

Loaded Ladle Candidate Questionnaire Responses 2017

1. How have you supported The Loaded Ladle in the past and how will you continue to support The Ladle if you are elected? Please be specific.

2. A motion to implement a living wage was successfully passed by council last year; however this motion has not been implemented. What actions will you take to ensure that all workers in the SUB - including those employed by Chartwells food service - are being paid a fair wage? Subsequently, what will you do to ensure all employees in the SUB have support if they experience workplace harassment or discrimination?

3. Complaints have been filed against Chartwells for insufficiently meeting the needs of students during cultural and social events held in the SUB. How will you prioritize culturally appropriate food and meet the needs of a diverse student body? How will you do this while working with a company that has failed to display cultural competency or willingness to accommodate student needs?

4. Chartwells has a history of anti-union activity and dismissing the concerns of employees. How do you reconcile working with a corporation who engages in anti-union activity while being part of a union? How do you plan to avoid recreating these dynamics within the DSU?

5. In the past, many DSU executives have run on a platform of ending the DSU's relationship with Chartwells and moving to a self-operated food system, yet few concrete steps to move towards a student-run or self-operated food service have not been taken. What steps would you take to move towards a more equitable food service system? Please be specific.

The following candidates did not submit responses to this year's questions:

Cory Larsen (VP Student Life)

Candidate Responses

Amina Abawajy (President)

1. I believe The Loaded Ladle has supported me more than I have supported The Ladle. I have so much admiration for the work Ladle does in supporting students by providing accessible meals three days a week (and so excited to support the levy to move this to four days a week!). I was happy to witness the move to their own dedicated cooking and serving space in the SUB. I have supported the work of Ladle through recommending their solidarity servings to students who are interested in hosting events and are looking for affordable and accessible food options.

2. As the Vice President Academic and External, it was strange to me that we were externally advocating for and supporting the Fight for \$15 campaign while internally not implementing this ourselves. I am committed to looking into the viability of paying our staff a fair living wage. Workplace harassment and discrimination are serious issues that should have serious consequences. If anyone brings forward cases of harassment and discrimination I will ensure that they are aware of all their options and are supported in the ways they choose to move forward.

3. Ensuring that there are culturally appropriate food that meets the diverse needs of students is a priority of mine. This is an issue that's very close to my heart. Last year, I tried to organize a fundraising event and it was very important to me and my community that we be able to provide culturally relevant food. I notified Chartwells 3 months in advance (I note this because the usual argument is that societies don't provide enough notice) but up until the day before, I was unsure if I would be able to do so. In the end, it was only with Loaded Ladle and NSPIRG's support that I was able to provide culturally relevant food. I have witnessed first-hand how Chartwells has failed to display cultural safety (not a huge fan of the phrase cultural competency) and when presenting to Council they provided little to no concrete answers on how they hope to change that. I understand the importance of having culturally appropriate food and I promise to use that understanding to better serve students.

4. I plan to avoid recreating those dynamics within the DSU by ensuring that student voices are always at the forefront. Dismissing concerns of valuable people in our community is not acceptable. We need to ensure that our food service model is student-centered, equitable, sustainable, and accessible

5. It was very disappointing to see folks who campaigned on ending DSU's relationship with Chartwells break their promise to students. I was one of six students who voted in favour of ending this relationship. I am committed to seeing our union move towards a more equitable student-centered food service model. I want to ensure that student voices are heard during all phases of rolling out the model and not just in the implementation phases. I want to reach out to students who do not feel reflected in our current food service model and refocus our attention on ensuring their needs are met. I want to host forums with students who are passionate about these issues and societies who are doing incredible work in the food justice movement. I want to rely on the expertise and knowledge of those on our campuses as well as across the country to ensure that we are able to provide the best food experience for our students.

Ntombi Nkiwane (VPI)

1. The Loaded Ladle provides a vital service for Dal students, and community members. I initially heard about The Loaded Ladle through a friend who volunteered there. She encouraged me to come to the Ladle for a lunch meal- which I did! I was pleasantly surprised. After that, I happened to attend a number of community events, in which attendees were fed by the Loaded Ladle. The last event I attended in which a solidarity serving took place, was at the Mi'kmaq Friendship Center on Gottingen. I have never volunteered at the Ladle, but recently signed up for Iron Ladle which I am very excited about.

