



National Health Sciences  
Students' Association  
L'Association des Étudiants des  
Sciences de la Santé du Canada

---

NaHSSA-AÉSSCa  
Strategic Plan for 2006-2011

PREPARED BY STEVEN J HOFFMAN

Approved on 15 March 2007

Supported by:  
Health Canada



*National Health Sciences Students' Association*

College of Health Disciplines  
400 - 2194 Health Sciences Mall,  
Woodward Instructional Resources Centre  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z3

Tel: 604-822-5571 Fax: 604-822-2495  
Email: [mail@nahssa.ca](mailto:mail@nahssa.ca) Website: [www.nahssa.ca](http://www.nahssa.ca)

## Table of Contents

---

Letter from the President .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Background .....	6
Our Work .....	6
A National Network of Local Chapters .....	7
A National Communications Strategy .....	7
National Initiatives .....	8
Operations .....	9
Beyond 2011 .....	9
1. Background .....	10
1.1 Overview .....	10
1.2 Mission Statement .....	10
1.3 Objectives .....	11
1.4 Membership .....	13
1.5 Strengths .....	13
1.6 Challenges .....	13
2. A National Network of Local Chapters .....	14
2.1 How Local Chapters Actually Work .....	14
2.2 Chapter Development .....	15
2.3 Linking Chapters Together as a National Network .....	17
3. A National Communications Strategy .....	18
3.1 Communication between NaHSSA and its Local Chapters .....	18
3.2 Communication between Local Chapters .....	18
3.3 External Collaboration with Existing Organizations .....	19
3.4 Overcoming the Challenges of Pan-Canadian Communication .....	20
3.5 Bilingualism .....	20

4. National Initiatives .....	21
4.1 Focus of National Initiatives .....	21
4.2 Strategy #1: Networking.....	21
4.3 Strategy #2: Knowledge Exchange .....	24
4.4 Strategy #3: National Programming.....	30
4.5 Strategy #4: National Leadership .....	33
5. Operations .....	39
5.1 Board of Directors .....	39
5.2 Advisory Council .....	40
5.3 Annual General Meeting .....	40
5.4 Board of Directors' Semi-Annual Meeting .....	40
5.5 Headquarters: UBC College of Health Disciplines.....	41
5.6 Incorporation, Bylaws, and Policy Guidelines .....	41
5.7 Accountability .....	41
5.8 Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative .....	41
6. Beyond 2011 .....	43
6.1 Post-Five Year Possibilities.....	43

## Letter from the President

---

The National Health Sciences Students' Association (NaHSSA) has come a long way since its relatively recent creation. Established with the support of Health Canada and the UBC College of Health Disciplines at a time of great optimism within the education community, Canada's health and human service students have taken control of their own education and are forging ahead with efforts to promote interprofessional education at impressive speed.

Interprofessional teamwork and collaborative practice are patient-centered methods of health care delivery that are quickly transforming Canada's health care system and maximizing limited resources by reducing medical errors and duplication of services. As attention is increasingly focused on provincial health human resources strategies and efficiency in health care practices, the importance of interprofessional teams in the delivery of primary health care is becoming increasingly clear. NaHSSA, as the world's first and only national student interprofessional organization, is a student-initiated project that helps tackle this challenge by fostering a collaborative spirit among students from over twenty different health care professions at colleges, universities and places of practice across Canada in order to promote the attitudes, skills and behaviours necessary for health professionals to work together effectively.

Student leadership in interprofessional education, as coordinated by this association, is an essential component of enhancing future health professionals' individual willingness and ability to collaborate in interprofessional teams for better patient-centred care. The contributions of student-initiated interprofessional education are clear: 1) students are an effective vehicle of socialization to enhance the attitudes, values and beliefs of their peers; 2) students can offer a risk-free way of engaging in IPE while building support for this issue among themselves, educators, policymakers and the general public; and 3) students can facilitate the formation of friendships across profession that extend the interprofessional education experience beyond the formal academic setting.

The creation and continued growth of NaHSSA provides the opportunity for all health and human service students in Canada to get involved with student-initiated interprofessional education in a positive and meaningful manner. This five-year strategic plan was developed with the financial support of Health Canada to ensure that this growth is achieved in an effective and sustainable manner.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the NaHSSA Board of Directors of 2006-2007 – Alexandra Harris, Mark Ng, Mahta Rasouli, Stephen Quigley, Mohammad Zarrabian – for the time and support they devoted to developing this strategic plan. Dr John Gilbert, our Faculty Advisor, must also be thanked for his guidance along with Dr Ivy Oandasan, Dr Louise Nasmith, Brenda Sawatzsky-Girling, Enette Pauzé, Daniel Rosenfield and members of the NaHSSA Advisory Council for their helpful advice that contributed greatly to this project. Finally, recognition must go to Canada's health and human service students who are truly leading these important initiatives throughout the country.

Thank you for taking the time to review our five-year strategic plan. After reading it, I hope you will be as excited about the potential of this association as I am!



Steven J Hoffman  
*NaHSSA President 2006-2007*

# Executive Summary

---

## BACKGROUND

Established in January 2005, the National Health Sciences Students' Association (NaHSSA) is a diverse network of student chapters that seeks to address the unmet need of actively involving Canada's health and human service students in interprofessional education while promoting the attitudes, skills, and behaviours necessary to provide collaborative patient-centred care. Despite being a relatively new organization and the first of its kind in the world, NaHSSA has accomplished various goals related to advancing interprofessional education and plans to continue expanding in the years to come. Having been formally recognized by both Health Canada and the Health Council of Canada for exceptional efforts, there is no question that NaHSSA's role will become increasingly important as interprofessional care continues to move forward. This document highlights NaHSSA's history, vision and strategic plan for attaining its goals over the coming five years.

## OUR WORK

NaHSSA has three primary objectives:

1. PROMOTE INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR COLLABORATIVE PATIENT-CENTRED PRACTICE

NaHSSA will increase awareness among health and human service students for interprofessional education as a way of improving the health of patients.

2. FACILITATE AND POTENTIATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERPROFESSIONAL INTERACTION

NaHSSA will encourage health and human service students to interact with one another by publicizing, creating and enhancing interprofessional education opportunities.

3. FOSTER STUDENT CHAMPIONS TO LEAD INTERPROFESSIONAL EFFORTS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

NaHSSA will also aim to inspire and nurture student leaders who can champion interprofessional education within their local communities and further promote the goals associated with collaborative practice.

## A NATIONAL NETWORK OF LOCAL CHAPTERS

NaHSSA's local chapters actively work to connect health sciences students from the various disciplines at their institutions of higher education through academic, social and community outreach initiatives. Not only do students learn about the roles of each profession, but they also appreciate how each member fits in a team setting.

As of March 2007, NaHSSA consists of 17 university- and college-based chapters and 5 additional schools that have joined as an "association of associations." Not only does NaHSSA endeavour to *create* additional chapters, but the association seeks to *enhance* each local chapter so that its leadership can provide the best possible services to health sciences students at their local university, college or place of practice. Additionally, NaHSSA facilitates the *continuity* of each chapter to ensure long-term sustainability of the entire association. Chapters are expected to remain accountable, maintain communication with the national leadership, and serve as foci of innovation.

As a national organization, NaHSSA recognizes that its strength lies within the combined efforts of its local chapters across Canada.

## A NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Given the national nature of the association, effective communication across geographic boundaries is imperative. Indeed, NaHSSA has embarked upon various communications strategies, including: 1) national email directory of chapter representatives; 2) telephone directory of local chapter leaders; 3) frequent one-on-one telephone meetings; 4) occasional teleconference consultations; 5) Advisory Council meetings; 6) website ([www.nahssa.ca](http://www.nahssa.ca)); 7) annual newsletter; and 8) annual conference.

Additionally, for local chapters to communicate with one another, NaHSSA is developing an online student forum, chapter development kit and online chapter development database.

NaHSSA is also actively establishing and nurturing partnerships with other health care organizations. These include (but are not limited to) Health Canada, national agencies, provincial governments, patient safety initiatives, other health student associations, and most recently, the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative (CIHC).

NaHSSA is also endeavoring to become a fully bilingual association, and is closer to achieving this goal through the recent creation and appointment of a VP Bilingualism.

