

simon fraser student society



1998 annual general meeting

report to the membership



in 1998 the student society built a brick wall on which students wrote the amounts they owed in student loans. The wall drew public attention to the crisis of student debt in Canada.

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VICTORIES & CHALLENGES

Dear Members,

Students at SFU won several important victories in the 97/98 academic year. First, working with other student unions across BC, we were part of a campaign which won a freeze on tuition fees in B.C. This victory kept tuition fees from becoming more of a barrier for students, and brought B.C. down to having the second lowest tuition fees in Canada.

Through our work in the National Day of Action on Student Debt, we raised awareness in the public of the student loan debt problem. Our brick debt wall in Convocation Mall sparked a lot of media interest, and helped us connect with our members.

Simply more was accomplished in this academic year than the Student Society has done in recent memory, due to the hard work of our members, Forum, the Executive, and Staff. More events were organized, more communication happened amongst the membership, and more advocacy campaigns were run. This year was also noteworthy for its improved relationship between Forum and staff. This made the organization more efficient and decreased resources spent resolving disputes. We owe thanks to all the Student Society Staff for their dedicated work and continued enthusiasm.

The SFSS also regained a stronger voice for students within the university. The SFSS was vocal on university committees and other bodies, and raised important university issues in the media. SFU also regained its strong role in our provincial and national organization, the Canadian Federation of Students. Full delegations were sent to the General Meetings, and we participated fully in campaigns with other student unions across Canada.

Looking ahead, key challenges face us as we undertake our work for the next year. University and college administrations across B.C. are meeting to plan how they can break the tuition fee freeze. Drastic changes to the Bankruptcy Act will force disasters for students who are unable to meet student loan payments. The federal government continues to abandon its funding role and allow universities and colleges to pressure students for more tuition and ancillary fees. SFU and other institutions are flirting with "Virtual U" technology to cut their costs at the expense of quality education. Corporations chase students for their consumer dollars farther and farther inside the university environment.

All of these challenges should not overwhelm us, but should remind us of the importance of activism and solidarity. The past year has seen a huge leap forward for our student union; the year ahead is an opportunity to continue working better and harder for our membership. Please join us as we continue to build our student union.

In solidarity,

the Executive Committee

1997/98 FORUM REPS

Executive Officers

President Joey Hansen
Treasurer Maya Russell
Internal Relations Officer Phil Zirkwitz
External Relations Off. Mark Veerkamp
University Relations Off. Jen Overington
Graduate Issues Officer Joy Morris

Departmental Reps

Archaeology
Meghan Fisher 05.01.97-04.30.98 (97-2 on-leave)

Biological Sciences
Rachel Erstling 05.01.97-04.30.98 (97-2 on-leave)

Business Administration
Winnie Cheng 05.01.98-09.24.97
Vipul Pachchigar 07.02.97-01.14.98
Aidan Reid 05.01.97-04.30.98
Tony VanderByl 09.24.97-02.04.98

Canadian Studies
Jonathan Frate 10.08.97-04.30.98

Chemistry/BioChemistry
Bryan Coad 05.01.97-09.24.97
Hieu Nguyen 10.08.97-04.30.98

Communications
Kimberley Matthews 09.24.97-10.08.97

Computing Science
Paul Olynek 05.01.97-04.30.98

Criminology
Melissa Adams 06.11.97-01.14.98
Patricia Lal 02.18.98-04.30.98

Economics
Johnny Chao 05.01.97-04.30.98
(10.08.97-01.01.98 on-leave)
Scott Newman 10.22.97-12.31.97

Earth Science
Sheryl Beaudoin 09.24.97-04.30.98

Education
Maaïke Niet 05.01.97-04.30.98 (97-2 on-leave)
Jason Thomas 05.01.97-04.30.98

Engineering Sciences
Rhiannon Coppin 05.01.97-01.14.98
Brendon Wilson 02.04.98-04.30.98

English
Ryan Cousineau 05.01.97-04.30.98

Environmental Science
Marcia Chandra 10.08.97-04.30.98
Damon Matthews 07.02.97-10.08.97

Film:
Jonathon Howells 01.14.98-04.30.98
Robert Yates 05.01.97-10.22.97

Fine and Performing Arts
John Crawford 10.22.97-04.30.98

French
Jens Biertumpel 02.04.98-04.30.98
Meredith Holmes 05.01.97-01.14.98

Geography
Vanessa Tellier 05.01.97-04.30.98 (97-2 on-leave)

History
Charles Harris 05.01.97-04.30.98 (97-2 on-leave)

Humanities
Christa Peters 06.11.97-04.30.98

Kinesiology
Joon Park 03.04.97-04.30.98

Latin American Studies
Tania Aguila 10.22.97-04.30.98

Linguistics
Pam Bermingham 05.01.97-04.30.98 (97-3 on-leave)

