

# **Board Report Oct 2008 – Oct 2009**

Since the last AGM in October 2008 the Simon Fraser Student Society's Board of Directors focused on delivering one of its newest and most visible services, the Extended Health and Dental Plan. The Board of Directors also completed projects involving a co-funded Ombudsperson Office, renovations of the Forum Chambers and Rotunda. This year's board of directors' driving focus has been to improve student services and community involvement.

This report will outline the type of projects that have been accomplished by the Student Society since October 2008 to an update on what the current progress is for most upcoming projects this year.

## **Society Development**

### **Campaigns**

All month the Advocacy Committee advertised an online survey asking students what the most important issues to them are. The survey was conducted in September, and there were 114 responses. After the survey results were analyzed, a clear majority of SFSS members wanted the society to focus on reducing the costs of post secondary education and demand that funding from government increase.

#### **1. Federal Election Campaign**

For the October 14th 2008 Federal Election, the Advocacy Committee put a campaign together to inform students of the issues and get them out to vote. We registered students to vote on campus, handed out information leaflets, advertised in The Peak, and organized a local all candidates' debate for the riding of Burnaby-Douglas. The debate was well attended and students were able to ask questions of their candidates on important education issues. Because of accessible polling stations were also available on campus for students/citizens in Residence and the UniverCity, the voter turnout was quite higher than the national average. This fact credits the SFSS's campaign to be effective in motivating students to vote.

#### **2. Municipal Election Campaign**

The SFSS municipal election campaign was another "Get out the vote"

campaign where the Advocacy Committee drew attention to improving transit and making housing more affordable. The Advocacy Committee held an event at Production Way Skytrain where we gave out information on key issues. We also partnered with the UBC AMS and Canadian Auto Workers Local 111 on the skytrain event and placed 2 full page ads in the Metro and 24 Hours. This campaign was successful because visibility and a solid volunteer base was established.

### **3. Provincial Election Campaign**

The Provincial Election occurred on May 12, right at the beginning of the summer semester. In joint collaboration with the SFU Community Coalition, the SFSS hosted an All-Candidates Debate on May 6th 2009 which included the following candidates: Green Party of BC Helen Chang, BC Liberal Harry Bloy and BC NDP Jaynie Clark. The primary goal of this debate was to highlight the key issues of the provincial . The Peak and the Korean News covered the event and therefore we got the debate in the media for others to see engaged SFU students. The campaign focused on encouraging students to vote for the candidate that had the best policies on high-quality and affordable education, public transit, housing, the environment, and the economy.

### **4. February 4th Rally to Save SFU**

A rally was held in convocation mall on February 4th 2009. The Save SFU rally enjoyed broad support from faculty and staff of the university, but the SFSS was the anchor. The rally's call was for more funding for SFU. It was a huge success because the SFU Community Coalition included the SFSS, the GSS, and the other university unions. The rally to Save SFU was highly visible on campus, and over 1000 were in attendance. This event brought awareness that SFU is under-funded by the provincial government.

### **5. Campaign – No More Cuts!**

The SFSS Advocacy Committee started the No More Cuts campaign in September 2009. The goal for this campaign was to visualize our message and to keep it simple; thus we designed a visually appealing and grabbing symbol that represented SFU Student's desire for higher student funding and lower tuition fees. Over 600 postcards were signed and personalized with a message for the Minister of Advanced Education. The ERO appeared in the Burnaby Now Newspaper for its coverage of the No More Cuts campaign in September 2009.

Also, a viral video is being made to allow students to voice how the funding

cuts have impact their lives. The ERO and URO filmed interviews with fellow students that were concerned about the funding cuts to post-secondary education in BC. We filmed students from a variety of different backgrounds and opinions. We launched this video on October 1st, 2009 and our next steps of the campaign is to present the video to our membership, media outlets and the Minister of the Advanced Education.

The Advocacy Committee is planning a hike up SFU Burnaby Mountain from Production Way Skytrain Station to demonstrate how high tuition fees have increased in the last 10 years. An additional rally is also being discussed jointly with the UBC AMS regarding the cuts to post-secondary education.

