

Introduction

My second term as Environment Representative for the Simon Fraser Student Society has largely been spent conducting work set out by both the board, as well as pursuing projects within my faculty. While not comprehensive, this report provides an overview of the work that I have done over the course of the fall semester.

Committees

This section provides an overview of the work conducted by committees I sit on, that were active this semester.

Advocacy Committee

Over the fall semester the advocacy committee was involved in numerous campaigns and initiatives including the following, #textbookbrokeBC, the federal elections, translink consultations and zero waste to name a few. Although all of these campaigns were brought forward to the advocacy committee, the following campaigns are one's that I had the chance to work more closely on.

a. #textbookbrokeBC:

Over the course of the fall semester the open textbook working group, led by VP University Relations, Brady Yano, was actively involved in raising awareness on open educational resources to students. A joint campaign was formed alongside the Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver, with both student societies launching a social media campaign using the hashtag #textbookbrokeBC. For the campaign students were asked to take a picture with a whiteboard showing the amount of money they had spent on textbooks. Students were then asked to share these pictures on twitter using the hashtag #textbookbrokeBC. Additionally, they were also encouraged to take pictures of their receipts from the bookstore and tweet/post them online. The #textbookbrokeBC photo album on the SFSS Facebook page was well received, gaining more traction than any other campaign/event put on by the society. The working group has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign and will be making the necessary adjustments for the spring semester. Bookmarks produced for the campaign were also popular amongst students. Additionally, the open textbook working group participated at the Open Access event hosted by SFU. This allowed us the chance to inform both professors and staff about the campaign. I also acted as moderator for the Open Access event panel discussion.

On behalf of the Open Textbook Working Group I attended several conferences and workshops during the fall semester. These events were focused on the Open Educational Resources movement. Myself, and other members of the working group learned about new forms in which we could engage with students and faculty about the benefits of OER's.

b. Zero Waste Campaign:

At the end of the Fall semester it was brought up by VP University Relations, Brady Yano, that the SFSS should establish some guidelines to be in line with SFU's Zero-Waste goals. This has begun through the implementation of bin buddies within the board office, signage depicting the nearest recycling and composting receptacles, as well as the development of a zero waste campaign for the advocacy committee. At this point in time I have been collecting information and brainstorming ideas on how the SFSS can engage students in sustainability related issues. Further work will be conducted in terms of logistics for the campaign, which will launch in the spring semester.

Governance Committee

Since the summer semester, under the direction of the board of directors, the society has been striving to make significant changes to its overall functioning. The board of directors created a governance committee to deal with the work required for implementing this change. Throughout the summer semester the governance committee reviewed problematic areas within existing policies, and created a recommendation of new policies for the board. These new policies outlined an important change for the society in which the job of the board would be separated from the job of staff. Under the new policies the board is responsible for all governance related issues, such as, direction setting of the society and membership engagement. The Chief Executive Officer (Executive Director) is responsible for operations of the society and managing staff. The board formally adopted the governance committee's new policy recommendations mid-september.

Once the policies were adopted, it was identified that further work needed to be done regarding committee structures. A new governance committee was appointed by the board, to review the existing committee structures and come up with a recommendation. Additionally, the committee was tasked with refining the new ends policies in greater detail. Through evaluations and consultation, with support from society staff, the governance committee came up with a new committee structure proposal. This calls for the deletion of committees which currently deal with operational matters, directing these tasks towards society staff instead. This proposed change is to ensure that tasks which fall under the purview of staff are completed by staff, creating both better quality and accountability. This in turn will ensure the board is better informed on all aspects of the society. Moving into the spring semester, the governance committee will be seeking feedback from the board on the proposed committee structures in addition to completing other tasks designated by the board.

SFSS Membership Engagement

Outreach

Throughout the fall semester the board was very focused on membership engagement. In the summer semester it was identified that this was a problem area for the society and that measures needed to be taken to address it. This was especially important for the beginning of the semester given Build SFU and the AGM. Throughout the fall semester I participated in numerous outreach opportunities including SFU Week of Welcome, SFSS Clubs Days, SFSS Club & SU Meet and Greets, Fall Kick-off, Vancouver Open House and numerous Pub Nights. I also attended many events held by DSU's

within my Faculty. Additionally, I continued my role as liaison with Embark Sustainability, meeting bi-weekly over the course of the semester and attending some of their events as well.