Physics
Victor Finberg 05.01.97-04.30.98

Political Science
Sukhpreet Sidhu 05.01.97-04.30.98

Psychology
Christina Ranger 09.24.97-12.31.97
Jessica Stanley 05.01.97-04.30.98 (97-3 on-leave)

Sociology/Anthropology
Cathy Duck 05.01.97-09.24.97
Ryan Mijker 10.22.97-04.30.98

Visual Arts
Maralee Lincoln 02.04.98-04.30.98
Jennifer McAuley 11.05.97-01.15.98

Women's Studies
Jeannie Morgan 05.01.97-02.18.98 (97-2 on-leave)

1997 AGM Minutes

Annual General Meeting Minutes October 30th, 1997

Forum Members: Joey Hansen, President; Phil Zirkwitz, Internal Relations Officer; Maya Russell, Treasurer; Jennifer Overington, University Relations Officer; Mark Veerkamp, External Relations Officer; Joy Morris, Graduate Issues Officer; Meghan Fisher, Archaeology; Rachel Erstling, Biological Sciences; Aiden Reid, Business Administration; Tony VanderByl, Business Administration; Jonathan Frate, Canadian Studies; Hieu Nguyen, Chemistry/Biochemistry; Paul Olynek, Computing Science; Melissa Adams, Criminology; Scott Newman, Economics; Rhiannon Coppin, Engineering Science; Ryan Cousineau, English; Meredith Holmes, French; Vanessa Tellier, Geography; Victor Finberg, Physics; Sukhi Sidhu, Political Science; Ryan Mijker, Sociology/Anthropology; Tania Aguila, Latin American Studies.

Excused: Vipul Pachchigar, Business Administration; Kim Matthews, Communications.

Absent: Sheryl Beaudoin, Earth Sciences; Maaiké Niet, Education; Jason Thomas, Education; Marcia Chandra, Environmental Science; John Crawford, FPA Theatre and Music; Charles Harris, History; Christa Peters, Humanities; Christina Ranger, Psychology; Jeannie Morgan, Women's Studies.

Staff: Adeline Cheam, Student Union Organizer; Nina Magnaye, Student Employee; Jennifer Whiteside, University Relations Fieldworker; Leah Georgia, Women's Centre Coordinator; Laurine Harrison, Ombudsperson (Staff); Lynn Thorogood, Bookkeeper; Alison Holmes, Bookkeeper;

SFSS Members: Allison Burmaster, Karla Randel, Timothy Hillman, Luke Mayba, James Fletcher, Stefan Misse, Jade Burnside, Shea Pertma, R. Balakrishnan, Ian Hamilton, Kevin Ginnell, Margaret Mannery, Reshaad Ali, Dennis Piva, Mason Wright, Ryan Stocker.

Guests: R.M. Duchambeau, Charlie Miller, Maura Parte.

1. Call to Order

Parte called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

2. Appointment of the Chair

M/S/C

To appoint Maura Parte as the Chair of the 1997 SFSS Annual General Meeting.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

M/S/C

To adopt the following agenda:

1. Call to order
2. Appointment of the Chair
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Adoption of the SFSS Annual General Meeting Minutes of October 31st, 1996
5. Adoption of the SFSS Special General Meeting Minutes of February 27th, 1997
6. Forum Report
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Auditor's Report
9. Appointment of the Auditor
10. Adjournment

1997 AGM

Minutes

4. Adoption of the SFSS Annual General Meeting Minutes of October 31st, 1996

M/S/C

To adopt the SFSS Annual General Meeting Minutes of October 31st, 1996.

5. Adoption of the SFSS Special General Meeting Minutes of February 27th, 1997

M/S/C

To adopt the SFSS Special General Meeting Minutes of February 27th, 1997.

6. Forum Report

M/S/C

To receive and file the 1996/97 Forum Report.

7. Treasurer's Report

M/S/C

To receive and file the 1996/97 Treasurer's Report

Russell said that since April 30th, 1997, the Society continued to pursue timely financial statements. She said that two management positions had been eliminated and the Executive Committee was more involved in the day to day runnings of the Food and Beverage Service operations. Russell said that increased attention was being paid to the two retail services of the SFSS - Quad Books and the Printshop. She said that a new Retail Coordinator had been hired to work at Quad and the Printshop. Russell added that the SFSS was disputing \$11,000 of money owing to Canadian Actuarial. Hansen said that the new Retail Coordinator was not a new position, rather it was a replacement of an existing position. Russell said that customer service training, comment cards, marketing and promotions in the fall, and reduction of wage costs over 2 years were some of the strategies being implemented to improve on the financial viability of the Food and Beverage Services.