*"NaHSSA will aim to achieve its goals through four main strategies: networking, knowledge exchange, national programming and national leadership."*

## NATIONAL INITIATIVES

NaHSSA will aim to achieve its goals through four main strategies:

### 1. NETWORKING

NaHSSA will work to provide a forum for Canada's health and human service students to network and share their enthusiasm and motivation for interprofessional collaboration. The association will motivate student leaders and encourage them to develop innovative student-initiated IPE programming as part of a larger community that shares ideas and promotes best practices. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy: 1) Annual Conference; 2) Online Student Forum; and 3) NaHSSA Advisory Council.

### 2. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

NaHSSA will aim to exchange knowledge (including expertise, past experiences, achievements and program resources) with the people who can use them to enhance the goals associated with interprofessional collaboration. This association will provide its local chapters with the program resources to run valuable interprofessional programming and effectively communicate their collective accomplishments to key stakeholders. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy: 1) Website; 2) Chapter Development Kit; 3) Online Chapter Resources Database; 4) Annual Newsletter; 5) Year-in-Review; and 6) External Relations.

### 3. NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

NaHSSA aims to complement local chapter events with national programming that is accessible to students from across Canada and provide a milieu for the development of student leaders at a national level. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy: 1) Interprofessional Education Teleconference Seminar Series; 2) Leadership Development Program; and 3) NaHSSA Essay Contest.

### 4. NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

NaHSSA aims to represent the Canadian health sciences student community on matters related to interprofessional collaboration and foster the leaders of tomorrow for the sustainability of its local chapters and other student-initiated projects. This association will also encourage the development of student-initiated interprofessional education projects through leadership and organizational support. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy: 1) Apolitical Advocacy; 2) Innovative Local Chapter Programming Initiative; 3) NaHSSA IPE Mentorship Award; 4) Creation of New Local Chapters; 5) Recruitment of Individual Members; and 6) Partnership with the CIHC.

## OPERATIONS

NaHSSA is led by a national Board of Directors that consists of ten positions: President, VP Student Affairs, VP Academic, VP Bilingualism, VP Chapter Development, VP Communications, VP Finance, VP Internal, VP Legal, Faculty Advisor (from the UBC College of Health Disciplines), Faculty Advisor (from the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative), and Past-President (non-voting member). An Advisory Council also exists to guide the vision of the association and provide a strong voice to NaHSSA's local chapter leaders from across the country in the association's governance. Each year NaHSSA holds an Annual General Meeting where students are given the opportunity to pass resolutions, review the operations of the association, and elect a new Board of Directors to coordinate member chapters' collective efforts throughout the year. A semi-annual Board of Directors meeting complements this meeting and allows for enhanced coordination of the association's activities.

Based at the UBC College of Health Disciplines, NaHSSA is a registered non-profit association incorporated in the Province of British Columbia that strives to maintain the highest level of financial accountability to its members, partners and supporters.

NaHSSA and CIHC – as Canada's only two national non-governmental organizations devoted to interprofessional collaboration – have an opportunity to integrate their work and complement each other's initiatives. Working under the generally accepted assumption that CIHC will become a full-fledged national association beyond its current mandate that ends on 31 March 2008, NaHSSA will work to enhance its efforts through the closest possible cooperation with the CIHC and sharing organizational resources for increased efficiencies.

*“Based at the UBC  
College of Health  
Disciplines,  
NaHSSA is a  
registered non-  
profit association”*

## BEYOND 2011

While there are many possible initiatives that NaHSSA could undertake, some wonderful ideas for future projects are most likely beyond the association's current capabilities for logistical and financial reasons. Nevertheless, there is hope that this association will eventually run such ambitious projects. Some ideas include: 1) establishment of regional networks; 2) publication of a peer-reviewed academic journal for students' work; 3) linking the efforts of student-run interprofessional health clinics across Canada; 4) maintaining an online database of interprofessional opportunities; 5) shared programming with other recognized national student organizations; 6) public relations campaign to enhance awareness for interprofessional education among Canadians; 7) recruitment of tens of thousands of health sciences students to become individuals members of NaHSSA from across Canada; 8) development of an international student association that links national student associations that are devoted to promoting interprofessional education; and 9) hiring of permanent staff to enable these efforts.

# 1. Background

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

Formed in January 2005, the National Health Sciences Students Association (NaHSSA) is the first and only national interprofessional student association in the world. As a diverse network of university and college-based chapters, NaHSSA seeks to address the unmet need of actively involving Canada's health and human service students in interprofessional education while promoting the attitudes, skills, and behaviours necessary to provide collaborative patient-centred care. NaHSSA has great potential to positively influence the educational and professional development of Canada's next generation of health care providers and will become a premier pan-Canadian student federation capable of achieving great success in this area.

The idea of creating a national interprofessional student association was raised over a casual coffee break conversation and came to fruition through a successful grant application to Health Canada's Primary Health Care Transition Fund. NaHSSA's

*"NaHSSA has demonstrated true leadership in furthering this agenda. The importance of its work is immeasurable as the Association's members are the health care providers and leaders of tomorrow who will help strengthen and shape the future of health care delivery...Advancing the Interprofessional Education for Collaborative Patient-Centred Practice agenda would not be possible without hard work and dedication from various partners, including our colleagues at NaHSSA. This association is run by students, for students, with the ultimate benefactors being the patients, and hence, the public. On behalf of all Canadians and Health Canada I would like to thank you for your energy, enthusiasm and vision. We look forward to strengthening our working relationship with NaHSSA and wish the association continued success."*

– Sandra MacDonald-Rencz, Executive Director,  
Office of Nursing Policy, Health Canada, 2006

*"Students make valuable contributions to their own learning environments as leaders, recruiters, peer mentors, among many other roles. A particular strength...is the involvement of the Health Sciences Students Association. This group, the first of its kind in Canada but now part of a national movement involving students at 20 universities, passionately promotes the program at area high schools and helps to orient first-year students to the philosophy and values of the program. Comprised of students in midwifery, laboratory sciences, rehabilitation therapy, dentistry, medicine, nursing, nutrition, social work, psychology, and other disciplines, this organization represents the great potential for change that can come through thinking and learning through an interprofessional perspective."*

– Report: *Modernizing the Management of Health Human Resources in Canada*,  
Health Council of Canada, 2005

Inaugural Conference, hosted by the University of British Columbia Health Sciences Students' Association, was held from 7-9 January 2005 in Whistler, BC, and was attended by 65 students representing all 16 Canadian universities with medical schools as well as notable experts, academics, health professionals, and provincial and federal policymakers. This conference witnessed the formal launch of NaHSSA which has since expanded its membership and has solidified its future. NaHSSA has now truly become Canada's recognized national interprofessional student association.

## 1.2 MISSION STATEMENT

NaHSSA strives to promote collaborative patient-centred practice and teamwork through interprofessional education in order to respond to the evolving health care needs of Canadians. By increasing health and human service students' awareness for the health professionals around them and by promoting the attitudes, behaviours and skills conducive to interprofessional care through student-initiated projects, this organization strives to improve the health of Canadians through enhanced patient care provided by this country's future health professionals.

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES

To fulfill its central mission of enhancing students' individual willingness to collaborate in interprofessional teams, NaHSSA strives to achieve three main objectives:

### 1.3.1 Promote Interprofessional Education for Collaborative Patient-Centred Practice

NaHSSA will increase awareness among health and human service students for interprofessional education as a way of improving the health of patients. The establishment of vibrant local chapters and the provision of ongoing support for interprofessional programming will be a top priority. Promoting the benefits of interprofessional education and generating enthusiasm for this initiative will also be priorities.

Political advocacy that promotes the adoption of policies incorporating collaborative practice and interprofessional education will be a priority for NaHSSA at the institutional, provincial, and national level. NaHSSA will endeavour to support all interprofessional education-friendly policies that exist and encourage the implementation of such policies where they do not exist.

### 1.3.2 Facilitate and Potentiate Opportunities for Interprofessional Interaction

NaHSSA will encourage health and human service students to interact with one another by publicizing, creating and enhancing interprofessional education opportunities.

In order to fully benefit from the various interprofessional education initiatives that currently exist nationally and internationally, NaHSSA must publicize these potential

experiences among its members and encourage the dissemination of this information to all health and human service students in Canada. This goal will be achieved by utilizing effective communication methods such as a comprehensive website, email directory, publicly accessible listserv, online forum, newsletter and/or local meetings or conferences that advertise these opportunities.