BUILD SFU

As determined by the board in the summer semester, BUILD SFU was to be of top priority. Much of the beginning of the Fall semester was spent conducting outreach activities/events catered towards promoting the project and the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

In terms of promoting the project, this was done through outreach by both the board and staff, educating and informing students about all the project has to offer. The board actively engaged with clubs, DSU's, council and other relevant stakeholders, providing them with information on the details of the project and answering any questions. I also had an opportunity to provide insight for Embark Sustainability regarding sustainability and the student union building.

The AGM was then promoted through the board taking on an official 'Vote Yes' stance towards the project. This included informing students on when and where the AGM was taking place, and encouraging them to attend alongside their peers. The board achieved this through general student outreach, emails, connecting with clubs, DSU's, council, classroom presentations and promoting the project through personal social media. Additionally, given the environment frosh occurred directly after the AGM, I helped organize a meeting place for faculty of environment students with frosh volunteers. This helped out new students who didn't necessarily know where the west gym was, as well as offering them the opportunity to attend/sit with a group of students from their faculty.

All of these endeavours resulted in a successful passing of both the Student Union Building and Stadium projects, as well as the SFSS bylaw addition, on September 22nd. I think the board's approach, which focused on reaching out to students directly and being the face of the project, helped immensely in securing a yes vote.

Faculty Focused Work

Departmental Student Unions

a. Fall Clubs Day Tabling

During the summer semester I reached out to all of the DSU's to see if there would be interest in hosting a joint table at clubs days, versus each DSU having their own. The rationale for this was that it is often difficult for many of the DSU's to get enough volunteers to manage their own table for a 2 day period. By having a joint table, DSU's would be able to pool resources together ensuring a successful tabling experience. Overall the members were happy with the arrangement and found that it eased the work on the executive members in terms of filling time slots for tabling.

Given this was a first time pilot, there were some issues that did arise. First of all, because the idea did not transpire until clubs day bookings had already opened, the DSU's were unable to book two tables side by side. The DSU's instead utilized one table for the event. Although this was functional it was noted that one table was a bit too crowded for all the groups and that two tables should be booked for next semester. Additionally, it was brought up that a short blurb should be created for each DSU so that regardless of who is tabling at the time, all specific information pertaining to each DSU is available.

c. DSU Liaison Meetings

Unfortunately, due to class conflicts I did not have the chance to attend any of the DSU meetings this semester. I was able to remain informed on each DSU's activities through reading their minutes, attending bi-weekly DSU liaison meetings, and emails with DSU president's/chairs. The liaison meeting was made up of representatives from all DSU's, myself and Leigh McGregor (Manager, Recruitment and Community liaison for the faculty of environment). This meeting ensured that we were all looped into each other's activities and initiatives. These meetings also allowed for collaboration amongst DSU's for events and has also led to a new Faculty of Environment logo being created. This committee also takes on the responsibility of planning and hosting the annual Faculty of Environment Undergraduate Symposium. The symposium offers undergraduate students a chance to share both research they have conducted and experiences in the field. The committee will be working on the logistics for this event at the beginning of spring semester.

d. EnviroFrosh

This fall semester marked the first ever Faculty of Environment Frosh, known as "EnviroFrosh". EnviroFrosh was a free event that was catered towards first year students, while still being open to all undergraduate students. The event was held from September 22nd - 24th and was a collaboration between all 4 DSU's, the Faculty of Environment and the co-op program. Given September 22nd was also the day of our AGM, I was very busy in the weeks leading up to both events.

September 22nd was the EnviroFrosh Launch which consisted of introducing team leads, icebreaker activities, introducing the #Bucketlist challenge and dividing participants into teams. September 23rd included Faculty Lab Tours throughout the day and a Careers Night. The final event on September 24th was a finale in which all faculty members and students were invited to the Archaeology Museum for a reception. Overall the entire frosh was a success, engaging with undergraduate students of all years, faculty and staff. EnviroFrosh also helped to promote all four of the DSU's, resulting in increased memberships. A detailed report has been created by the EnviroFrosh team leads which will be passed along to the next person holding my position or group of students wishing to plan the event.

Administrative

Over the course of the fall semester I hosted weekly office hours at both Harbour Centre and the Burnaby campus. I also performed other duties associated with being a board member such as reading all minutes and documents presented, answering emails and attending meetings.

Conclusion

My second semester on board has been extremely busy and enjoyable. I'm impressed with how well our board was able to come together and mobilize as a team, accomplishing the goals we set out in the summer semester. I am very proud of the work the board on a whole has completed and look forward to the upcoming semester.

Thank you for taking the time to read my fall semester report. If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact me at envrep@sfss.ca or 604-518-7233.

Sincerely,

Christine Dyson