8. Auditors Report

M/S/C

To adopt the 1996/97 Financial Statements.

Miller presented the 1996/97 Audited Financial Statements. Russell began by thanking the Coordinators in the Finance Office for their hard work in getting the audit completed on time. She said that there were deficits in the Food and Beverage operations. She said that the reasons were attributable to the move to the new building which resulted in services being disrupted, a backlog in financial reporting which made it difficult to plan, and there were three different treasurers at the SFSS this fiscal year.

9. Appointment of the Auditor.

M/S/C

To appoint Tomkins, Wozny & Co. as the Simon Fraser Student Society auditors for the 1997/98 fiscal year.

10. Adjournment

M/S/C

To Adjourn.

Campaigns and Government Relations

The Student Society Forum endorsed or financially supported several campaigns and/or organizations during the past year.

The Campus Community

On campus, the Society supported different initiatives and causes: On behalf of the students at the Visual Arts Department **Alexander Street Studio**, Forum directed the University Relations Officer to write a request to the University Administration for the purchase of a computer.

Out of concern that University budget cuts threatened to further erode **SFU's tutorial system**, the Executive drafted a letter addressed to all Chairs of University Departments, Faculty heads, TSSU members, and several other administrative bodies and community members asking how University departments were responding to reductions in their budgets.

When it was reported to Forum that 22-year old SFU student Sam Yeh had unexpectedly suffered a heart attack and died on campus, and that a memorial trust fund had been set up in his name, Forum passed a motion donating \$300 to the **Sam Yeh Memorial Trust Fund**.

In response to the need for providing permanent space to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered students' collective (**Out on Campus**), Forum allocated the area in the Rotunda formerly housing the SFSS Printshop to Out on Campus.

Out of concern that heavy layoffs to the **SFU Bookstore** staff would result in a negative impact on the services to students and the availability of books and products, Forum directed the University Relations Officer to write a letter of concern to the University Administration expressing those concerns.

In addition to the \$3,494 the Student Society provided to **World University Services Canada** (which sponsors refugee students from overseas), the Society helped WUSC students lobby the University for increased funding in order to expand the program.

At the request of SFU's Campus Radio Society (**CJSF**), the Society Executive wrote a formal letter of support for CJSF's application for an FM license, to the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

The Wider Community

The Society also supported many campaigns and initiatives that affected people in the wider community than just those here at SFU: **Globevote** was a campaign organized at SFU to lobby the United Nations to call a global referendum on the banning of nuclear weapons. In support of this campaign Forum passed the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the Simon Fraser Student Society endorse the resolution requesting the United Nations to call a referendum on banning nuclear weapons.

Be it further resolved that the SFSS Representative to the Canadian Federation of Students Provincial Executive Committee be directed to propose that the CFS launch a national awareness campaign on the global referendum.

Be it further resolved that the SFSS send letters to the following groups, requesting their ratification of the request to the United Nations:

SFU President's Office

Teaching and Support Staff Union

Administrative and Professional Support Staff Association

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*SFU Faculty Association
The Canadian Union of Public Employees campus Locals*

When the City of **Surrey School Board banned books** used in schools to educate students regarding the issue of same sex relationships and families, the Student Society Forum passed a motion opposing the book ban and through the External Affairs Committee, worked with groups off-campus and on, such as Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (E.G.A.L.E.) to organize around the issue. It was noted on Forum that the continued discrimination of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons was in effect a barrier to education for many people.

One of the most important events in Vancouver in 1997 was the **Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation** Summit held at UBC. Given the serious level of controversy surrounding the summit and the issue of APEC and human rights, Forum held a four-hour debate on the issue, inviting speakers both for and against the summit and 'Cooperation' to deliver their position on the issue to students at SFU. At the end of the debate, Forum took a stand on the issue and passed the following motion:

*Whereas APEC and the discussions surrounding it have not included considerations of social conditions; and
Whereas they have disregarded the issue of human rights; and
Whereas they have been inherently undemocratic;*

*Be it resolved that
the Simon Fraser Student Society cannot support APEC as it stands. The Society will continue to oppose APEC until such time as the above concerns are adequately addressed.*

In line with the issues surrounding APEC, the **Multilateral Agreement on Investment** spurred a great deal of debate at Forum. Inviting SFU Professor Marjorie Cohen to Forum to speak to the issue of the MAI, Forum afterward passed the following motion:

*Whereas the federal government is secretly negotiating an international trade agreement called the MAI in Paris through the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; and
Whereas the MAI is the latest in a series of regional and global agreements which, in the name of liberalizing trade and investment, expand the powers of multinational corporations at the expense of the powers of citizens; and
Whereas the most recent draft of the MAI indicates that, if adopted, it will have a major impact on many important areas of life including education, employment, social security, healthcare, environmental protection and culture; and
Whereas the MAI is anti-democratic in so far as it would be binding for 5 or 15 years once signed, and little information on the MAI has been provided by the federal government or any public body; therefore
Be it resolved that the SFSS reject the MAI, and call upon Parliament to reject the current framework of the MAI negotiations and to seek an entirely different agreement by which the world might achieve a fair and just global trade regime; and
BIFRT the SFSS actively oppose and campaign against the implementation of the MAI.*

It was also decided to declare SFU an "**MAI-Free Zone**" and embark on a campus-wide education campaign around the issue of the MAI and its potential impact on Canada.