Where such initiatives do not exist, NaHSSA will endeavour to develop or encourage others to develop these opportunities in the most effective way possible. As such, NaHSSA's pan-Canadian network of local chapters will run hundreds of academic and social events annually that are based on research evidence and prove to be of the highest quality. Communication is of utmost importance to the goals of interprofessional practice, and local chapters are in the best position to provide for direct interaction between students. As such, local chapters will spearhead the development, execution, and evaluation of valuable and locally-applicable initiatives that will be enhanced by leadership development programs and complemented by various national initiatives.

NaHSSA will also provide a means for its members to share relevant and valuable knowledge that may assist in furthering their effectiveness in achieving common goals. The creation of an Online Chapter Development Database which included materials such as case studies, program instructions, promotional materials, anecdotes of success, evaluation tools, and inspirational ideas would be a valuable tool for local leaders to lead their own successful programs. National conferences, regional workshops and more intimate chapter-to-chapter relationships will also encourage information sharing.

NaHSSA will encourage the development of formal interprofessional education curricula by students through recognition of student success and by seeking and publicizing funding opportunities for such initiatives. Leading academics and education administrators from across Canada will be encouraged to include student representation on relevant interprofessional education steering groups and health sciences curriculum committees, and create meaningful roles for students in their interprofessional education research projects.

### 1.3.3 Foster Student Champions to Lead Interprofessional Efforts Now and in the Future

NaHSSA will also aim to inspire and nurture student leaders who can champion interprofessional education within their local communities and further promote the goals associated with collaborative practice. This inspiration will stem from creating leadership opportunities within NaHSSA and its local chapters, as well as hosting conferences and developing other practical forums to achieve this goal.

As a student initiative, NaHSSA will also aim to secure student representation and meaningful participation on the various decision-making bodies that influence relevant interprofessional education policies, programs, and funding allocations. This goal will be pursued at the institutional, provincial, and national level.

Further, NaHSSA will encourage student-led research projects that are conducted in interprofessional research teams and/or explore the challenges of collaborative practice and interprofessional education.

## 1.4 MEMBERSHIP

As of 1 January 2007, NaHSSA is composed of health sciences students from over 20 different health and human service professions and the following 19 institutions of higher education from across Canada: 1) University of Alberta, 2) University of British Columbia, 3) University of Calgary; 4) Dalhousie University, 5) Université Laval, 6) University of Manitoba, 7) McGill University, 8) McMaster University, 9) Memorial University of Newfoundland, 10) Université de Montréal, 11) University of Northern British Columbia, 12) University of Ottawa, 13) Queen's University, 14) University of Saskatchewan, 15) Université de Sherbrooke, 16) University of Toronto, 17) University of Victoria, 18) University of Waterloo, and 19) University of Western Ontario.

Membership is open to any recognized organization of health and human service students that promote interprofessional education among their peers at institutions of higher education (including colleges, universities and places of clinical practice). NaHSSA is always looking to expand its membership and reach an even larger number of health professional students across Canada.

*“NaHSSA is composed of health sciences students from over 20 different health and human service professions”*

## 1.5 STRENGTHS

- World's first and only national interprofessional student association
- Student perspective
- Innovation
- Fresh ideas
- Pan-Canadian representation

## 1.6 CHALLENGES

- Financial Sustainability
- Short Student Life Cycle
- Limited communications options

## 2. A National Network of Local Chapters

---

### 2.1 HOW LOCAL CHAPTERS ACTUALLY WORK

NaHSSA's local chapters actively work to connect health sciences students from the various disciplines at their institutions of higher education through academic, social and community outreach initiatives. Not only do students learn about the roles of each profession, but they also appreciate how each member fits in a team setting. Educational programming and social gatherings further encourage trusting friendships to be developed, helping to foster amiable relationships between the various health professions. The leaders of NaHSSA's local chapters from across Canada are devoting their time and using their creative energies towards furthering interprofessionalism by running the following type of events:

- Interprofessional conferences;
- Student-led clinical workshops;
- Small group discussions;
- Lecture series;
- Research symposiums;
- Community fairs;
- High school presentations; and
- Campus newsletters.

Through such initiatives, NaHSSA and its chapters play a key role in uniting Canada's health and human service students in building the health care workforce of tomorrow through such initiatives.

It is clear that the work of NaHSSA and its local chapters throughout the country has increased the awareness of interprofessionalism among students. NaHSSA believes that peer-teaching and learning is among the most effective methods of concept delivery; as such, student-initiated projects are developed, executed, and evaluated by the association's local student leaders at their educational institutions. Through organizing and participating in interprofessional activities/events, students come to truly understand and appreciate the importance of teamwork. Even as a fledgling organization, NaHSSA and its chapters have already proven their collective potential in breeding a new generation of health care professionals who are committed to collaborative patient-centred practice.

## 2.2 CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT

NaHSSA's relationship with its local chapters is unique in the sense that NaHSSA is "an association of associations". The organization is structured in such a way that it is run by local student leaders across Canada. Through communication with its local chapters, NaHSSA ensures that interprofessional issues are being addressed and student-led initiatives are being successfully completed. With this in mind, NaHSSA's role is three-fold regarding local chapters:

1. CREATION – Lead the proliferation of student efforts through the creation of vibrant new chapters that include students from an increasing number of educational institutions.

*FACTORS FOR SUCCESS: Recruitment of student champions, link to faculty mentors, stable funding from the educational institution, chapter development resources and guidance.*

2. ENHANCEMENT – Enhance the efforts of local student leaders by facilitating the sharing of best practices and providing leadership development, training in interprofessional education research literature and access to both innovative educators and student experts.

*FACTORS FOR SUCCESS: Resources, mechanism for information sharing, publicity and promotion, access to experts, ideas exchange, leadership development and motivation.*

3. CONTINUITY – Enable the long-term sustainability of local chapters by linking them to a larger association with the organizational resources to guarantee the vital recruitment of new student leaders and the availability of necessary support mechanisms.

*FACTORS FOR SUCCESS: Strong national association, pan-Canadian recognition, effective communication network, partnerships, external relations, and strong relationships with key stakeholders in the education community.*



*Figure 1: NaHSSA's Chapter Interaction Model that shows the relationship between local chapters and the national leadership.*

NaHSSA's local chapters from across Canada also share collective responsibilities to the greater association. First of all, the local chapters and their leaders are charged with the task of carrying out the goals of NaHSSA and embodying the association's mission statement in all its activities. Most local chapters do this by hosting social events, academic conferences, information sessions, and/or fundraising events that not only spark students' interest in interprofessionalism, but also allow health and human service students from across Canada to learn how to work with their peers. Other than this, the association expects three things of its chapters:

1. **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Uphold principles of accountability for all programming content and the way in which finite resources are utilized. All efforts must be taken to maximize impact based on research literature and best practices.
2. **COMMUNICATION** – Maintain communication with the national leadership and provide frequent updates on all activities.
3. **FOCI OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION** – Serve as a focal point for creative ideas and innovative programming and make every possible effort to exchange this information with other NaHSSA chapters.

Overall, the work of NaHSSA's local chapters is paramount to the association and will undoubtedly form a foundation of interprofessional collaboration for many years to come.

## 2.3 LINKING CHAPTERS TOGETHER AS A NATIONAL NETWORK

As a national organization, NaHSSA's strength lies within the combined efforts of its local chapters across Canada. In addition to the creation, enhancement and continuity of its local chapters, this association provides health and human service students with access to a national network of student leaders which in turn addresses a number of otherwise unmet needs that would limit student efforts in this area. This national network:

- Acts as an information clearinghouse and facilitates the dissemination of knowledge and sharing of ideas;
- Serves as a valuable resource and provide guidance on student efforts based on best practices and experiences from across the country;
- Facilitates social and professional networking among student leaders from across Canada
- Provides a central point-of-contact for student leaders seeking to link with IPE experts, researchers, educators, practitioners and policymakers;
- Fosters student champions and provides opportunities for leadership development;
- Generates enthusiasm among health sciences students for interprofessional collaboration and provides student leaders with the motivation to achieve common goals;
- Educates students through several initiatives at the national level about the importance of interprofessional education and its potential impact on the health care of Canadians
- Holds the legitimacy and credibility to work with large organizations and key stakeholders within the health care community to create interprofessional education opportunities for health professional students; and
- Represents students at provincial, national and international forums on matters related to interprofessional education.

