Studentcare Annual Stakeholder 2023 Conference Report

***Introduction***

The conference was held in Montreal, where the home office for Studentcare is. The conference spanned over two days and brought together a diverse group of professionals, industry experts, and student representatives from various regional educational institutions. The event aimed to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among attendees, promoting awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by students in the realm of insurance.

The conference sessions were attended by multiple student unions from across the country and were assisted by the home office team of Studentcare. The conference featured a series of engaging keynote speakers and presentations, providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the insurance landscape and its impact on student welfare.

There were three delegates that attended this conference on behalf of CSI:

* President- Nelson Chukwuma
* Vice President- Monil Jethva
* Director- Aishwarya Raj

This report will give a summary of each day of the conference and highlight its importance to our student union.

***Day 1: Tuesday, May 23rd***

This day was a travel day. We arrived at the hotel in the late afternoon and met some of the delegates from other schools. There was a quick meet and greet in a hotel nearby which was followed by dinner.

***Day 2: Wednesday, May 24th***

The day began with a very informative session on mental health led by an industry expert – Sarah Mogul, who has over 10 years of experience in the mental health field. This session shed light on the importance of prioritizing mental well-being and insurance policies’ role in supporting students in this regard. The discussion centred around innovative approaches to integrate mental health support within insurance plans, emphasizing early intervention, access to counselling services, and comprehensive coverage for mental health treatments. The session also highlighted the need for destigmatizing mental health issues among students and promoting a supportive campus environment.

Vice President Monil Jethva states in his report:

*“Attendees actively shared best practices and strategies to address the unique challenges students face in accessing mental health resources. This session left a lasting impact, emphasizing the significance of comprehensive insurance coverage, including robust mental health support, to foster students’ overall well-being.”*

A session on Insurance trends then followed it. This session explored the latest trends and innovations in the student insurance industry. It covered topics such as digital transformation, personalized coverage options, and the integration of technology to streamline claims processing and enhance customer experience.

President Nelson Chukwuma states in his report:

*“Presented by Del Pereira, Director of Partnership and Development, this session gave us insight into the way the Student Health Insurance Industry works, as well as, the way Studentcare designs customized plans for each student union based on the needs and capacity of the organization.”*

After lunch we there was a session in Successful Negotiations. The session aimed to provide valuable insights and strategies for achieving favorable outcomes in insurance-related negotiations. Esteemed legal professionals shared their experiences and showcased case studies where effective negotiation skills played a pivotal role. They emphasized the importance of thorough preparation, understanding the interests of all parties involved, and maintaining clear communication throughout the negotiation process.

Director Aishwarya Raj states in her report:

*“. It helped us to discover the power of effective communication, creative problem-solving techniques to reach mutually beneficial outcomes, building relationships and enhance our negotiation skills.”*

An office tour of the Studentcare office followed up this session. They were kind enough to take us through the everyday operations and provide insights into the everyday work and functioning of the organization. This marked the end of the sessions being held on the first day.

***Day 3: Thursday, May 25th***

This day began with a presentation on the branding basics for student unions. This session aimed to provide attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the key elements and strategies involved in building a strong brand identity. The session covered topics such as defining brand values, creating a compelling brand story, and developing a consistent visual identity. Expert presenters emphasized the significance of conducting market research to understand target audiences and competitors, as well as the importance of establishing a unique brand positioning.

Director Aishwarya Raj states in her report:

*“This session was organized by Anne Martel where she discussed Branding creation and Branding in the context of Student Union. This session helped us get an overview of the steps to create branding and various do’s and don’ts in the branding process.”*

Vice President Monil Jethva states in his report:

*“Attendees gained valuable insights into effective brand messaging, including the use of storytelling, emotional connections, and authenticity to resonate with customers. The session also highlighted the role of digital platforms and social media in amplifying brand presence and engaging with audiences. Overall, this session provided a solid foundation in branding principles, equipping attendees with essential knowledge and tools to enhance their institution's brand image and perception..”*

Following this was a presentation on managing energy and mitigation burnout.

President Nelson Chukwuma states in his report:

*“Our positions can be highly stressful and we always want to go above and beyond for our students. This session was important because it taught us techniques to help manage our body and mental energy through our daily lives.”*

The session was then followed by Navigating EDI in higher education. This session aimed to provide attendees with insights and strategies to foster an inclusive environment within academic institutions. The discussion highlighted the importance of embracing diversity and ensuring equal opportunities for all students, faculty, and staff. Presenters shared best practices and initiatives implemented to address systemic barriers, promote cultural sensitivity, and create inclusive policies and practices.

Vice President Monil Jethva states in his report:

*“We gained a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by underrepresented groups in higher education and explored strategies to enhance representation and support for marginalized communities. The session emphasized the need for collaborative efforts, including training programs, inclusive curriculum development, and the establishment of safe spaces for open dialogue. It was an empowering session that inspired attendees to take concrete steps toward creating equitable and inclusive environments within their respective institutions.”*

This highly valuable session marked the end of the conference.

***Benefits to CSI***

Director Aishwarya Raj writes:

*“This conference was really helpful to gain knowledge about a wide range of topics like mental health, Equity Diversity and Inclusion, Branding, managing our energy and successful negotiations and also to get to know issues faced in each campus and solutions/ practices they implemented. These solutions can be useful for us to enhance the strategies at our campus.”*

Vice President Monil Jethva writes:

*“Attending a conference like this offers numerous benefits, including knowledge sharing, networking opportunities, professional development, access to experts and resources, inspiration, collaboration, and exposure to diverse perspectives. Through keynote presentations, workshops, and panel discussions, attendees can gain new insights, expand their knowledge base, and enhance their professional skills. Networking opportunities provide connections with industry professionals and peers, opening doors for collaborations, partnerships, and mentorship.”*

President Nelson Chukwuma writes:

*“This provided a much needed understanding on the operations of Studentcare and showcased that our organization made the right choice in selecting Studentcare as the company to help provide health benefits for our student members.”*