## **Services**

### **1. Lobbying**

Previous ERO had two meetings with the Minister for Advanced Education, two meetings with the critic for advanced education, one meeting with the Minister for Transportation. This year, the ERO and IRO had a meeting in Victoria with the Critic for Advanced Education, Dawn Black and the ERO has scheduled a meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education in Vancouver on October 14th 2009 to discuss the issues of the recent funding cuts, per student funding and the UPass.

However, getting this meeting was a challenge. Since May 2009, the ERO and staff have been trying to arrange a meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education, Moira Stilwell and every time we have called the office, we were ignored. On July 24, we discovered through the Vancouver Sun that the Provincial Government cut \$17 million of funding to student aid, scholarships and other post-secondary assistance. When we heard about this the Board of Directors was quite shocked and disappointed that the government had cut funding without even consultation with student leaders. In response, the ERO wrote a press release and has made this issue a priority in Advocacy Committee meetings. Harry Bloy, SFU's local MLA, is aware of our concerns and has requested a meeting with the Minister on our behalf. All summer, the ERO and the Advocacy Committee have been working on campaigns to be ready for the Fall semester to help students understand these funding cuts and to demand the government restore funding.

### **2. UPASS**

The SFSS had a Vancity UPass Service Review Committee meeting in which two SFSS representatives attended along with the Graduate Student Society, representatives from TransLink, Coast Mountain Bus Company, SFU UPass Program and Facilities Management. The purpose of these

meetings is to review transit demand and supply for SFU U-Pass holders. We reviewed transit service to date (ridership and service levels and upcoming service changes). We also discuss changes to student population, on-campus student housing, class times, parking rates and availability as these factors influence transit demand. Also an overview of TransLink's funding/10 Year Plan and Olympic Games service was reviewed.

The SFSS raised four issues of concern: ridership increase, 24/7 Skytrain service, the Evergreen Line, and the UPass for all students. TransLink responded with direct answers. Ridership has increased and that students should be more aware of their bus route options and to ride the bus at twilight zones. The SFSS raised the issue of students studying late at night at Surrey and Vancouver Campus and that later Skytrain service would provide a lot of convenience. In regards to the Evergreen Line, an SFSS representative will be attending a meeting sponsored by CAET - Citizens for Appropriate Evergreen Transit with various Mayors and Members of the Legislative Assembly to discuss the Evergreen Line Project.

Lastly, the SFSS also asked of the campaign that Douglas College, Emily Carr and Vancouver Community College has launched for a UPass for all students in the Lower Mainland. The UPass was implemented in 2003 and is required to be revenue neutral (The revenue of UPass offsets the cost of additional bus service to SFU campuses). If the UPass was offered to other schools, then SFU and UBC students would have to pay more for their UPass to achieve revenue neutrality. The SFSS stated that should the UPass be offered to more schools, SFU students are unwilling to pay additional fees. The SFSS is lobbying for better quality transit for SFU students.

### **3. SFSSBookswap.ca**

This became a service of the SFSS sometime in the Summer of 2008. Despite the service growing in popularity, Board found that its costs exceeded its benefit to students and that several free comparable services existed. SFSSBookswap.ca was discontinued as a SFSS service in Fall 2009.

### **4. Ombuds Person**

For a brief period, students at Simon Fraser University were without an ombudsperson. The URO on behalf of the Simon Fraser Student Society aided in negotiating a jointly funded Ombudsperson who would be shared by both undergraduate and graduate students. This program was to be funded by the University, the SFSS, and the GSS.

## **5. Establishing Common Room Sharing Program**

There is a serious lack of student space at all of SFU's campuses. In particular, there are several DSUs that do not have a common room to use for holding meetings, storing event supplies, and generally calling their own. As a result, an SFSS representatives will be working towards establishing a system through which students with adequate facilities share their space with those that are without such a "base".

## **6. Establishing Endowment Funds**

The SFSS is working closely with the FAS Advancement Officer, and several individuals in Donor Relations, to try to set up endowment funds for Communication and Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT) students. Details still need to be ironed out, but in a nutshell the FASS rep wants to organize a dinner gala fundraiser to provide these funds with the capital needed to get off the ground. This gala would be held at the end of the spring semester and would invite the alumni from the according department to attend, meet the current students, and generally find out what the university is working on.