After a great deal of public debate in Canada over the issue of free trade agreements with nations possessing horrific records on human rights, the University of Victoria bestowed

an honorary degree on Chinese Premier **Jiang Zemin**. At the request of the UVic Student Society, the SFSS passed a motion formally opposing the honorary degree and sent a letter to the UVic Board of Governors outlining its concerns.

When an earthquake struck a remote province of China (Hebei), the Chinese Student Union raised money to send to China for **earthquake relief**. At the request of the CSU, the Society donated office space and covered printing costs to aid the Chinese Student Union relief campaign fund raising efforts.

Importantly, the Society devoted much of its time to various campaigns around the issue of **post-secondary education**. At the Provincial level, the Society hosted a **BC Government press conference** when **Education Minister** Paul Ramsey and **BC Premier** Glen Clark announced improvements to the **BC Student Assistance Plan**. A meeting was also held between student leaders across BC and Ramsey and Clark to discuss education and youth issues. At this meeting students recommended improvements to student assistance, and discussed the issue of youth unemployment, the federal and provincial role in post-secondary education, and the implication of private post-secondary education.

The Society worked with its partner locals in the Canadian Federation of Students to successfully lobby the BC Government to extend the **tuition fee freeze** in BC for the third year in a row. After rallying 12,000 signatures to a petition to continue the freeze, the SFSS Executive were invited to a closed meeting with the **Premier and Education Minister** where the CFS and the SFSS presented the petition to government. The meeting allowed the opportunity to discuss other issues of importance to students.

Nationally, the Society also sent a letter to Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin outlining concerns with the Federal Government's proposed **Millennium Fund**, a privately administered student scholarship program available in the year 2000. The Society argued that the Fund was flawed because it was based on merit rather than need. This meant that students from well-off families held an advantage over those from poorer families. The Society further argued the Fund was vastly insufficient to deal with the national student debt crisis. To further the Society's work around the Millennium Fund, the External Relations Officer participated in a panel-discussion with Liberal MP Hedy Fry regarding problems posed by the Fund.

To aid in educating the public around the issue of **student debt**, the Society's External Relations Officer spent a great deal of time giving media interviews for the Vancouver Sun, Province, and the Bill Good Show (CKNW), CBC, CKWX, Global, BCTV, VTV and publishing articles in various publications outlining the problem of student debt and **Income Contingent Loan Repayment Schemes** (ICLRPs).

The Society participated in the Canadian Federation of Students **National Day of Action** around the issue of student debt (January 28th). To draw public attention to the issue, the Student Society built an 8 foot by 12 foot **wall of bricks**, on which SFU students were encouraged to write the amount of their total student loan debt to date. 500 debt amounts on the wall at the end of the week-long campaign totalled over \$8.3 million. The campaign was a total success, and attracted the attention of media across the lower mainland, even making the CBC National News. The day before the Day of Action several students and staff of the Society formed an information line at the intersection of Gagliardi and Burnaby Mountain Parkway. The line was active from 8:30 am until 10:30 am when the RCMP showed up and forced the line's closure. The information, as well as much leafleting at SFU bus stops and parking lots, and the debt wall itself, resulted in a good turnout downtown for the city-wide rally against student debt at the Vancouver Public Library. At the downtown rally, several community representatives from labour, women's groups, high school and post secondary students, spoke to gathered students. SFSS Treasurer Maya Russell spoke to the crowd about the issue of student indebtedness and the problems posed by Income Contingent Loan Repayment Schemes (ICLRPs).

Finally, on January 29th representatives of the Student Society and other student groups across the Lower Mainland took 155 bricks from the debt wall down to **Liberal MP Hedy Fry's** constituency office. The bricks (one for every Liberal member of Parliament) were a visual representation of the personal stories of hardship that have been created by Federal cuts to Education and the lack of a national system of grants in Canada.