2. It is unfortunate that the motion to implement a living wage has not been implemented. The DSU should prioritize a living wage for all SUB employees. I believe that working with the VPFO to prioritize this is key. The budget is a matter of priorities, and this concern should be made a priority. I believe that all SUB employees should have access to the Survivor Support Centre, if levied. The Centre will ensure that all staff have access to support services, if they experience sexual harassment or assault. I also will work with the newly appointed Ombudsperson to ensure that staff know about and access the Ombuds office, for any discrimination they experience.

3. As an international and racialized student, I know that many students feel marginalized due to the lack of culturally appropriate food. Having culturally appropriate food is important for me, and many others. It's unfortunate that we have to work within Chartwell's constraints. I will work closely with the VPFO to ensure cultural societies have a voice. I will also believe that it is my role to bridge the gap between the Union and marginalized students. Surveys are one of many ways in which the concerns of diverse groups of students can be brought to the forefront.

4. It is unfortunate that the previous Council voted in favor of Chartwells. Ensuring the concerns of employees are centered in conversations is key in reversing top-down power dynamics. I engage in a lot of grassroots work which aims to do this. I would like to ensure that employees are also part of decision making conversations.

5. I am not in favour of Chartwells for a number of reasons. I am involved in prison work, which aims to dismantle the prison industrial complex. Chartwells parent company, the Compass Group, is the world's largest supplier of prison meals. Encouraging an ethical and sustainable student-run food system is an important way to gain autonomy. I aim to review the current food services, and encourage student input regarding what students think about our current food services. I will also ask students what they would like to see. Furthermore, I would encourage societies to engage in more ethical food practices, and try and provide more resources for societies to do so.

Alex Hughes (VPI)

1. The Loaded Ladle stole my heart in my first year, when I had classes during the lunchtime meal hall hours, and couldn't afford to buy food on campus. In my roles as VPI of DASSS, and Arts Rep on DSU council, I frequently speak to DASSS council, as well as general students surrounding DSU Services, levied societies, and society support. When speaking on these points, I highlight the Ladle's operations providing servings, but also as a model society that has gone above and beyond to live up to their mandate and help students. I have also been promoting the Ladle levy this campaign period! As explored in my platform for Vice-President Internal, a goal of mine is to support levied societies in reaching more students. A specific action item I have for this goal is to work with Ladle to reach Carleton and Sexton by employing a student to drive the Tiger Patrol Van to deliver servings to these campuses to help make Ladle as accessible as possible to all students.

2. I am a strong believer in the living wage, (\$20.10/hour according to the 2015 *Working for a Living Wage* report published by CCPA and the United Way.) I work part time while doing a full course load (necessary to maintain my financial aid) in order to afford my education and living expenses. The DSU advocates for lower tuition fees, and provides services (like Loaded Ladle and the Food Bank) directly acknowledging the financial strain, and immense debt most students face, yet pay these students who run their union minimum wage. I think this is hypocritical and needs to be addressed with next year's executive and VPFO. I think it is important that all students are educated about what a living wage is and why it is necessary. The Chartwells agreement will likely be signed before my term as VPI would begin, however, as a DSU councilor I can commit

to pressing the current Executive to challenge Chartwells surrounding the living wage during their negotiations, and split their contract into segments (3 years, 3 years, and 4 years) to be reviewed at these markers allowing us to hold Chartwells more accountable, and uphold our values with the opportunity to dissolve our contract within the 10 years. If elected, I would also work with the Executive and VPFO to review the overall budget of the DSU and review the full time wages of staff to ensure they are being paid just wages as well.

In order to ensure all employees are supported in instances of workplace harassment or discrimination, I think it is vital that we continue to fund services like the Social Worker hours in the Wellness Room, counselling and the Survivor Support Center, and encourage all staff to use them whenever they need. I would also like to direct more funding to the E&A office, and ensure that staff feel safe and welcomed to use that space to address issues of harassment or discrimination in the workplace. Moreover, if elected, I would like to look into the possibility of creating a HR full time staff position to ensure that the workplace is equitable, safe, and that all staff are held accountable to the values and expectations of the DSU.

3. The lack of Halal food, and a diverse range of food options to accommodate the needs of our diverse student body needs to be addressed in the wake of the recent decision not to go self-operated on DSU council. While this the contract likely will have been signed before I take office, I can commit to pressuring the current DSU executive with my seat on council to include representatives from cultural societies, and the International Students Rep when designing their negotiations with Chartwells. This was already suggested to the executive during council, and it is vital that we ensure these voices are heard and prioritized, since the DSU is proceeding with a company that has failed our cultural societies on many occasions. Moreover, I would reiterate what I addressed in the previous question, urging the Exec to consider a 10-year term that is split into smaller segments, so we can review Chartwells' performance, and ability to meet our needs throughout this contract in order to maintain our dialogue with this company and keep them accountable to their promises. If elected, I think it is vital that we further support societies like the Loaded Ladle that promote healthy, accessible food services, and begin to lay the long-term groundwork in what a self-operated model could look like, investing in these initiatives so we have a solid foundation to work off of when the time comes to re-evaluate our food services once again.