*"NaHSSA's strength lies within the combined efforts of its local chapters across Canada"*

## 3. A National Communications Strategy

---

### 3.1 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NAHSSA AND ITS LOCAL CHAPTERS

Effective communication is vital to ensure the continued growth and success of NaHSSA and its local chapters. The ability to provide direction, offer guidance, share knowledge, and coordinate national initiatives requires a concrete communications system that is recognized by everyone within the association. As such, several means of communication have been developed by the national leadership to ensure that they can remain in constant contact with their local student leaders:

- National email directory of chapter representatives;
- Telephone directory of local chapter leaders;
- Frequent one-on-one telephone meetings;
- Occasional teleconference consultations;
- Advisory Council meetings;
- Website ([www.nahssa.ca](http://www.nahssa.ca));
- Annual newsletter; and
- Annual conference.

An email directory of interested health and human service students will also be maintained by the national leadership of NaHSSA to supplement its chapters' intra-institutional communication networks for major announcements.

### 3.2 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LOCAL CHAPTERS

In addition to maintaining strong lines of communication between the national leadership and local chapters, NaHSSA must facilitate communication between its local chapters so that they may directly share information and collaborate on larger projects. Three main initiatives (described in the "National Initiatives" section of this strategic plan) have been developed to enable communication between NaHSSA's local chapters:

- Online Student Forum;
- Chapter Development Kit; and
- Online Chapter Development Database

### 3.3 EXTERNAL COLLABORATION WITH EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS

To achieve its ambitious goals, NaHSSA realizes that it must work with a wide array of existing organizations to both enhance its efforts and ensure the overall sustainability of its work. NaHSSA will therefore collaborate with any organization that is seeking to improve the health of Canadians and has been fortunate to receive support and encouragement from various groups including Health Canada, provincial health ministries and many health professional associations provincially, nationally and internationally.

While NaHSSA is a new association, many organizations currently exist that are interested in collaborative patient-centred practice and interprofessional education. As such, NaHSSA will reach out to these groups and form mutual partnerships to enhance patient care in Canada's health care system. The following groups are seen as potential partners:

- Government of Canada (i.e., Health Canada);
- National agencies (e.g., Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency);
- Provincial governments (i.e., Ministries of Health and Education);
- Projects funded through Health Canada's Interprofessional Education for Collaborative Patient-Centred Practice (IECPCP) Initiative and/or Health Human Resource Strategy;
- Patient safety organizations (e.g., Canadian Patient Safety Institute);
- Health care renewal organizations (e.g., Health Council of Canada);
- Health professional associations (e.g., Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, Canadian Association of Social Workers);
- Student health professional associations (e.g., Canadian Nurses Students Association, Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns, Student Canadian Chiropractic Association);
- Other health-related student organizations (e.g., Canadian Society for Life Science Research, New Health Professionals Network);
- Other health-related associations (e.g., Canadian Diabetes Association, Canadian Mental Health Association, Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada);
- Charitable foundations; and
- Academic and/or policy associations.

*"NaHSSA will [...] form mutual partnerships to enhance patient care in Canada's health care system"*

NaHSSA's local chapters work especially close with local health professional student societies and/or student councils and endeavour to collaborate with other existing organizations at their institutions of higher education, including:

- Faculty and student leaders within health professional schools, colleges and faculties;
- Offices and/or educational units devoted to interprofessional education;
- Projects funded through Health Canada's Interprofessional Education for Collaborative Patient-Centred Practice (IECPCP) Initiative;
- Faculty-initiated educational projects;
- Faculty and/or student publications; and
- Student-run health clinics.

### 3.4 OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF PAN-CANADIAN COMMUNICATION

The great geographical divide that separates the association's leaders is an enormous challenge to overcome. Face-to-face meetings and other conventional means of national communication are prohibitively expensive and must be used judiciously. As a response to this challenge, NaHSSA will utilize free modern electronic communications tools – including email, online instant messaging, and online video conferencing – that generally complement students' comfort with internet-based technologies. However, the need to better coordinate the activities of the national executive, regional networks, and the entire association will require direct teleconferencing from time to time.

### 3.5 BILINGUALISM

As a national association that has member chapters in almost every Canadian province, NaHSSA recognizes the importance of bilingualism and reaching out to student populations that speak in either English or French as their first language. However, with most of NaHSSA's current leadership based outside of Canada's French speaking communities and the prohibitive expense of professional translation services, practicality dictates that true bilingualism as would be envisioned for a national association is not yet possible. Full efforts, however, will be made in partnership with NaHSSA's local chapters in Quebec to ensure that this association truly represents the bilingual character of Canada in the very near future. In the meantime, student translators will be recruited and priority documents will be translated into both official languages.

## 4. National Initiatives

### 4.1 FOCUS OF NATIONAL INITIATIVES

NaHSSA will aim to achieve its goals through four main strategies: 1) Networking; 2) Knowledge Exchange; 3) National Programming; and 4) National Leadership.

### 4.2 STRATEGY #1: NETWORKING

NaHSSA will work to provide a forum for Canada's health and human service students to network and share their enthusiasm and motivation for interprofessional collaboration. The association will motivate student leaders and encourage them to develop innovative student-initiated IPE programming as part of a larger community that shares ideas and promotes best practices. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy:

#### OUTCOME BY 2011

1. A forum for Canada's health and human service students to network and share their enthusiasm and motivation for interprofessional collaboration;
2. Cohort of student leaders that lead innovative student-initiated interprofessional education programming; and
3. Mechanisms to share ideas and promote best practices within the NaHSSA community.

#### 4.2.1 Annual Conference

NaHSSA's Annual Conference is an opportunity for student leaders from across Canada to meet after a year of accomplishments to share programming ideas, discuss future directions, collaborate on national projects, and enhance our national and regional linkages. This conference is also a time to formulate policy, strategize, and revitalize the association's commitment toward interprofessional education. Working groups are also given time to form and deliberate the future direction of NaHSSA as a collective body. The annual conference features various speakers, academic sessions, and policy debates, as well as the association's Annual General Meeting where past initiatives will be evaluated and a new board of directors will be elected.

### 4.2.2 Online Student Forum

The Online Student Forum will not only improve chapter-to-chapter communication, but it will also serve as central communications hub for all health professional students in Canada. This forum provides students with a mechanism to share and access information relevant to promoting interprofessional collaboration, and allows local chapter leaders to share ideas and discuss interprofessional topics and issues of importance to them. The forum will be connected to NaHSSA's website and will be accessible to everyone.

### 4.2.3 NaHSSA Advisory Council

The NaHSSA Advisory Council (to be described in the "Operations" section of this strategic plan) will also allow key student leaders from across Canada to network with one another and enhance their local efforts.

STRATEGY # 1: NETWORKING			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
Annual Conference	Jan 2007  2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinate conference for NaHSSA leaders to meet with some emphasis on IPE for those leaders</li> <li>▪ Recruit new cohort of national leaders including new Board of Director positions (VP Finance and VP Chapter Development)</li> <li>▪ Coordinate the world's first student-run national conference on IPE that is open to everyone</li> <li>▪ Slowly change format of conference <i>from</i> meetings exclusively aimed at further developing NaHSSA <i>to</i> student-centred interprofessional education for all health sciences students with concurrent meetings for NaHSSA's student leaders</li> <li>▪ Conferences should progressively become self-financed and eventually serve as a mechanism to raise funds for the association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conference for all of Canada's health sciences students on topics pertaining to interprofessionalism</li> <li>▪ Educational opportunities for students outside of NaHSSA leadership to learn about interprofessionalism and the importance of team-based care</li> <li>▪ Forum for NaHSSA meetings coinciding with this conference (to include Board of Directors, Advisory Council, local chapter leaders, key stakeholders, etc)</li> <li>▪ Annual focal point for all student-initiated interprofessional education efforts</li> <li>▪ Self-financed event that serves as an annual fundraiser for the association</li> </ul>