University Relations

The summer of 1997 was a stressful one for SFU. **Rachel Marsden and Liam Donnelly** put SFU on the media map across Canada. Angered by the fact that SFU President John Stubbs was being blamed for the problematic way the case had been handled, the Student Society launched a media campaign criticizing then Chair of the Board of Governors, David Bond, for using Stubbs as a scapegoat for a badly considered decision made by the Board itself, not the SFU President. In addition, the Society wrote Bond asking for fuller disclosure of Board proceedings. The Board of Governors had increasingly acted in an undemocratic and unaccountable manner, holding the majority of its proceedings in closed session. The SFU community began calling for a suspension of the discipline/discharge sections of the **Harassment Policy** based on the Donnelly/Marsden case. The Society, and student senators were opposed to the suspension of the Harassment Policy, and the motion was defeated in Senate.

Despite a great deal of campus community support for **President Stubbs**, including a media campaign to oppose the popular notion he was responsible for the Donnelly/Marsden fiasco, a petition of support, and a rally in his support, Stubbs took a leave of absence. In his place, Jack Blaney was appointed President *pro tem* by the Board of Governors. This was unusually undemocratic as the Board was not responsible for such an appointment. President Blaney, however, was interested in revamping the **Harassment Policy** and created a Task Force for this purpose. President Blaney was not in favour of student representation on the Task Force; however, after lobbying extensively the SFSS President was appointed as student representative, and a revised Harassment Policy was passed by Senate in December of 1997.

Concerns were raised at Forum around the issue of privacy and commercial access to student information in response to the news that SFU was bringing in a 'smart card' as the new SFU student ID card; the card would centralize access to all services offered by the University and all student information was contained in the cards. Forum resolved to lobby the University to ensure safeguards were in place protecting students' interests and rights to privacy of information. The Society also decided to decline the University's invitation to join the program because of prohibitive costs and the administrative nightmare potentially associated with introducing the new cards.

This year saw the issue of the **Burnaby Mountain Development** Plan arise. In initial meetings with the University and the Board of Governors, Student Society representatives raised concerns around the effects of commercial development on the SFU community, and the lack of representation from students and community members on the Burnaby Mountain Development Corporation Board of Directors. The issue remains a key one for the Society.

A meeting between the Student Executive and staff and many **University Vice Presidents** and President Jack Blaney took place in the fall of 1997. The meeting was used as a forum to discuss key issues and concerns and to strengthen communication between the University and the Student Society. Issues discussed included grade curves and grading practices, the role of Campus Security in harassment complaints, student representation and consultation on the proposed Community Events Policy Committee.

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In response to a great deal of complaints around the **Athletics and Recreation Department's** failure to refund gym tag deposits based on a communication technicality, the University Relations Officer worked with Campus Community Services and the Ombuds Office to suggest ways in which students might better be informed of deadlines for tag returns. As a result, CCS and the Athletics Department implemented changes that meant students were in fact not forfeiting their deposit money on a technicality; i.e., policy was changed and services were improved.

In the fall of 1997, the **SFU Library** began the process of creating a survey in preparation for its External Review. The Society met with the Library to suggest how the survey might best serve the needs of students. Society representatives met with the External Review Committee and presented concerns gathered from among students at SFU. Those concerns fit into roughly five categories: Lack of communication and consultation between the Library and students on key policy issues; the inadequacy of current Library acquisitions; the need for more comprehensive orientations to the Library and its use for students; organization of Library materials and physical conditions in the Library; and the acknowledged excellence of Library staff.

Two students brought forward a complaint to the Society regarding **wheelchair access** in washrooms in the Academic Quadrangle. The complaint centred around the issue that there were no accessible washrooms on either the fifth or sixth floors of the AQ, and that washrooms in the AQ clearly marked as wheelchair accessible, were not. The SFSS set up meetings with the students, the Ombuds Office, the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU), and the University Administration to ask that the situation be remedied immediately. Two washrooms were renovated to correct the situation.

The University's proposed **Statement of Purpose** raised some concerns among students for its lack of a commitment to internal (administrative) democracy and to SFU's tutorial system. These concerns were brought forward to the Board of Governors by the Society through the student governors. BoG decided to ignore these concerns and approved the Statement of Purpose as it was approved by Senate.

When the University raised its opposition to **student-run bake sales and barbecues** (whether for charity or not) because of the nature of its exclusivity contract with campus food provider ICL—Whitespot Ltd., the Society met with University administrators to express its disagreement with the University's stand on the issue.

The **Latin American Studies** Departmental Representative to Forum reported that the LAS program was under threat of being dismantled. The Society wrote the Dean of Arts to express its support for the continuation of the LAS program at SFU.

For the first time in SFU's history there were student speakers at convocation. After a suggestion from the SFSS, the Society and the Dean of Student Services office worked together to develop a selection process whereby designated graduands would speak to their graduating classes at **convocation**.

Finally, spurred by work being done in the Sociology/Anthropology Student Union, the Society began work to facilitate the development of departmental **student alternative calendars** which would provide students in departments with a student perspective on courses and course instructors.