Furthermore, a large reason why council voted not to go self-operated this year was because of the lack of a foundation or plan. It is vital that we consult with students, research and begin the planning process now so we are better prepared in the future. I would like to aid students, and particularly cultural societies in this process by acting as a personal point of contact and mediating relations between society representatives and the reservations staff in the DSU so we can accommodate the needs of cultural societies that cannot be met by Chartwells.

4. It is difficult to reconcile working with a company that conflicts with our mission and

our values as a Union. While I may not be able to change the values or business practices of Chartwells, I think we need to better use our local Chartwells representative to continuously communicate our needs, and where our students are being failed. The Chartwells executives seemed surprised to hear many of the DSU Council's concerns and needs during their council presentation. It is vital that we hold our local Chartwells representative accountable to these needs and that they are communicated in order to overcome of Chartwells' own bureaucracy. Moreover, in order to avoid recreating these dynamics, if elected I would like to work with the Executive to ensure that all employees, but specifically including Chartwells employees/the Chartwells representative are provided with anti-oppression training to ensure that they are operating in way that is consistent with the DSU's moral standards, and values.

5. The lack of consultation with students throughout this year to learn about Chartwells, food services in general, and the possibilities of a self-operated food services system was so evident this year. Not only were students outraged, but the DSU Council itself was given information very rapidly, and had to make a decision based on the views of their constituents without their constituents having access to all the information. The next Executive needs to begin researching, planning and laying the foundation for a self operated food service model immediately. If elected, I will work to ensure that all students are communicated this information, and a chance to give input into what matters most to them about accessing food on campus. This needs to be done with an intersectional lens, taking into account that these issues impact different student groups in different ways. I will work with the executive to reach out to cultural/marginalized community groups to specifically hear what their concerns and needs are, and prioritize those needs when creating the framework and foundation for a self-operated model for future executives. Furthermore, I would like to work with the VPFO to examine the budget, and potentially create an investment/savings fund specifically for the purpose of creating a cushion in the event that the DSU does vote to go self-operated in the future.

Masuma Khan (VPAE)

1. Since my first year at Dalhousie, I stumbled upon a service that was giving free lunch to students, they told me it was called the Loaded Ladle. I quickly realized that this service was giving healthy food options to students, being a Muslim student at Dalhousie this was huge for me because all of their meals are halal. For the past four years I have been a Loaded Ladler, Ladle has always helped me to feed myself as a hungry broke student. I had planned on being a devote volunteer this year, but due to barriers because of my disability this was made impossible to me. I will continue to support the loaded ladle by promoting their service with students. I hope to create a campaign with Loaded Ladle if elected. I would also love to give some input on the dishes and start volunteering.

2. The actions I will take to make this motion implemented is to get it on the council agenda and work with the VPFO to create a budget that makes it possible to pay workers in our union a fair wage. It is time we have a campaign regarding fair wages to educate the student population. We, as member of our union, need to discuss why this hasn't passed and why the

previous executives have done nothing to push this motion through. In terms of discrimination faced by employees in the SUB, as VPAAE and DSAS being under my portfolio I would ensure that all employees of the union have access to this service as well as the Equity and Accessibility Office. In addition, I want to make sure that all employees of the SUB go through anti-oppression training and other trainings to address the discrimination in our union. This training shouldn't happen once a year but should be a reoccurring process.

3. I have been one of those students who have complained about the lack of cultural food on campus, specifically halal food on campus. Cultural food that is accessible to all students has and will always be my priority. It is time we hold Chartwells accountable, regarding their service. The current DSU council has decided to continue receiving Chartwells' services, with this contract comes accountability. I personally do not believe we should continue having a service that time after time does not allow food options for our union members. In this coming year if elected, I would work with my team of executives to ensure that we hold Chartwells accountable. We must make sure that all students who pay into the DSU have access to food in their SUB. I would love to introduce local halal food companies to Chartwells to take advantage of the space they are not using effectively.

4. If elected as VPAAE I would meet with Chartwells and make sure that anti-oppression training is mandatory for all their staff. I would also like to analyze the way concerns of the employees is being addressed. As I stated in my response to question two, I would like the employees of the union to have access to services such as DSAS and the E&A Office. If we are going have Chartwells is running in our SUB then it is compulsory that they align with mandate of our union.