## **7. Undergraduate Extended Health and Dental Plan**

The SFSS has been working towards improving the undergraduate health plan. This year we are looking into changes to allow Field School, PDP, and dual-degree students to opt in at the regular pro-rated fee charged by StudentCare. We are also looking into options to improve the plan and its administrative aspects to make it more convenient for both students and the administration departments.

## **Policy Changes**

Through the Constitution and Policy Review committee, the Society has created a new elections policy. CPR is currently chaired by the URO is also working on changing other policies to ensure that Society business is done transparently and effectively.

## **Society Events and Faculty Involvement**

***Events*** – building a community at SFU through more events

- 1. Week of Welcome and Satellite Campuses Clubs Days  
Pancake Breakfast***

**Organized by the Education Representative and At-large Representative:** Went fantastic, served lots of pancakes, fruit and coffee too! Fresh blueberries, and canvassing.

### **Freezie's Day**

**Organized by the Science Representative and At-large Representative.**

### **Shag in the Magg**

The SFSS organized a successful event ever called the 'Shag in the Magg', which was an all ages dance party that was held early this September '09. The event was a huge success with roughly 500 attendees. This event is the first of it's kind for the SFSS and we are going to work towards having more all age's events throughout the year. A big pat on the back goes to the SFSS Directors for the long hours for which they volunteered (in some cases missing class to do so), especially Ada Nadison and Mona Law.

### **Volunteers**

The Society has been working hard to recruit an active volunteer base to help the Society hold events, and foster a better university experience.

### **SFSS presents Starlight Cinema**

The SFSS worked with Ulife to host this event for Residence Students. A gigantic Outdoor Movie Screen. Overall success was around 450 students approximately.

### **Surrey Campus BBQ**

**Organized by the Surrey Liaison/At-large Representative. Refer to Surrey Representation.**

## **2. Faculty Frosh events**

### **Frosh General Meetings for DSUs**

**Organized by the APP SCI Representative:** Over the summer '09 SFSS representatives sought to increase the level of cooperation between Departmental Student Union executives when it came to organizing large-scale events like those in Frosh Week (or Frosh-Day, for some DSUs). After the Frosh events had concluded, many DSU executives indicated that this type of forum had been a substantial asset during their event coordination phase.

### **Faculty Representatives contributed time in faculty Frosh events**

**Science:** The DSUs were on board and six student unions pooled their resources and manpower all summer long to pull off the first inaugural Science Frosh at SFU in September. Response to the event was a great success and registration was full before our promotions day event. Over 200 science students participated in the Frosh and on the day of the event everyone got a free science frosh t-shirt, competed in a campus-wide scavenger hunt, and had the chance to slide down a giant slip 'n' slide near Terry Fox Field.

**Business:** Business Frosh was a great opportunity to mingle with existing and incoming business students as well as alumni who were invited to the event. I was invited to deliver a speech to incoming first years which I really enjoyed as the audience was comprised of first year students eager to learn about their new campus and SFSS services. Immediately after, a carnival put on by BASS enabled the SFSS to put on a member services table, as part of being a Gold sponsor to the event. This was perhaps the most enjoyable part of the day for me as it was a great time to engage in discussion with many of the first years, answering any concerns and/or questions they had while listening to their feedback on WOW events, especially Shag in the Magg. Following the carnival the day wrapped up with a BBQ, further allowing some time to mingle with the business community.

### **The Social**

**Arts:** A large beverage garden hosted by the SFSS collaborating with many Arts Clubs and DSUS. This event was also a big success.

### **3.Science Geek Week**

Last year's Science Faculty Representative pulled off some successful science events throughout her term and helped to organize the first ever 'Geek Week' at SFU. No event of its kind has been held for science students at SFU before and it effectively gave them a chance to be active in Science on campus and got the gears turning for future events. The Geek week is a weeklong event intended to help build the social-academic community in the Faculty of Science at SFU. Throughout the week various activities and lectures were put on for science students and by the end of the week SFU students discovered that "Geek is the New Chic" as the tagline of the event, contends.