STRATEGY #1: NETWORKING			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
<b>Advisory Council</b>	Aug 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish advisory council including small group of chapter leaders</li> <li>▪ Led by Board of Directors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decision-making body that provides ongoing direction for the work of the Board of Directors</li> <li>▪ Mechanism for maintaining accountability among the Board of Directors for carrying out the vision of NaHSSA's members (local chapters)</li> <li>▪ Forum for exchanging ideas, planning future direction of the association, and leading national initiatives</li> <li>▪ Breeding ground for new leaders to assume national leadership positions within NaHSSA</li> </ul>
	Jan 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hold advisory council meeting at conference to discuss future governance of advisory council</li> </ul>	
	2007 or 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer representation to every established local chapter</li> <li>▪ Chapter leaders assume leadership role over advisory council and assert decision-making capacity</li> </ul>	
	2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work towards developing advisory body that provides ongoing direction and support for Board of Directors</li> </ul>	
<b>Online Student Forum</b>	Sept-Dec 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish online forum for NaHSSA's local chapter leaders to communicate with each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mechanism for ongoing electronic communication among NaHSSA's local and national leaders</li> <li>▪ Discussions among Canada's health and human service students on Allow for ongoing discussions</li> <li>▪ Open space for individuals to voice their opinions on anything related to interprofessionalism and other health-related issues</li> <li>▪ Continue enthusiasm and information exchange that is generated at annual conferences</li> </ul>
	Jan 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Announce the launch of this forum at NaHSSA's annual conference</li> </ul>	
	2007-2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate effectiveness of forum and make improvements</li> </ul>	
	2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open forum to all health professional students within Canada and internationally to discuss topics related to IPE</li> </ul>	
	2007-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continually moderate forum and initiate new discussions of interest</li> <li>▪ Enhance navigation system and interactive functions</li> <li>▪ Encourage active use by all students</li> </ul>	

### 4.3 STRATEGY #2: KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

NaHSSA will aim to exchange knowledge (including expertise, past experiences, achievements and program resources) with the people who can use them to enhance the goals associated with interprofessional collaboration. This association will provide its local chapters with the program resources to run valuable interprofessional programming and effectively communicate their collective accomplishments to key stakeholders. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy:

#### OUTCOME BY 2011

1. Mechanisms and institutional know-how to effectively exchange knowledge among NaHSSA's national leadership, local chapters and the greater health sciences community;
2. An effective method of providing NaHSSA's local chapters with the program resources they need to run valuable, evidence-based interprofessional programming; and
3. Proven dissemination strategy to effectively communicate and highlight the accomplishments of NaHSSA's national leadership and its local chapters.

#### 4.3.1 Website

NaHSSA will maintain a website ([www.nahssa.ca](http://www.nahssa.ca)) that is relevant and easy to navigate. The association recognizes the importance of electronic media in providing effective and efficient communication between the national body and its member chapters, in addition to better informing the public regarding our goals and achievements.

#### 4.3.2 Chapter Development Kit

Serving as a collection of valuable documents compiled from the efforts of NaHSSA's local chapters and the national leadership, the Chapter Development Kit will act as a resource for existing student leaders and provide an excellent starting point for newly formed chapters. In CD format, this kit will be updated and distributed annually at NaHSSA's conference and would contain documents such as the following:

- Events information package (including a list of event ideas, suggestions for how to go about planning events, sample posters, letters, and other resources that would be needed when planning an event);
- List of national professional and institutional contacts that are willing to assist in the development of student-initiated interprofessional education projects (including researchers, practitioners, professional champions, and policymakers);

- Current research articles that chapters can use to better inform their efforts;
- Governance documents including bylaws and constitutions;
- Presentations previously given by local chapters and the national leadership;
- Sample logo designs and templates for stationary (including business cards, envelopes, and letterhead);
- Information brochures on interprofessional education and NaHSSA;
- Anecdotes of success and advice;
- List of other NaHSSA resources (including the website, online student forum, and contact information for current NaHSSA leaders)

### 4.3.3 Online Chapter Development Database

Working complementary with the Chapter Development Kit, the Online Chapter Development Database will facilitate the sharing of documents, materials, and event ideas that are developed between publication of the annual Chapter Development Kit. This online database similarly promotes the use of best practices in local interprofessional education programming and enables cross-national synergistic teamwork. It will be connected to the NaHSSA website and accessible exclusively to NaHSSA's members.

*"This online database promotes the use of best practices in local interprofessional education programming and enables cross-national synergistic teamwork."*

### 4.3.4 Annual Newsletter

One newsletter will be published each year in an electronic format to serve as a vehicle of communication between NaHSSA and Canada's health and human service students. This project also has the ancillary benefit of creating a sense of community between chapters, in addition to informing the greater health sciences community of our progress and the objectives achieved.

### 4.3.5 Year-In-Review

Towards the end of each year, a Year-In-Review will be published to communicate NaHSSA's achievements to key stakeholders including researchers, practitioners, educators, education administrators, policymakers, potential sponsors and leaders of relevant health organizations in Canada and internationally. This publication will also serve to highlight lessons learned, individual stories of success, ongoing projects and new partnerships.

### 4.3.6 External Relations

As a relatively new national organization, NaHSSA must strive to promote itself and receive recognition from various student, academic, and policy communities in Canada. Coupled with the promotion of interprofessional education and collaborative patient-centred practice, the act of informing the greater health community on the progress of NaHSSA will facilitate enhanced student involvement in achieving this goal and participation in interprofessional activities. As such, the need to represent NaHSSA at relevant forums will be of utmost importance as our initiatives and goals mature, as will the development of an effective media relations strategy.

STRATEGY #2: KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
Website	Aug 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop functioning website that contains basic information about NaHSSA and its operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interactive tool for all health sciences students across Canada to share information</li> <li>▪ Enhance NaHSSA's image among key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Mechanism to reach out to interested individuals within Canada and internationally Support fundraising efforts by highlighting work of NaHSSA and its achievements</li> </ul>
	Mar 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professionally designed website that brings credibility to NaHSSA and includes interactive components (online student forum, online chapter development database resources database, etc)</li> <li>▪ Website based on "content management system" technology to make future updates relatively easy</li> </ul>	
	2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update and maintain website content</li> <li>▪ Further enhance interactive functions</li> </ul>	

STRATEGY #2: KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
<b>Chapter Development Kit</b>	Jan 2007  2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distribute first edition of chapter development kit that contains at least some valuable resources for local student leaders at the annual conference</li> <li>▪ Establish organized system whereby chapter leaders continually share their documents and resources for inclusion in the kit's next edition</li> <li>▪ Update kit annually and distribute as necessary</li> <li>▪ Make the kit available online for easy accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annually updated compilation of valuable documents and resources for chapter leaders to create and enhance their local chapter efforts</li> <li>▪ Single package for useful chapter resources to help new chapters start-up and achieve early successes</li> </ul>
<b>Online Chapter Development Database</b>	Jan 2007  2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a members-only interactive database for Board of Directors and local chapter leaders to exchange resources</li> <li>▪ Maintain and further enhance interface and database resources</li> <li>▪ Continually encourage local chapter leaders to share their resources and provide incentives for remembering to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Forum for student interaction and resource sharing to complement the Chapter Development Kit</li> <li>▪ Facilitating the exchange of documents, materials, event ideas and anecdotes of success</li> <li>▪ Enable cross-national synergistic program development</li> </ul>



STRATEGY #2: KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
External Relations	2006-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Network with health-related associations</li> <li>▪ Establish strong partnerships with relevant groups</li> <li>▪ Secure NaHSSA representation at various health professional and interprofessional conferences</li> <li>▪ Promote the work of NaHSSA throughout the health sciences community</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement media relations strategy</li> <li>▪ Generate media coverage for NaHSSA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Canada-wide recognition of NaHSSA as the premier student-run organization for promoting interprofessional education</li> <li>▪ Recognition for the value of student involvement in leading interprofessional education initiatives</li> </ul>

## 4.4 STRATEGY #3: NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

NaHSSA aims to complement local chapter events with national programming that is accessible to students from across Canada and provide a milieu for the development of student leaders at a national level. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy:

OUTCOME BY 2011

1. Diverse offering of valuable national programs that are accessible to students from across Canada and complement what is offered at the local level; and
2. A facilitative environment for the development of student leaders at a national level.

### 4.4.1 IPE Teleconference Seminar Series

Using its clout as a national association and the help of its professional supporters, NaHSSA will run a series of seminars via teleconference on relevant health topics. Students from across Canada will be invited to call-in and share their thoughts with experts at the top of their fields who will first give an informal presentation based on their expertise.

### 4.4.2 Leadership Development Program

NaHSSA's vitality as a student association depends upon the ability of its student leaders to direct the work of the organization and nurture the development of additional leaders to carry on this mission. As such, an ongoing leadership development program for NaHSSA's student leaders will be established to promote effective leadership, generate enthusiasm, and provide the necessary education and skills to work in the knowledge-intensive, research-based environment of interprofessional health education.

