

VP University Relations, Fall 2015 Work Report

Brady Yano

Introduction

The Fall 2015 semester marked a period in which the Board successfully overcame adversity in our pursuit to enrich the undergraduate student experience at Simon Fraser University. The semester marked a time of numerous individual and team successes. Two notable team successes include the adoption of Phase 1 of the Governance Reform process as well as the substantial progress made regarding the Build SFU project.

#textbookbrokeBC

The Open Textbook Working Group was quick to resume its efforts to advocate for free courseware for SFU undergraduate students. In conjunction with the Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver, our student societies both successfully educated students on existing materials made available through BC Campus. The #textbookbrokeBC campaign gained significant traction on social media. While the SFSS received reduced traction due to late postings of the images taken throughout the campaign, the #textbookbrokeBC photo album on the SFSS Facebook page received more traction than any other campaign/event put on by the society. Having identified both the strengths and weaknesses of this campaign, the working group has made changes for the Spring semesters effort. The bookmarks produced for the campaign also served as popular memorabilia.

Beyond physical outreach, on behalf of the Open Textbook Working Group the VP Student Life and I attended OpenCon 2015 in Brussels, Belgium. The report from this conference can be found [here](#). As well, I also presented alongside representatives from UBC on our ongoing advocacy efforts on campus at the International Open Education Conference. A report put together by two board members who attended the conference in full can be found [here](#).

Build SFU/Annual General Meeting

The success of the Build SFU campaign can be attributed to the collaborative approach taken by all facets of the SFSS. Led by the leadership of the Board, students voted on September 22nd at our Annual General Meeting to approve debentures for both the Student Union Building and Stadium projects as well as the SFSS bylaw addition. Having been the third time these questions had been posed to the membership, our board had decided previously that an unsuccessful vote would result in the termination of the project. In light of this, supporters across the institution came together to help make the 'Yes' vote a reality. Leading up to the AGM, the board was active in educating students on the logistics of the various projects. This exhaustive effort to inform students on many of the intricacies of the project was something which had never been done before.

During the AGM, I sat before the attendees to answer any questions students had on the Build SFU project. Having been on the board the year prior, I assisted the President in answering many of the questions put forward.

Following the successful AGM vote, I continued my role on both the Build SFU Joint Steering and Building Committees. From October to December, the board was active in signing many agreements essential for moving the project forward. These included the Building Lease, Construction Services Agreement and many other documents necessary for the tender process to take place. There are agreements which remain outstanding which will be dealt with in the New Year. Kudos to our Board and Management for securing financing for the Student Union Building during the final weeks of 2015.

SFU Vancouver/SFU Public Square

Under the leadership of our FCAT Representative and myself, the board successfully secured temporary office space at the Harbour Centre building downtown. From this space, the board was able to extend weekly office hours to the Vancouver campus on Wednesdays from 9-5 and also extend limited services to our Vancouver based students. This would not have been possible had it not been for weekly commitment from our VP Finance, VP External Relations, Environment Representative, FCAT Representative and myself. As the semester progressed, rotating staff support was also provided. Both initiatives are ones we will continue next semester.

A series of meetings also took place between the SFSS and SFU Vancouver administration. Through these, we began to collaborate on the promotion and hosting of various joint events, discussed the potential renovation of spaces as well as exchanged best practices for engaging students in Vancouver. The SFSS has also recently created a banner for our Vancouver campus to better promote our presence at the campus.

Throughout the fall semester, I was a part of the student design team of Campus to City, an event put on by SFU Public Square. As a part of the design team, I played a role in shaping the itinerary of the conference. On the day of, I helped with registration and also hosted two bus breakout sessions. Due to my time contribution, the SFSS was one of four 'supporter' organizations for the event. While we had previously arranged to offer our MBC conference room space for a panel discussion, due to logistical difficulty the venue was changed the day prior to the event to a more accommodating space. Information on the event can be found [here](#).

Vice President Academic and Provost Search Committee

A significant amount of my time was spent preparing for and attending committee meetings for the VP Academic and Provost search. Being the only student on the 23 person committee, I ensured that the student perspective was voiced and taken into consideration in all decision

making. Due to this process being a confidential one, I am unable to disclose any further information. Thank you to the SFSS Board and the Graduate Student Society for allowing me to represent SFU students on this prestigious search.

Sustainability Office/ Zero Waste Campaign

My work with the SFU Sustainability Office continued on from my previous term. I am currently involved with two sustainability related committees: Zero Waste Initiative Review Committee and the Food Packaging Standards Working Group. Both involve all major stakeholders at SFU which I represent the SFSS at. Beyond that, I have continued to work towards getting the SFSS in line with SFU's Zero-Waste goals. This has continued through the implementation of the Bin Buddies within the Board Office as well as Advocacy Committee officially launching a Zero Waste campaign. Work on this campaign will carry over into the Spring semester.

Fraser Library Hours

Unfortunately minimal progress has been made in this term, largely due to numerous delays on SFU's end. The SFSS did mention Fraser Library hours/Surrey Campus operation on Sundays during the SFU Budget Consultation and were affirmed by the SFU Surrey Executive Director that they would do the same. The SCC, SFSS President and I also met with the SFU Surrey Chief Facility Officer, Head of Fraser Library, President Petter and AVP Students. In moving forward, the SFSS Communications Office has been tasked to develop a Surrey specific survey which will be disseminated in late-January. Evidence from this survey will be later used in our submission to SFU's Vice President Research explaining the situation from an undergraduate point of view.

Excellence in Teaching Awards Committee

Both myself and the Business Representative served as the two students on SFU's 2015/16 Excellence in Teaching Awards Committee. This process involved meetings as well as the lengthy review of nominated faculty. It was a pleasure to serve on this committee and have the opportunity to read about some of SFU's most engaging faculty within the classroom. Congratulations to our three well-deserved recipients.

Board Outreach

As mentioned previously, the board conducted a significant amount of outreach during September. We did this through attending a series of club and student union events and meetings as well as hosting numerous appreciation events for the executives of these groups. While providing a thorough introduction of the student society's services and operations, we also educated our members on the details of the Build SFU project.

Administrative Duties

The remainder of my time was consumed by regular administrative duties innate to my role as VP University Relations as well as those associated with being a Board member. These included hosting weekly office hours on Tuesdays 1130-130 and Fridays 1030-1230 on the Burnaby campus as well as Wednesdays from 2-5 at Harbour Centre. This time was largely spent responding to emails and meeting with various student groups.

Conclusion

Thank you for reading my fall semester work report. While this report is not exhaustive by any means, it does provide a comprehensive analysis of the work completed in the summer term. For more detailed reports of all the board members, click [here](#). If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at vpuniversity@sfss.ca.