5. I am really disheartened by the lack of efforts of the previous executives to establish a self-operated food service. It's time we meet with students and communicate to them about what is going on in their union regarding food options. I would love to work with the VPFO and other executives to start creating a concrete plan with the help of our members to make sure that this service does not only represent the executive's opinions but our members opinions and needs. Personally, I am sick of all the talk that happens in our union with a lack of action. It's time we come create a solid foundation for Self-operation in our union, as this would be a major benefit to our members and would create countless student jobs.

Todd Best (VPFO)

1. I have never been greatly involved with the Loaded Ladle, but I think it's a great service and I have plenty of friends who eat there and love it! A month or two ago I filled out a paper to help you run your referendum question in this election. I also took a picture yesterday in the "VOTE YES ON LADLES LEVY" border. During this interaction I got to know a little more about the Loaded Ladle and I was surprised about how far your services extend. I think the burrito delivery to Sexton campus is amazing and I would love to see more of that happening. I think that the Ladle being open a fourth day a week would be great for students. As we all know, money can get pretty tight as a student. During my campaign period, I have also been spreading word to vote yes for the Ladle as well as for the survivor support. In the coming year, I'd love to consult

with you all at the Ladle to see what the DSU can do to help you expand your service, because who doesn't love free food and burritos?!

2. As one of my campaign promises, I have promised to ensure that Chartwells treats their employees fairly and pays them a fair wage. If this means I have to monitor these food services extremely closely and fight with Chartwells to promote change, I will. To ensure that employees in the SUB have support for things such as harassment or discrimination, I'd like to see more money going towards services that are meant for this (harassment, discrimination, sexual assault, violence etc.). This is one of the many reasons that I will be voting YES for the DSU survivor support levy.

3. I understand that organizing and catering an event with culturally appropriate food can be difficult when it is not offered in the SUB. I do not think this is fair at all, as I believe all students and societies should be able to have their culturally appropriate food served at their events. This is why one of my campaign promises is to work towards a catering service that would be able to serve all cultural and social events in the SUB. Although this may be difficult to accomplish while dealing with a company like Chartwells, I will work my hardest to ensure that it happens.

4. I will make it very clear to Chartwells and everybody else in the SUB that this type of behaviour is unacceptable.

5. I will do everything in my power to ensure that Chartwells treats their employees fairly, as well as students. If we are unsatisfied with what they bring to the table during this new contract, I would be more than happy to start up a savings fund to go independent down the road. I think the major reason why we have to sign another contract with Chartwells right now is because we simply do not have the startup capital. I think this is an ongoing problem, as it is hard to save up enough money to transfer into the independent food services business. Though it will be difficult to organize, I think it is possible to start a savings fund to go independent down the road when the contract runs out.

Chantal Khoury (VPFO)

1. I have been lucky enough to always have access to the services provided by The Loaded Ladle. I've always been a strong advocate for what The Ladle does for the student body, providing nutritious meals at no cost for those who need it. However, I've never volunteered at The Loaded Ladle.

If elected VPFO, I plan to increase funding for initiatives that provide services to students, especially those that are inclusive and accessible to all, and provide nutritious foods. I've been a "casual vegan", due to religious and personal beliefs, and it is so incredibly difficult to find inexpensive, nutritious, and filling food to match dietary restrictions, especially as a student. These barriers have resulted in me adding the word "casual" in front of my dietary restrictions. The Loaded Ladle provides access to all students. I'm also hoping to increase funding in order to expand The Loaded Ladle's presence to Sexton, as they have few food options for their diverse student community. Ensuring that The Ladle has the funding and resources to expand their reach and ensure their service is accessible to the greater student body is a priority for me if elected VPFO.

2. My time at Dalhousie has been quite difficult in terms of finding a balance between work and school. I've worked up to three jobs to support myself while being a full-time student. A living wage is very important to me, and definitely a priority to me. The Dalhousie Student Union cannot truly be an advocate for student rights if they aren't even paying their employees a living wage for their work. To my understanding, an audit was conducted in the past year that evaluated the wage of senior staff in The Union. I believe we must analyze that information and compare to where we stand on the national average, and ensure we are paying all our employees an adequate wage.

