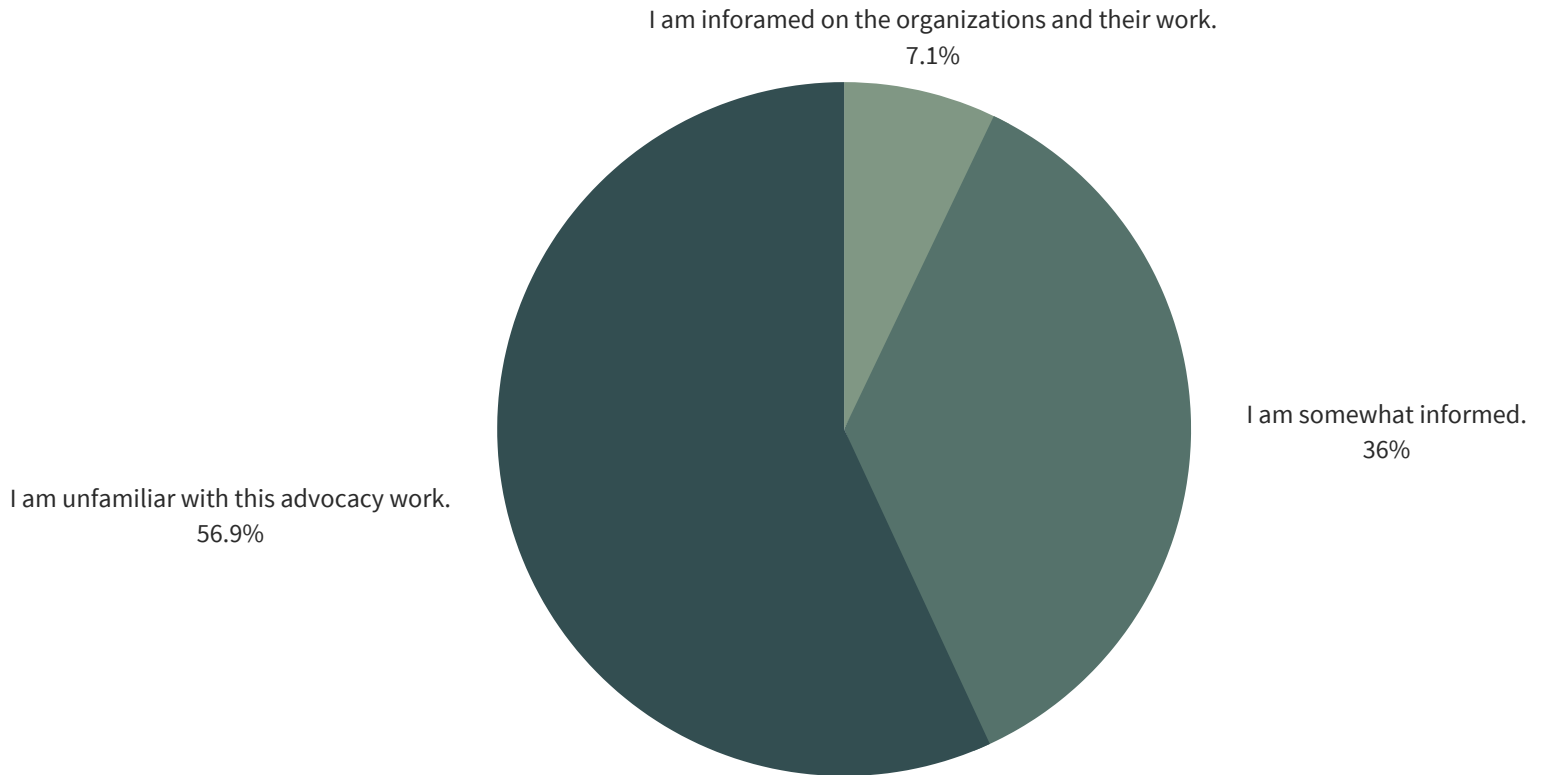
- From this survey, STU SU will increase our use of Student Notices via email to ensure students are informed on events, updates and advocacy.
- However, we will recognize the diversity of student preferences and continue to engage students through our social media channels.
- While the website is intended to serve as a source of static information, we want to ensure it is attractive for students, nonetheless. We will respond accordingly by updating and re-designing the website in a way that is more accessible and organized.

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STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS



STU SU is a part of two advocacy organizations where that write policies and conduct research to improve the post-secondary experience: the New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA) as well as the Canadian Student Alliance (CASA). How familiar are you with the work of these organizations?