Membership Outreach and Organizing

In 1997 Forum set the goal of **improving communication** with the membership. As part of this commitment, a Communications Committee was established early in the fiscal year to

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coordinate the communications needs of the Society and to inform and educate the membership and disseminate information on the advocacy, retail and service areas of the Student Society. Many strategies were implemented to ensure improved communication.

The Society was pleased to introduce a comprehensive **web site** that provided members with an overview of SFSS services and events on the internet. A template for large **display boards** was designed and one was placed by the Alexander MacKenzie Cafeteria. "The Advocate" **newsletter** was published informing members on such issues as student debt, APEC, student union finances, and information on the January 28th Day of Action.

Membership leaflets were developed, **suggestion boxes** were created, and **information tables and sessions** were held in the AQ, at Residences and at Clubs Days.

The SFSS **Student Handbook** was distributed in September. Thanks to the hard work of Mark Veerkamp and the rest of the Almanac Committee, this year's Almanac was expanded to better serve the needs of students. After production was completed, the Almanac Committee recommended to Forum that a Temporary Project Worker be hired next year as an advertising coordinator in order to establish a client base that would facilitate the collection of adequate advertising so that the Society could provide a useful and effective student handbook.

In January, the SFSS held "**Welcome Back Days**" to celebrate the start of a new semester and to acquaint new and returning students to the Student Society. Our popular free **pancake breakfast** was served, clubs days were held, and there were many workshops and seminars focusing on such issues as student union organizing, harassment, and Wenlido. The **Pub** celebrated its **25th anniversary** in style with *Rymes with Orange* and grad students held a successful pub night and social.

In an effort to keep Society and Forum members informed on issues facing post-secondary students a **Forum Speaker Series** takes place at the beginning of most Forum meetings. This year was no exception. Some of the speakers invited to speak at Forum included:

- Trevor Todd (a student employee with ICBC and member of the President's Advisory Committee) presented on the Advisory's Committee's recommendations regarding no fault insurance.
- John Chao (Economics Forum Representative) and Sarah Farina (SFPIRG APEC Action Group) both spoke on Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.
- Dr. Bill Glackman (Special Advisor to the VP Academic on Technological Issues) spoke on SFU's new modem policy.
- Ralph Elke (SFSS Labour Relations Consultant) spoke to Forum about its role in relation to employees and current collective agreements
- Ron Heath (Dean of Student Services and the Registrar's Office) addressed a number of concerns including a reading break, scholarships and bursaries, and the student code of conduct.
- Lionel Tolen (Director of Academic Computing Services) discussed issues arising from his discussion paper on computing services at SFU.
- Marjorie Cohen (Professor of Political Science and Chair of the Women's Studies Department) spoke on the impact and implications of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

The SFSS **sponsored and co-sponsored events** at SFU with the aim of educating the membership on issues affecting post-secondary students including an Anti-Racism Forum; Transfer Issues Forum; Federal Election All Candidates Meeting; APEC and Public Education Forum; and a press conference on Provincial Improvements to Student Assistance with Premier Glen Clark and Andrew Petter, Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. The SFSS, along with the Friends of CBC held a sentimental 'listen-in' to the last

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Morningside with Peter Gzowski on May 30th.

The **Graduate Issues Committee** also worked hard this year to reach and inform grad students here at SFU. The GIC held a workshop called "Financial Survival for Graduate Students: Show Us the Money!" The GRADuate BULLETin was published in September with articles on such topics as Differential Fees for International Students, Tax Tips, and Budget Cuts at SFU. Graduate Issues Officer Joy Morris spent a great deal of time meeting with graduate students at Welcome Back Days, information tables, information nights and very popular **Grad Gab and Grub** Nights.

SFSS members enjoyed socializing with students from other departments at **beer gardens** in March and July as well as **Sports Day**. These efforts were made to bring student unions together to host events, get to know each other, share experiences, and support SFSS initiatives. These events attracted more interest at both departmental union levels and the Society itself. About 800 students came out and took part in various events. **Pub Nights** were as popular as ever and bands such as *Huevos Rancheros*, *People Playing Music*, and *the Molestics* played on Thursdays during the fall and spring semesters.

Many students got involved with the Student Society by joining and organizing clubs. Centred around **Clubs Days** held the second week of each term, Club services include: an operating budget; centralized mail box and contact information; club locker; free e-mail and website access; free meeting room space; and coordination of Audio Visual requests and Facilities Management support for special events. Of note, the 1998-99 budgeting process saw Clubs budget allocations increase over 30% to \$20 000.