### 4.4.3 National Essay Contest

How are health professionals of today cooperating and how will they do so in the future? Due to the fact that collaborative care represents the future paradigm of healthcare, this topic is of vital interest not only to the members of NaHSSA, but to the future professionals and patients of the Canadian health system. Therefore, NaHSSA is proud to stimulate more thought in this area by coordinating an annual essay competition.

The NaHSSA Essay Competition will aim to achieve two goals: increase participation in interprofessional activities and encourage future health professionals to contemplate collaborative care. Information about the competition including specifics of essay topic and length will be given to local chapters and submissions will be accepted until the deadline. A selection committee will be established by the NaHSSA Board of Directors who will subsequently review the entries and choose the winners of monetary prizes to recognize the entrants' efforts.

STRATEGY #3: NATIONAL PROGRAMMING			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
<b>IPE Tele-conference Seminar Series</b>	Jan 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop program concept and establish timeline</li> <li>▪ Get involvement from local chapter leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A respected national teleconference seminar series with many participants and notable speakers</li> <li>▪ Mechanism to exchange knowledge between highly respected experts and a new generation of health care practitioners</li> <li>▪ Increase awareness for issues related to interprofessional practice, education, research, and policy, as well as other relevant health issues of great importance.</li> </ul>
	Jan-Mar 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Production of the first iteration of the teleconference series on a small-scale with limited numbers of participants</li> <li>▪ Evaluate the effectiveness of different telecommunications technologies to support this initiative</li> </ul>	
	2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open seminar series to all individual members of NaHSSA and encourage their participation</li> <li>▪ Continual evaluation of the technology supporting this initiative</li> <li>▪ Aim to diversity topics and secure presenters who would attract many participants</li> <li>▪ Seek sponsorships from Canada's telecommunications industry</li> </ul>	

### STRATEGY #3: NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
<b>Leadership Development Program</b>	2007-2008  2008-2010  2010-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop plan for leadership development program</li> <li>▪ Consult local chapters and key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Partner with relevant organizations</li> <li>▪ Test the implementation of the leadership development program on a small scale</li> <li>▪ Expand program to enhance accessibility</li> <li>▪ Evaluate program with an eye for progressive improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective program that fosters student leaders and encourages them to lead efforts promoting interprofessional collaboration</li> <li>▪ Cohort of student champions to lead the efforts of NaHSSA and eventually lead efforts to work collaboratively in their future place of practice</li> </ul>
<b>NaHSSA Essay Contest</b>	Aug-Dec 2006  Jan-Mar 2007  2007-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish plans for an annual NaHSSA Essay Contest</li> <li>▪ Consult local chapter leaders on most effective way to publicize the contest</li> <li>▪ Announce the first annual NaHSSA Essay Contest to Canada's health and human service students</li> <li>▪ Encourage student participation and publicize incentives for submitting an entry</li> <li>▪ Form a selection committee to review all submitted essays and select the winners</li> <li>▪ Publicly announce the winning entrants</li> <li>▪ Invite winners to present their papers at NaHSSA's annual conference and disburse prizes</li> <li>▪ Evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative and make improvements as necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National essay contest with wide recognition and active participation by many health sciences students from across the country</li> <li>▪ Enhanced awareness for interprofessional education for collaborative patient-centred practice</li> </ul>

## 4.5 STRATEGY #4: NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

NaHSSA aims to represent the Canadian health sciences student community on matters related to interprofessional collaboration and foster the leaders of tomorrow for the sustainability of its local chapters and other student-initiated projects. This association will also encourage the development of student-initiated interprofessional education projects through leadership and organizational support. The following initiatives will be undertaken as part of this strategy:

### OUTCOME BY 2011

1. Recognition that NaHSSA is Canada's health and human service student voice on matters related to interprofessional collaboration;
2. Proven institutional capacity to foster the leaders of tomorrow for the sustainability of NaHSSA, its local chapters and other student-initiated projects; and
3. Mechanisms to encourage the development of student-initiated interprofessional education projects through leadership and support.

### 4.5.1 Apolitical Advocacy

NaHSSA will represent the student voice and promote the adoption of policies that support interprofessional collaboration at institutions of higher education, relevant health organizations, professional associations, and all levels of government. NaHSSA will support the enhancement of interprofessional education curricula where it exists and encourage the development and implementation of such curricula where it does not exist.

### 4.5.2 Innovative Local Chapter Programming Initiative

In addition to providing a mechanism for national collaboration between chapters, NaHSSA hopes to provide modest, targeted financial grants for local chapter development and special projects that go beyond regular programming and require more support than locally accessible. Innovative projects that enhance regional linkages or combine the efforts of multiple chapters are of particular interest and will be especially encouraged. If and when funds become available for this initiative, special calls for proposals will be sent out and local chapters will compete for funding based on their proposed programs. Recipient chapters will be required to demonstrate responsibility, transparency, and accountability, and will report on their progress and evaluate their outcome to encourage best practices in the future. The sharing of all resources developed for the supported project will be required and the student leaders involved will be expected to serve as sources of expertise for others who may wish to lead something similar.

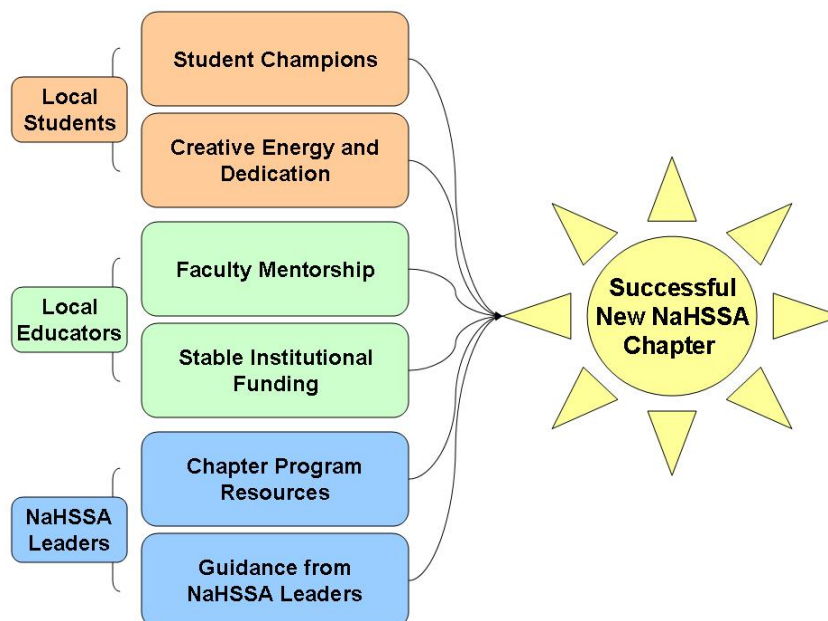
### 4.5.3 NaHSSA IPE Mentorship Award

NaHSSA will establish an IPE Mentorship Award that will be awarded annually to recognize the contributions of one educator from across Canada for their extraordinary support of student-initiated interprofessional projects. Based on the premise that students are in a unique position to recognize the work of their educators, nominations will be sought from student leaders and a selection committee will be formed by NaHSSA's Board of Directors to choose the winning educator. Pending the availability of adequate funding, this award will include a plaque, an invitation to address the association at its annual conference, and reimbursement for the costs associated with attending the conference.

### 4.5.4 Creation of New Local Chapters

As interest in collaborative patient-centred practice and IPE continue to grow, new colleges, universities and places of practice will undoubtedly wish to form chapters and expand NaHSSA's network of interprofessional education programming. To facilitate such efforts, NaHSSA will provide the necessary chapter program resources and guidance to complement the local student leaders' own creative energy and their institution's funding and mentorship. Unlike the past, it is expected that chapter start-up grants will not be available in the future.

Special efforts will be taken over the next five years to start local chapters at colleges, where almost 75% of all health professionals are trained. Supportive administrators and educators within the college community will be identified and chapters will be formed in a manner that supports existing interprofessional education projects at those institutions.