267 responses

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STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

DATA SUMMARY:

The results reveal that over half of students are unfamiliar with the work of NBSA and CASA, and only 7% are confidently aware of their advocacy work. This result is unsurprising. The pandemic has only further amplified challenges to bring advocacy closer to students.

ACTION ITEMS:

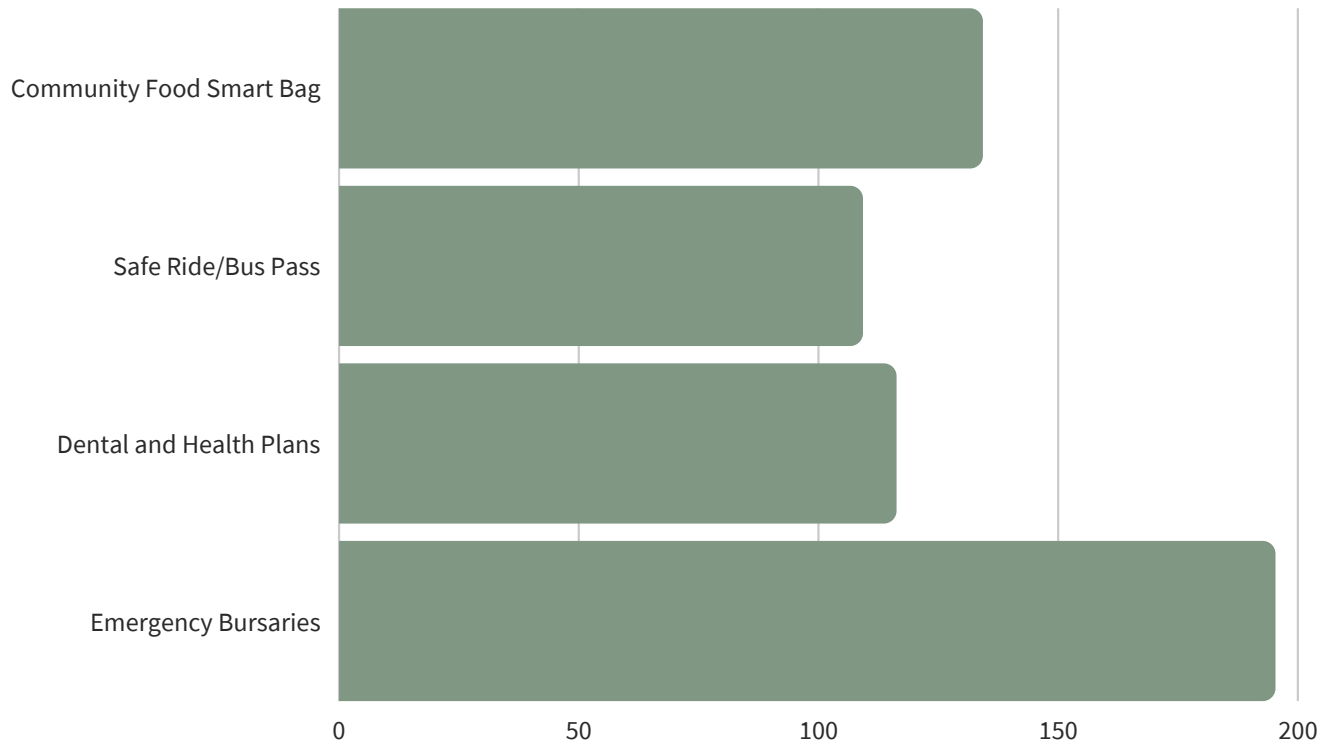
- Bring advocacy closer to students. With the transition back to in-person, it is our duty as Student Representatives to raise awareness of the work of the NBSA and CASA to our students through the methods identified by students as most effective.
- Invite representatives from both NBSA, CASA and the Department of Post-Secondary, Education, Training and Labour on-campus and have information booths at Sir James Dunn Hall.
- Engage all members of the Representative Council in advocacy work so that they can help serve as a vehicle to share advocacy updates with their constituents.
- Encourage and promote more student participation in federal and provincial advocacy week.

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STUSU STUDENT SERVICES



What STU SU services would you like to learn more about?

267 responses

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STUSU STUDENT SERVICES

DATA SUMMARY:

The results indicate that students would like to be informed about a variety of our services. Emergency bursaries are leading with 73% of students indicating that they would like to learn more. All services are vital and should be promoted to students consistently throughout the academic year and accessible for all.