There were 38 organized **departmental student unions** during the year, with about 60% of those being active. A new student union was organized in the Asia-Canada Studies Program. As well, a new representative seat was created on Forum upon the recognition of a new student union in the Environmental Science Program. In an effort to more effectively communicate with and organize students on campus, the Committee for Departmental Student Unions (CDSU) through the Student Union Resource Office organized information seminars and two-hour workshops for students interested in learning about SFSS policies and procedures and organizing effective student unions. Information packages with info sheets on commonly asked questions around student union organizing were prepared and made available to students on campus. Working with the Graduate Caucus Organizer and the Graduate Issues Committee, CDSU and the Student Union Resource Office endeavored to encourage better communication and mutual involvement between departmental graduate caucuses and student unions.

Close to **\$110,000** was allocated to student union and graduate caucus organizing in 1997/98, and close to **\$53,000** was allocated to student union and graduate caucuses in the form of grants for the same period. Policy was changed to streamline core budget expenditures for student unions, reducing the turn-around time for reimbursements.

The Society's External Relations Officer acted as a resource for **Sociology 357—Research Methods** when students enrolled in the course were assigned the project of researching student financial assistance and student debt.

Finally, SFSS President Joey Hansen offered himself up enthusiastically as a victim to be tossed into the SFU pond for the Engineering Undergraduate Student Society's mid-winter **Polar Plunge** raising money for charity.

Servicing the Membership

As part of its ongoing work to make life at Simon Fraser better for students, the Student Society provided a number of services to the campus community.

In 1997, the Student Society resurrected what had been a long-time service of the Society, **Film Night**. Popular, recently-released feature-length blockbuster movies were shown every Thursday night in Images Theatre.

The Printshop acquired twenty-one new photocopiers, card and coin-operated, and placed them in satellite locations around campus to increase student access to photocopying. The Printshop also endeavored to bring its pricing in line with copy shops in the Lower Mainland; although not yet able to compete with Kinko's, Staples, or Office Depot which use copying as a loss leader.

In 1997/98, **Quad Books** saw a staffing change and continuing modification of its product mix, in keeping with the new building and its proximity to the University bookstore. In September 1997, the Student Services Committee refined the margins, marketing, and overall strategy of book buyback. Quad must struggle constantly with intense customer service activities, such as postage, transit, fasttrax and fax; basic student requirements such as paper, binders, index cards; and with a mobile student population able to venture off campus to Staples and Office Depot. An effort has been made to make the store attractive and interesting to a diverse clientele with the stocking of gifts, cards, and other non-essential items, as well as continually changing Quad's mix of products and services.

The Society's **vending** program continued to be popular with vendors and students alike. However, this year the University expressed an interest in reducing the space allowable to the Society for vending. The Society began to pursue ways in which to prevent the deterioration of this service.

The **Food and Beverage Services** of the Student Society continued to provide a challenge in providing livable part-time employment for students on campus and quality reasonably-priced food and beverages to the campus community. While the food and beverage services continued to show a loss this year, much progress was made to change the financial direction of those services. To enhance service to students a number initiatives were undertaken including the development and distribution of a customer survey, from which suggestions were taken and implemented; a comprehensive customer service/training program for all food service staff was introduced; Interac and credit card service was installed; plans were developed to begin renovations and decoration of the Pub for September 1998; and a new Mission Statement was adopted by the Society in relation to the Food and Beverage Services that would act as the guiding set of principles in future management of the Pub and other food services. The **Mission Statement** was adopted as follows:

Your SFSS Food and Beverage Services Committee is committed to enhancing campus life at Simon Fraser University through providing:

- *high quality, reasonably priced food and beverages*
- *comfortable, safe, student-friendly social centre*
- *funding for student bursaries*

In cooperation with SFU's autonomous student newspaper, *The Peak*, the Society co-funded the construction of a **new darkroom facility** for members of the ever popular Darkroom Club.

The Society's vending program continued to provide ongoing financial support for the **SFU Foodbank** in the amount of \$4,000. In addition the Society provided ongoing funding to **World University Service** of Canada in the amount of \$3,494, to the **SFU Nightline** (a crisis line) in the amount of \$4,750, and to the SFSS **Pub Student Bursary** Program in the amount of \$10,000.

The Student Society **Health Plan** wound up its operations in August of 1997.

In 1997/98 the Society's General Office issued approximately 3,000 **International Student Identity Cards** to students. The cards, provided free of charge by the Canadian Federation of Students, entitle students to discounts worldwide while traveling.

The Society's **free legal clinic** provided to students every Thursday afternoon, saw around 600 students.