*Figure 2: NaHSSA's Chapter Creation Model for the successful development of new local chapters.*

#### 4.5.5 Recruitment of Individual Members

While NaHSSA is legally an “association of associations” whose membership technically consists of its local chapters, the association will develop an action plan for offering individual, non-voting memberships that target Canada’s health and human service students directly. Benefits may include access to members-only sections of NaHSSA’s website, updates on NaHSSA’s activities, links to the professional world, special discounts, invitation to attend NaHSSA’s annual conference, discounts, and possibly automatic student membership to a relevant national interprofessional organization for practicing professionals, educators and policymakers (i.e., Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative). Offering individual memberships will enable NaHSSA to directly target interested health professional students and raise funds through a small student fee that would be shared with the local chapter that actually sold the individual membership.

STRATEGY #4: NATIONAL LEADERSHIP			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
<b>Apolitical Advocacy</b>	Apr-Aug 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop framework for apolitical advocacy</li> <li>▪ Identify focus areas for advocacy efforts (e.g., curricular reform)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective strategies to advocate for a student role in interprofessional activities</li> <li>▪ Represent health sciences students to key decision-makers and provide student input on matters concerning interprofessional collaboration</li> <li>▪ Capacity to respond to emerging issues</li> <li>▪ Act as a resource for decision-makers on issues that affect health professional students across disciplines</li> </ul>
	2007-2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify target audiences and pressing issues</li> <li>▪ Identify and secure support from established groups</li> <li>▪ Begin coordinating apolitical advocacy efforts</li> </ul>	
	2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Begin to develop the capability to quickly respond to emerging issues that directly impact policies concerning interprofessional collaboration</li> <li>▪ Begin proactively writing policy papers and disseminating them among key target audiences</li> <li>▪ Evaluate effectiveness of this initiative and refine framework for NaHSSA’s apolitical advocacy efforts</li> <li>▪ Promote NaHSSA as a valuable resource for decision-makers on issues that affect health professional students across disciplines</li> </ul>	

STRATEGY #4: NATIONAL LEADERSHIP			
Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
	2009-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continually identify partners and topics of pressing concern for Canada's health sciences students</li> <li>▪ Enhance local chapter leaders' capacity to respond quickly to emerging issues that directly impact policies concerning interprofessional collaboration</li> <li>▪ Continually identify and implement innovative ways to promote student involvement in relevant interprofessional activities</li> </ul>	
<b>Innovative Local Chapter Programming Initiative</b>	2008-2011  2009-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage innovation and promote information sharing among NaHSSA's local chapters through this initiative</li> <li>▪ Develop and maintain a database of potential donors for local chapter leaders to review when seeking support for new projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination of innovative local chapter projects made possible through NaHSSA's fundraising efforts</li> </ul>
<b>NaHSSA IPE Mentorship Award</b>	Sep 2006  Jan 2007  2007-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Call for nominations from local chapter leaders</li> <li>▪ Announce winner of the first annual NaHSSA IPE Mentorship Award</li> <li>▪ Award winners invited to deliver keynote address to the NaHSSA conference delegates</li> <li>▪ Generate publicity for the award winner in the media</li> <li>▪ Run initiative on an annual basis</li> <li>▪ Evaluate program and make improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mechanism for recognizing the contributions of IPE educators across Canada for their support of student-initiated interprofessional projects</li> <li>▪ Award to have great stature generating media awareness</li> </ul>

## STRATEGY #4: NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
Creation of New Chapters	2006-2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of framework for chapter development and the creation of new local chapters</li> <li>▪ Establish plan for growth and conduct consultations</li> <li>▪ Chapters (or chapters-in-progress) to be established at all universities in Canada with medical and/or pharmacy schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A proper representation of health sciences students from across Canada with chapters based at colleges, universities and places of practice</li> <li>▪ Promotion of IPE to a greater population of health sciences students</li> <li>▪ Accessibility to local chapter programming throughout Canada</li> <li>▪ Efforts to include students that cannot access local chapter initiatives</li> </ul>
	Jan-Aug 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify potential locations for new chapters (with a special focus on including colleges)</li> <li>▪ Secure support of key educators and leaders within the college system</li> <li>▪ Send introductory letters to administrators offering support for development of student chapters</li> </ul>	
	2007-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Slowly develop contacts at other educational institutions and continually develop new chapters and expand to an increasing number of locations</li> <li>▪ Encourage select health science student leaders from non-member schools to attend NaHSSA's annual conference</li> <li>▪ Facilitate chapter start-up and provide ongoing support throughout their development</li> <li>▪ Develop a strategy to include Canadian health and human service students that cannot participate in the efforts of the association's local chapters</li> </ul>	

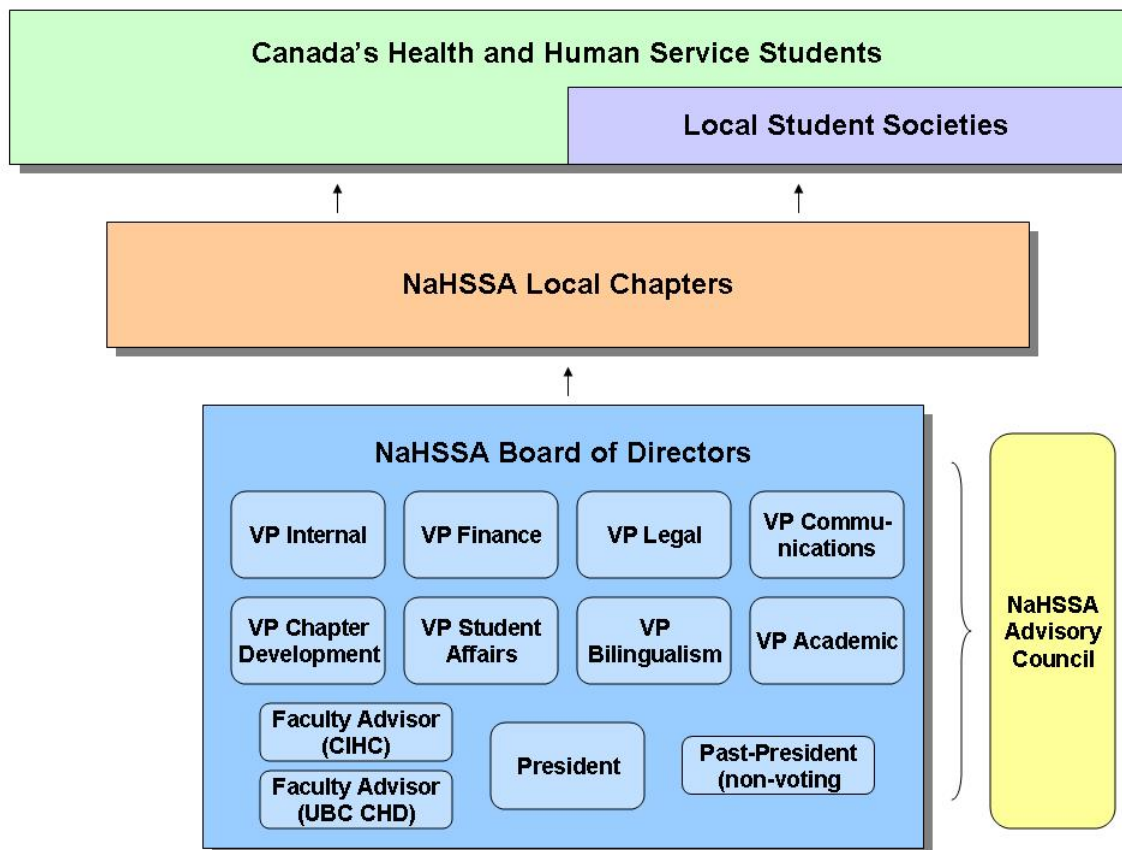
## STRATEGY #4: NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Activities	Time Frames	Plan of Action	What do we expect to achieve by March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2011?
<b>Recruitment of Individual Members</b>	2006-2007  Apr 2007  2007-2008  2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop plan for offering individual memberships</li> <li>▪ Begin offering individual memberships for modest fee</li> <li>▪ Develop mechanism to register and pay for individual memberships using NaHSSA's website</li> <li>▪ Secure benefits for students to become individual members of NaHSSA</li> <li>▪ Promote membership among Canada's health and human service students</li> <li>▪ Encourage chapters to sell individual memberships by offering to share a portion of the revenue</li> <li>▪ Agressively expand NaHSSA's network of individual members and enhance the services offered to them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large network of individual students that are interested in IPE and the work of NaHSSA</li> <li>▪ Mechanism to raise funds for the association</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership with the Canadian Inter-professional Health Collaborative (CIHC)</b>	2006-2007  2007-2008  2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the development of the CIHC</li> <li>▪ Sign formal agreement outlining specific plans for mutual cooperation until 31 March 2008 and intentions for collaboration beyond this date</li> <li>▪ Recognition of NaHSSA as the official student partner of the CIHC</li> <li>▪ Begin process of integrating the work of NaHSSA with that of the CIHC and its pan-Canadian partners</li> <li>▪ Formally establish a special representative position on each organizations' board of directors for each other</li> <li>▪ Fully integrate NaHSSA's activities with those of the CIHC and its partners</li> <li>▪ Achieve recognition for NaHSSA's individual members as CIHC's student members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integration of NaHSSA's work with that of the CIHC and their partners to synergistically complement their activities and build upon interprofessional education efforts that already exist across Canada.</li> <li>▪ Shared organizational resources to enhance mutual efforts</li> <li>▪ Enhanced legitimacy and credibility for NaHSSA</li> <li>▪ Enhanced access to key stakeholders through CIHC's national network</li> </ul>