Recently, as part of SFU Volunteer and Civic Engagement Week, the Geek Week Organizing Committee was given an SFU Award for Engaged Citizenship.

## **SUB – consultations**

### ***Student Union Building***

SFSS has had several meetings with facilities management, university administrators, as well as Bing Thom Architects to ensure careful steps are taken and planning is done properly.

We have been meeting with Bing Thom Architects and various university departments with regards to having a Student Union Building on campus. This project is still in the works; however, the Board this year decided that our first priority should be to improve spaces that we currently own (i.e. Rotunda, Forum Chambers, and Atrium Cafeteria) and to work towards the better promotion of the Society itself via events and strong campaigns.

## **Renovations**

### ***Renovations to the Rotunda and Forum Chambers***

The SFSS worked towards the renovations of the Rotunda and Forum Chambers.

**Rotunda**, we now have heated flooring, new paint on the walls, new furniture (benches and tables), added glass panels, new heating system, and increased the number of power outlets.

**Forum Chambers**, improvements have been made including changes like a new decorative scheme, new furniture, new floors, new paint on the walls, and new doors.

**Atrium Cafeteria** is the next thing that the SFSS is working towards renovating, and we are making sure repairs needed for society spaces are not overlooked. Other new renovations include changes to the Highland Pub, with a forest theme to make it more warm and welcoming to students.

## **Court Case – *Canadian Federation of Students***

The judge indicated that this issue could not be decided via a summary judgment



(18A application). The court proposed that the SFSS and CFS come to some sort of settlement.

The CFS's suggestion on a settlement is to hold another referendum in compliance with the Canadian Federation of Students bylaws. Following on that, they would like membership fees due and owing to the CFS and CFS – Services to date be paid by the SFSS in accordance with the Bylaws.

In the Simon Fraser Student Society is currently seeking legal advice on the CFS's settlement offer.

## **Membership Development & Representation**

### **Residence Representation**

A Residence Issues Working Group was struck in the summer of 2008 to address the lack of representation of residence students in the SFSS. The best way to address this need was to create the Residence Committee. This committee brought together all the major residence organizations and gave them the ear of the SFSS. This Committee officially became part of the SFSS in the fall of 2008. Unfortunately, the Committee was ineffective in practice and in the summer of 2009 it was scrapped and replaced with a new Board portfolio in the form of a Residence Liaison, much like the Surrey and Vancouver Liaisons.

### **Surrey Representation**

The following are significant highlights concerning the Surrey Campus Committee. Aside from the biweekly committee meetings, the Committee has also participated, hosted, and sponsored many activities and events.

During the summer semester, the SCC participated in the 5th annual Mini Golf Tournament and BBQ, a fundraiser for the SFU Surrey Campus Community Bursary for Students in Financial Need. Towards late August, the SCC had their Visioning Session in which the current and past committee members, as well as active volunteers came together to discuss and reflect the current state of the Committee and how they could better it. The itinerary and goals for the year were reflected and revised. The SCC promoted and represented themselves and the

Society very well during Orientation and Week of Welcome. We were able to get the opportunity as a stop during Orientation Tours for New Students. In addition, the SCC hosted their annual Week Of Welcome BBQ and Mezzanine Activities. The event was very successful and the SCC received great exposure. On behalf of the SFSS, the SCC hosted Clubs Days during summer and fall semester, with a turnout of 15 Clubs and DSUs during the summer and 30 during the fall. We saw an increase of Burnaby Clubs outreaching to the Surrey student population. The committee continues to have productive Joint Operations Advisory Group Meetings with the Surrey Campus Administration.

The SCC has sponsored Movie Nights, hosted by Student Life. There have been three movie nights held so far with a good turnout. The SCC is having their annual general elections for three members at large and the first year cohort representatives. A nominee info session will be held in the evening of October 6th.

Two of our most popular events, Rocktober Fest and the SCC Halloween Dance are happening in the next three weeks. We are expecting a huge student turnout to these signature events.

## **University Relations**

### **Surrey Lease**

Space at Surrey was also a big issue. The URO has been meeting with University administrators in Surrey to negotiate the terms of the lease for space at SFU Surrey. Much legal advice has been sought by the URO and this project is in its final stages.