If elected, I will ensure that The Survivor Support Centre, South House, NSPIRG and The Wellness Room will receive adequate funding to provide support for those who have experienced workplace harassment and/or discrimination. However, I believe in order to be proactive, a more preventative approach is necessary. This year I was given the opportunity to have Anti-O training by South House. I believe that all staff should be given the opportunity to have Anti-Oppression training, as well as Active Listening training. This should be mandatory for society leaders and those conducting any service or event that interacts with the greater student body. It's also important to address that many of the societies listed above are inclusive to the student population, however they ensure that the most vulnerable and oppressed populations at Dalhousie have access to their services. If elected VPFO, I will ensure that students are aware of this service, and do what's possible to increase the accessibility of this service to everyone.

3. Culturally appropriate foods are a topic that is very important to me. Currently, the SUB does not provide proper access to sovereign foods for the diverse populations on campus. In order to address this issue of lack of culturally appropriate food, under the Chartwells contract, negotiations must be put in place. Space must be found in order for independently operated food services to provide culturally appropriate food to students. Chartwells should not have the authority to have a monopoly over food services in the SUB if they do not meet the diverse needs of the students.

To put this plan into action, it is important for the VPFO to ensure that adequate funding and support is there for the current self-operated student initiatives that are tirelessly fighting to promote food sovereignty and security on campus, such as the Loaded Ladle and the DSU Market. It is also important to begin to lay the foundation for a self-operated food service on campus. This can be done by initiating research in order to do so, and providing the resources to the student-run initiatives to take part in this research.

4. It's important that any organization or service working in the union is held to the same standard as the executive, and other union members. It's time we are bringing these issues up to Chartwells, and holding them accountable for their actions within The Union, and provide a plan for them to move forward. In order to work in The Union, Chartwells should have the same opportunities to receive Anti-O training and Active Listening training. Chartwells employees should also have access to services that aid with workplace conflict, in order to be held to the same standard as all other Union employees and members.

5. Other than to fund the student run societies are address food security and food sovereignty on campus, it's importance that the DSU executives work together to lay a foundation to move forward. This year there was a divide in the decision for going self-operated and terminating the Chartwells contract among the current executives. It's important to work with the DSU executive to ensure they are all meeting the needs of the students.

It's also important to ensure that adequate resources are given in order for research to be done to successfully implement a self-operated food service within the union, and it is important to consult with both the students and societies to ensure their needs are being met. However, town halls can't be the only method of consultation. In the past, students rarely attend town halls for consultation, and that's why I believe a more proactive approach is necessary for the DSU executive to take. If elected VPFO, I plan on meeting with the societies that address food insecurity on campus, such as The Ladle, on their own time, and laying a foundation to move forward and consult with students. The divide in decision making this year concerning the Chartwells contract as also due to lack of communication of what the contract meant for students, and the budget. This needs to be more clearly communicated and more transparent to all union members as it affects them all.

Chris Abraham (VPFO)

1. I've eaten at the ladle so often, and I've been encouraging people to vote yes on your levy. In all honesty I've been lacking in concrete Ladle involvement in the past, this is something I want to improve next year as VPFO!

2. I think this motion is as easy to implement as giving our employees a raise. My platform contains many revenue positive plans and funding student jobs is one of my priorities. I also pledge to work with Chartwells to ensure they are paying a living wage, potentially subsidizing raises if necessary.

3. First and foremost, if societies have with the catering staff and they can't fulfill your requests students should be (as they are currently) able to bring in outside caterers. These caterers need to have liability insurance and food safety training so that we can be sure students are being served food that is safe. I plan to continue this policy in order to give students appropriate flexibility for their events. I plan to set up a specific and easy to use guide to provide students with information relevant to ordering catering and let them know about the flexibility available to them both when working with Chartwells and also when bringing in outside catering. I want to work with Jude to reach out to student groups when they book the McInnes room so that they know the catering options available to them and can work with caterers as far in advance as possible. I will set up Key Performance Indicators that can be measured over time to assess Chartwell's performance. This process includes surveying groups that use Chartwells catering to make sure they're satisfied with their service. I believe that by putting in place these measures we can improve catering in the SUB.

4. The first and most important concern in my mind is students. As a student union, I think we have to think of ourselves as slightly different than a labour union; we provide many different

services and priorities. It was determined by council that a continued affiliation with Chartwells was in the DSU's best interest. I support this decision. I don't think this means that the DSU does not support labour unions, nor that the DSU is anti-worker. I think that we can continue to advocate for worker and student rights while still using Chartwells as a provider.

5. This year a great deal of work was put in by our current VPFO and GM to work with a consultant to investigate self-op. It was determined that Chartwells could provide better service for students. I support this decision. I intend to work with Chartwells to bring the best food possible to the SUB, and to make sure they live up to the promises they've made.