## 5. Operations

### 5.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NaHSSA is led by a national Board of Directors that is elected at its Annual General Meeting and serves from April 1<sup>st</sup> until March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. This governing body consists of ten positions: President, VP Student Affairs, VP Academic, VP Bilingualism, VP Chapter Development, VP Communications, VP Finance, VP Internal, VP Legal, Faculty Advisor (from the UBC College of Health Disciplines), Faculty Advisor (from the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative), and Past-President (non-voting member). Together, the Board of Directors is involved in the direct day-to-day running of NaHSSA and holds frequent meetings via teleconference to complement their daily email correspondences. As well, this group is directly involved in the organization and delegation of many new initiatives that are developed during their term in office.



*Figure 3: The governance structure of NaHSSA with a focus on the Board of Directors.*

## 5.2 ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Advisory Council serves to guide the vision of NaHSSA and consists of the Board of Directors as well as key leaders from NaHSSA's local chapters. This body gives a strong voice to NaHSSA leaders from across the country in the operation of the association and provides a means for basic information exchange between its members. This advisory group discusses interprofessional issues of national concern and provides the Board of Directors with enhanced direction in the operation of the association as well as a sense of accountability to the local chapters that they are serving. It allows NaHSSA leaders to know each other more intimately and it serves as a mechanism for sharing news to and between local chapters. Finally, the Advisory Council gives the Board of Directors an opportunity to hear feedback on critical issues, recruit a pool of talent from which to draw assistance, and allow for coordinated solutions to common challenges. The Advisory Council is currently operated under the direction of the Board of Directors with the President serving as Chair and the VP Student Affairs as its administrative coordinator; however, there is hope that the Advisory Council will eventually become an independent, self-governing body that is driven by the concerns and interests of NaHSSA's local chapters.

## 5.3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NaHSSA's Annual General Meeting takes place at the association's annual conference to minimize costs associated with this legally-mandated gathering. Students are given the opportunity to pass resolutions, review the operations of the association, and elect a new Board of Directors to coordinate member chapters' collective efforts throughout the year.

## 5.4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

In order to better coordinate the activities of NaHSSA, the Board of Directors aims to meet face-to-face once a year, half way through their term in office. A central location with preferably free accommodation and minimal flight expenses should be arranged. While email, telephone, and other electronic methods will always make up the majority of communication between the directors, this meeting once a year in person is vital to the overall effectiveness of NaHSSA's leadership.

## 5.5 HEADQUARTERS: UBC COLLEGE OF HEALTH DISCIPLINES

NaHSSA's national headquarters is based at the UBC College of Health Disciplines with the UBC HSSA acting as a special link between the NaHSSA leadership and the college. The UBC College of Health Disciplines acts as NaHSSA's official secretariat and fully manages and audits the association's finances in conjunction with UBC Financial Services. In addition, the College provides in-kind reception services, telecommunications support, use of equipment, strategy development and information technology support. The following positions at the College are currently assisting with NaHSSA's operations:

- PRINCIPAL: Advisor and member of the NaHSSA Board of Directors
- ASSISTANT TO THE PRINCIPAL: Financial advisor and reimbursements
- COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER: Information technology support
- RECEPTIONIST: Phone, mail, fax and document support services

## 5.6 INCORPORATION, BYLAWS, AND POLICY GUIDELINES

NaHSSA is a registered non-profit association incorporated in the Province of British Columbia. Governed by standard clauses of an association that are set out in bylaws that are approved by member chapters, NaHSSA reviews its operating procedures on an annual basis the association's annual general meeting. A policy guidelines manual is also maintained that elaborately details the operating procedures not outlined within the bylaws. It is by this manual that the association is practically governed. Changes to policy guidelines can only be made by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

### 5.7 ACCOUNTABILITY

As a non-profit organization, NaHSSA must maintain financial accountability to its members, partners and supporters. In addition to a monthly external review of the association's financial accounting conducted by the UBC College of Health Disciplines, NaHSSA publishes an annual financial ledger as part of our annual report that is made available to the public in April of each year. This report will allow our members, partners and supporters to assess NaHSSA's financial sustainability and maintain accountability among the national board of directors and its officers.

## 5.8 CANADIAN INTERPROFESSIONAL HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

The Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative (CIHC) is a pan-Canadian collaborative of partners advancing the evidence base related to Interprofessional Education for Collaborative Patient-Centred Practice (IECPCP) toward improved health education, improved health services, and improved health for Canadians. Established with the support of Health Canada in the Fall of 2006, CIHC's focus is on

building a representative Collaborative, identifying and sharing best practices in interprofessional education and collaborative practice, and translating this knowledge to people who can use it to transform healthcare.

As Canada's only two national non-governmental organizations devoted to interprofessional collaboration, NaHSSA and CIHC have an opportunity to integrate their work and complement each other's initiatives. Working under the generally accepted assumption that CIHC will become a full-fledged national association beyond its current mandate that ends on 31 March 2008, NaHSSA will work to enhance its efforts through the closest possible cooperation with the CIHC and sharing organizational resources for increased efficiencies. It is expected that a formal agreement of mutual cooperation will be signed before April 2007 that will outline specific plans for mutual cooperation until 31 March 2008 and intentions for further integration beyond this date. A follow-up agreement is then expected to be reached before April 2008 that will outline a permanent partnership with recognition of NaHSSA as the CIHC's official student partner and cross-appointments to each organization's board of directors.

NaHSSA will aim to assist the CIHC in attaining its goals as described below:

- Promote and demonstrate the benefits of interprofessional education for collaborative patient-centred practice;
- Stimulate networking and the sharing of the best approaches to interprofessional education for collaborative patient-centred practice;
- Facilitate interprofessional collaboration in both education and practice;
- Articulate and facilitate a research agenda for interprofessional education for collaborative patient-centred practice;
- Facilitate the knowledge translation into the appropriate receptor communities;
- Facilitate and support sustainable change in IECPCP; and
- Foster, support and develop IECPCP in new and creative ways.



"NaHSSA and CIHC have an opportunity to integrate their work and complement each other's initiatives"

More information about the CIHC can be found on their website at [www.cihc.ca](http://www.cihc.ca).

## 6. Beyond 2011

---

### 6.1 POST-FIVE YEAR POSSIBILITIES

As a relatively new student organization that is tackling issues not addressed by any other group, there are many possible initiatives that have great potential and that could truly enhance the individual willingness and ability of Canada's future health professionals to collaborate for better patient care. For logistical and/or financial reasons, some of these ideas for future projects are most likely beyond NaHSSA's capabilities for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, there is hope that this association will eventually develop the capacity to run such ambitious projects. The following ideas are most applicable beyond 2011 – the scope of this five-year strategic plan – and may serve as inspiration for those efforts:

- Establish regional networks (Western Canada, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada) to coordinate provincial meetings and/or regional programming initiatives;
- Publish a peer-reviewed academic journal for students conducting research in interprofessional teams or on interprofessional education;
- Link the efforts of student-run interprofessional health clinics across Canada and encourage the development of such clinics where none exist;
- Maintain an online database of interprofessional opportunities;
- Develop shared programming with other recognized national student organizations;
- Initiate a public relations campaign to enhance NaHSSA's profile and education Canadians directly on the importance of interprofessional care;
- Recruit tens of thousands of health sciences students to become individuals members of NaHSSA from across Canada;
- Facilitate the development of an international student association that links national student associations which are devoted to promoting interprofessional education; and
- Hire permanent staff to enable these efforts.