ACTION ITEMS:

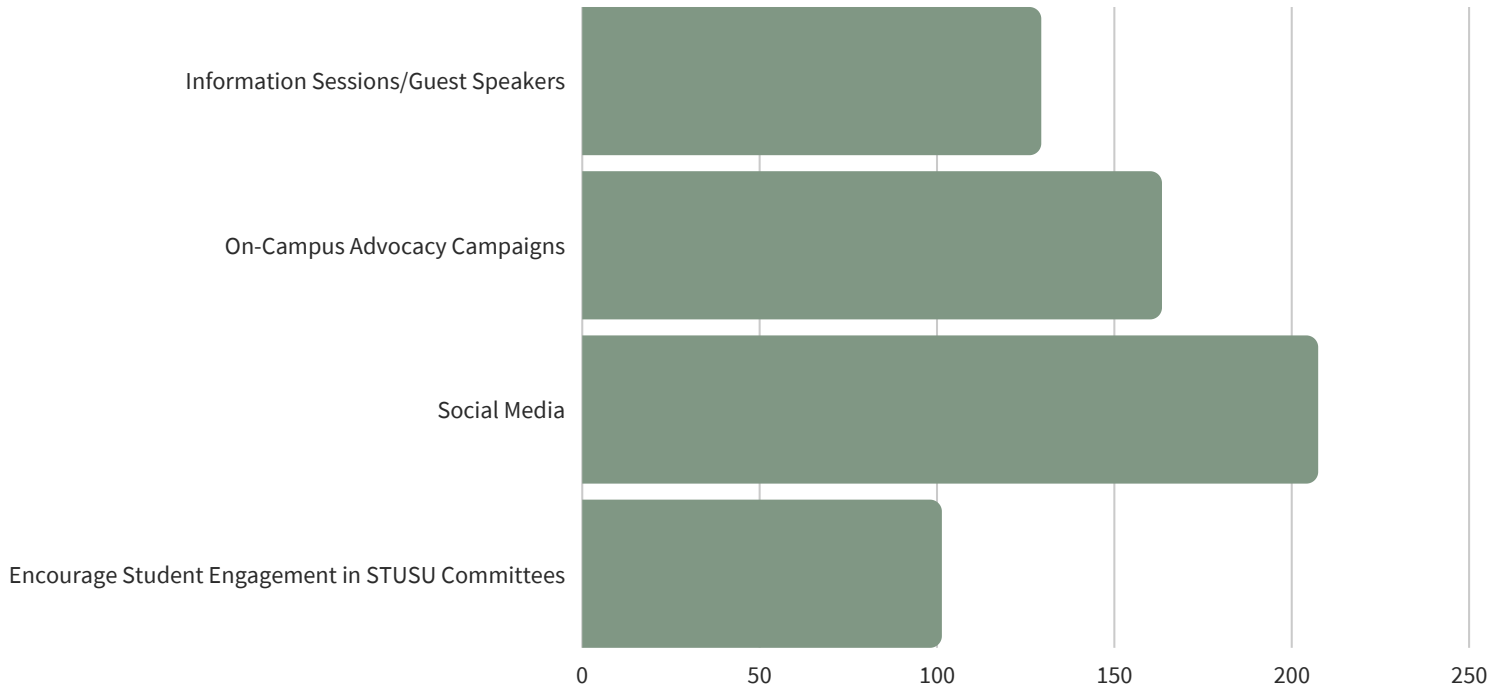
- Expand promotion of Emergency bursary and key student services.
- Display a QR Code at the Help Desk for direct access to information concerning services offered through STUSU and on campus.
- Promote the bus pass to students and familiarize students with the bus system.

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HOW TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



This year, STU SU strives to bring advocacy closer to students. We advocate internally, provincially and federally on issues from affordability, equity, and sustainability. How could we better engage students in this advocacy work?

267 responses

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HOW TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

DATA SUMMARY:

Students have expressed a preference for student engagement through social media (77%). Moreover, over 60% of students indicated on-campus campaigns as a means to better engage students in advocacy. This underscores the need to achieve a balance between online awareness and in-person presence.

ACTION ITEMS:

