



Dalhousie Student Union Building | 6136 University Avenue  
PO Box 15000 | Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4R2

T 902.494.2140 F 902.494.5185 [dsu.ca](http://dsu.ca) • [@dalstudentunion](https://twitter.com/dalstudentunion)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Dalhousie Student Union calling out Dalhousie and provincial government's inequitable treatment of international students in isolation**

**January 08, 2021:** In response to concern from international students and our community, the Dalhousie Student Union calls on Dalhousie University, the government of Nova Scotia, and the Federal government to acknowledge and rectify the inequitable treatment of international students travelling to Canada to obtain a post-secondary education.

The government requirements currently placed on international students in Nova Scotia are unethical and directly target incoming and first year students. Imposing harsher requirements, such as strict supervision, on international students that differ from those placed on domestic students creates an inequality among peers. Many domestic students have travelled from regions with similar or higher numbers of COVID-19 cases than the home countries of international students. The government's current treatment of international students endorses many of the xenophobic sentiments around contracting and tracing the spread of COVID-19.

Nova Scotia has chosen to interpret federal policy in a manner that does not align with other Atlantic provinces and is inconsistent with efforts made earlier this year to welcome domestic students back to the province. The continued exploitation of international students is unjustifiable, especially as Nova Scotia relies on the income they bring to our area. These students are a valued part of our community but have not been treated accordingly.

Dalhousie University created their plan to comply with provincial policy without consulting international students, which perpetuates Nova Scotia's inequitable application of isolation requirements. Dalhousie University continues to take millions of dollars in tuition fees from international students while refusing to support them. International students have been required to pay up to \$1,627.36 CA for isolation accommodations. Their domestic peers do not incur this cost, as the same requirements for supervision have not been applied. The accommodations cost is subsidized only for first-time entries into the province. First-time entries that demonstrate need are also eligible to apply for up to \$425 dollars in additional financial aid from Dalhousie. This leaves students who have previously entered the province and who have already applied for financial aid with Dalhousie without support.

Some international students say that they have reached out to Dalhousie with questions and concerns about their quarantine period only to be ignored or turned away. While Dalhousie is required to comply with government regulations to keep its status as a Designated Learning Institute, the failure to ensure international students are informed, supported, and treated equitably is inexcusable. Reports from international students who are currently staying at or have completed their 14-day isolation at the Westin Nova Scotian described conditions



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including lack of adequate food, heating, or internet connection. Students also state that Westin staff have ignored and avoided them while eagerly assisting other guests.

International students are a meaningful and vibrant part of our local community and inequitable treatment is unacceptable. Nova Scotia, Dalhousie University, and the Westin Nova Scotia cannot continue to gain from the presence of international students while simultaneously punishing them for returning. International students have been taken advantage of by all parties involved. These issues must be acknowledged and rectified immediately.

**For Inquiries:**

Holly Edmonds, DSU Communications Coordinator: [dsucomms@dal.ca](mailto:dsucomms@dal.ca)

Madeleine Stinson, DSU President: [dsupres@dal.ca](mailto:dsupres@dal.ca) / (226)-377-3703