### **Meeting with University Administrators**

The SFSS has had discussions about faculty restructuring and how it was going to affect students' undergraduate experience. Forum was informed about the effects of what this restructuring would mean for their faculties and were instructed on how to get involved in the drafting of the VP Academic's plan.

The SFSS is working closely with the University to enhance the student experience, and looking for opportunities to increase student travel to conferences and competitions abroad.

The Joint Operations Group which consists of key university administrators, the Student Society, and the Graduate Student Society was revitalized and has been an excellent forum to discuss issues of mutual concern.

## **External Relations**

Building and Maintaining Relationships with other Student Unions

### **Meeting with Other Student Unions**

The SFSS has met with various other student unions this year. Some include, UBC's AMS, Douglas Student Union, University of Guelph Student Union, University of Calgary Student Union, BCIT Student Association, and the Kwantlen Student Society. A big goal of the SFSS is to establish and maintain good relationships with the student unions around us so that we can work together towards common campaigns and goals.

#### **1. UBC - AMS**

The SFSS and the AMS arranged a joint meeting at SFU Harbour Centre to discuss our common goals and key differences. Both societies were quite impressed with each other's accomplishments, for example food services and effective campaigns. We recommended that the Executive of the AMS come up to SFU for a tour and to spend allocated time with each other's counterparts in order to collaborate ideas and plans to work together in the next year. In particular to the ERO portfolio, plans for organizing a joint Lobby Days in Victoria and also planning a Post-Secondary Education Funding Campaign with the AMS.

#### **2. University of Guelph Central Student Association**

The SFSS hosted a visit with two representatives from the University of Guelph Central Student Association. We gave them a brief tour of space and had lunch in the Highland Pub in which we compared services provided, volunteer outreach and governance and organizational structure. It was a good opportunity for our two students' unions to learn from one another and to have built collaborative relationships from across the country.

#### **3. University of Toronto Student Union**

On behalf of the SFSS, the Board of Directors have amended our issues policy to reflect the challenges faced by the University of Toronto students in regards to the insistence of their Administration to implement flat tuition fees. The SFSS officially opposes a flat tuition fee for all undergraduate students regardless of enrolled credit hours. We feel that flat tuition fees would force undergraduate

students to rush through University in order to save money, which would hinder their ability to explore, develop and take full advantage of all the opportunities that an academic institution would provide. Our Advocacy Committee and University Relations working groups are now committed to preventing a flat tuition fee system at our university and we support the University of Toronto Students Union in their campaign.

#### **4. University of Calgary Student Union**

Representatives from the University of Calgary requested a meeting with directors of the SFSS, and SFSS executives met up to welcome them. The U of C SU Executives was well prepared for the meeting and had researched about the SFSS. They are part of the national student organization called Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) so they provided a lot of valuable input on how to run a successful student union independent from the Canada Federation of Students (CFS). We had the opportunity to compare our management styles, volunteer outreach and advocacy campaigns with another university with the same membership size. The ERO and VP External compared lobbying strategies and campaigns regarding affordable housing and tuition fees.

#### **5. British Columbia Institute of Technology Student Association**

The meeting with the BCITSA gave the SFSS the opportunity to get in touch with more local student associations in the Greater Vancouver Area. We got a tour of their Student Services. We talked about the U-Pass program and realized that their demographic of students are quite different from ours in which students are enrolled for 2 years at the maximum and generally work full or part time while taking classes. Overall, the SFSS is continuing to build more relationships with other students unions than ever before! It will help us realize our strengths and focus on other things that we may want to reform.

#### **6. Douglas Students' Union**

The SFSS met with representatives from the Douglas Students' Union. The SFSS supports their efforts to implement a UPass program for Douglas College students with a fair revenue neutral system.

#### **7. Kwantlen Student Association at Kwantlen Polytechnic University**

The SFSS has not formally met with the KSA yet, but we are currently scheduling a meeting for the near future.

## **Society Finances**

Please refer to the Financial Report prepared by the Treasurer and the Auditor.

***Submitted for Approval***

**By the Simon Fraser Student Society, 2008 – 2009**