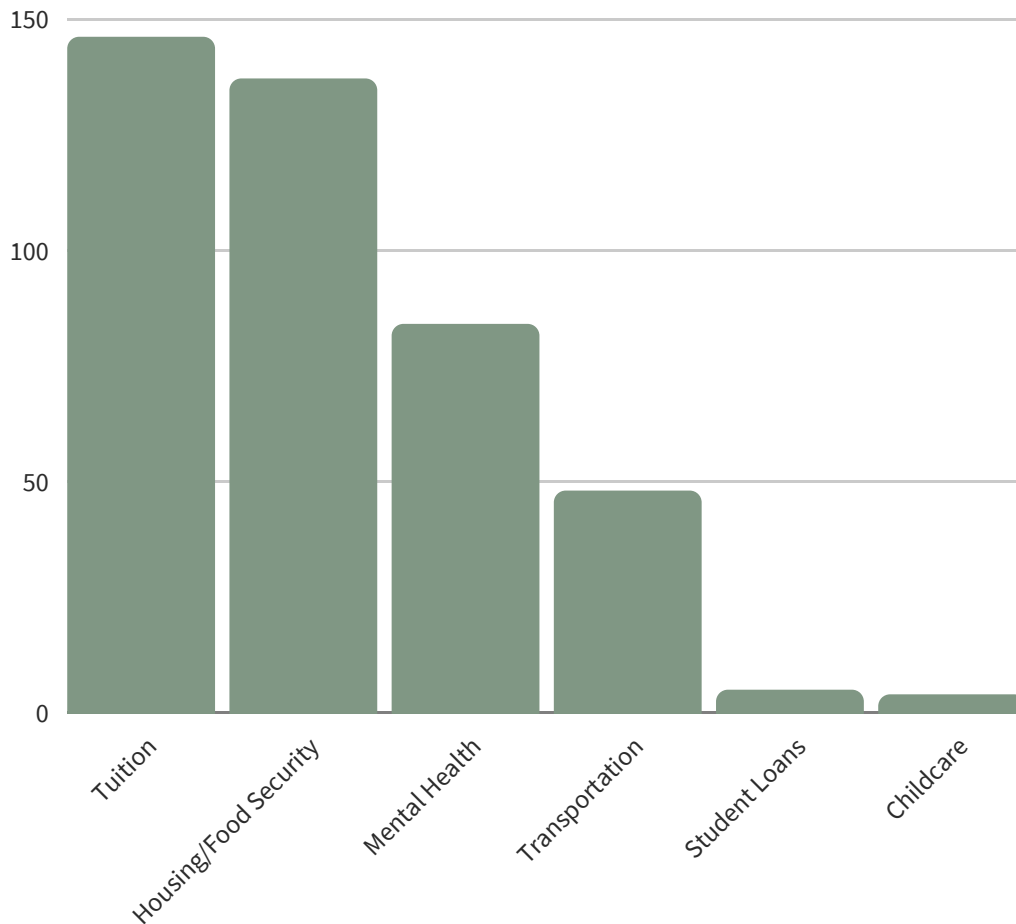
- (1) Enhance social media presence through regular updates on both CASA and NBSA work. This should extend beyond sharing updates but also, showcasing opportunities to get involved in Committees and advocacy week initiatives.
- Conduct an on-campus advocacy campaign.
- Have a hybrid component to advocacy campaigns to balance between our social media and on-campus presence.

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PREDOMINANT ADVOCACY CONCERNS FOR RESPONDENTS



What are the most pressing concerns you are facing as a student?

*This was an open-ended question, as such, students could indicate more than one concern. The responses were categorized by content as displayed above.

267 responses

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PREDOMINANT ADVOCACY CONCERNS FOR RESPONDENTS

DATA SUMMARY:

Tuition was noted as the predominant concern amongst students, with 146 students citing tuition costs as a stressor. That said, Housing and Food Security is a close second, with 137 students expressing concern. It is also worth noting that 84 students recorded Mental Health as an area of concern. These three advocacy areas were therefore declared as the “top 3” areas of concern. Having said that, we recognize that issues around child care and student loans, though expressed less frequently, nonetheless represent an area of concern and should not be overlooked.

#MORE THAN TUITION: IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

The results of this survey were both informative and disheartening. Students are struggling in more ways than one. As the data reveals, tuition was cited most frequently. This attests to the fact that tuition hikes are placing an immense burden on students. However, as the campaign name suggests, to cite tuition alone as the cause of hardship for students is a narrow view. University financial and emotional stress derives from #MORETHANTUITION. Student struggles are multifaceted, and tuition is one predominant piece of a much larger puzzle. This is not to suggest that the provincial government and institutions should look away from more affordable tuition but rather to underscore how tuition hikes are an additional burden that students must overcome in a world of inflation, rising costs, and the aftermath of online, pandemic learning. Multi-faceted problems demand multi-faceted solutions.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

With each question, we have created corresponding action items, as delineated above. We will provide updates to the student body on the progress of these tasks. Once this report is issued, we will transition into Phase 2 of the advocacy campaign.

LET THE ADVOCACY BEGIN!

1. Present the Phase 1 Survey findings to both the senior administration and provincial stakeholders.
2. Develop an advocacy campaign catered to the student concerns as identified in the survey: Tuition, Costs of Living and Mental Health.
3. Create policy asks that discourage tuition hikes and that address the real costs of education.
4. Bring advocacy closer to students by encouraging student participation in the campaign and by updating STUSU Advocacy Policy to reflect the diversity in student needs.

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