The **Women's Centre** continued its work for the full participation of women in society, to end all forms of oppression and to provide access to women-centred resources. The past year for the Women's Centre consisted of coalition efforts with campus and off-campus groups, as well as, structural and resource development within the Centre. The Centre's annual programming efforts included the Day of Action Against Violence Against Women and Children (December) and International Women's Week (March), Eating Disorders Awareness Week (Feb.), Human Rights Workshop in concert with the Harassment Resolution Office (Jan.), First Nations Women's Speaker Series (July) and of course the APEC Women's Conference (Nov.). Support/Discussion groups continued to run at the Centre covering such issues as Parenting and Body Image. Additionally, the Centre ran Wenlido, a self defense course by women for women. The Women's Centre's library continued to grow and expand to accommodate the amazing diversity of the Simon Fraser University community. Its collection of books, videos, and periodicals was added to through regular budget purchases as well as generous donations from the community. Plans were developed to provide Women's Centre Library catalogues to the Belzberg Library at Harbour Centre thereby increasing access to one of the best women's centre libraries in Canada. The Centre's campus and community resources were reorganized enhancing access for women and men on a myriad of issues including, but not limited to, domestic violence, custody, self-help, health etc. Its anti-oppression mandate was revitalized by changes to meeting structure thereby providing weekly opportunities for Women's Centre Collective members to work on social justice issues.

Internal/Administrative Activities

When CJSF ran into some snags dealing with SFU's Facilities Management around the issue of renovations to the radio station's space in the Rotunda, the Society was asked to cover the unexpected costs of upgrading the space to current WCB codes. The Society agreed to provide \$26,500 to the radio station with the understanding that it would try to have the University reimburse the money. In addition, the radio station and the Society began to finalize negotiations on an agreement that would set out the space entitlement of the station from the Society's space in the Rotunda, and the transfer of student fees from the Society (collected by the University) to CJSF. A similar agreement was signed with the Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group.

The Society completed collective bargaining with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3338, representing the employees in the food and beverage services; and bargaining was well under way with CUPE Local 2396, representing employees at the Student Society offices.

In the food and beverage services, there was a change in the management structure when the position of Assistant Manager was eliminated. Similarly, the recently created position of Student Society General Manager was deemed financially insupportable and also eliminated.

Student Representation

Representation of students' interests in the University's governance structure is an important issue. The Student Society appoints undergraduate and graduate representatives to many University, Senate, and Faculty committees. These representatives play a critical role in ensuring that the student perspective is heard by administrators and faculty, as well as providing information to the student Forum. In addition to the University, students at SFU require effective representation at Provincial and Federal levels as well. Through elected representatives to the Canadian Federation of Students, SFU students have a voice on many government committees and forums.

Over the 1997/98 fiscal year, the Student Society sent representatives to the following committees:

Provincial Government

- BC Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance
- BC Student Assistance Appeals Committee
- BC Ministry of Education Post-Secondary Transition Review Team

University

- Radiation Safety Committee
- Date and Acquaintance Rape Committee
- SFU Food Bank Committee
- SFU (art) Gallery Board
- Personal Safety and Security Committee
- Dean of Education Search Committee
- Advisory Committee on Mandatory Supplementary Course Fees
- Traffic and Parking Appeals Committee
- Registration Appeals Committee
- Academic Computing Services Committee
- Diverse Qualifications Adjudication Committee
- International Undergraduate Student Exchange Committee
- University Safety Committee
- Committee for the Excellence in Teaching Awards
- Library Penalty Appeals Committee
- Bookstore Customer Advisory Committee
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) In-House Adjudication Committee

Senate

- Committee on University Teaching and Learning
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- Committee on Undergraduate Studies
- University Development Committee
- Committee on Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries
- Undergraduate Awards Adjudication Committee
- Graduate Awards Adjudication Committee
- Committee on International Activities

Faculty

- Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee
- Faculty of Arts Graduate Studies Committee
- Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Studies Committee
- Faculty of Science Undergraduate Studies Committee
- Faculty of Science Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- Faculty of Applied Science Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- Faculty of Science Graduate Studies Committee

The Student Society sent **student representatives** to various other forums and ad hoc committees such as the Canadian Association of Graduate Schools Meeting, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Student Outreach Committee, BC Transit Youth Advisory Committee, the Student Union Development Symposium, and Canadian Federation of Students National and Provincial General Meetings.

December 5 saw the **Ministry of Education** hold a one-day forum to begin the process of negotiating an Accountability Framework between the Ministry and the six Universities of BC. The SFSS was invited to send representatives; two were sent to the forum. Issues discussed included the university in a differentiated system, the relationship between universities and government, and teaching and research, and issues related to continuing education.

Finally, the Student Society embarked upon **strengthening ties** between student governors on the Board of Governors and student senators on SFU Senate, and encouraging those reps to report to students at the Student Society Forum.

Elections

The Student Society General Elections were held March 17th-19th, 1998, presided over by the Chief Electoral Officer Chris Green and the Electoral Standing Committee that included Man Wing Chor, Anne Huang, and Tony Vanderbyl. Several **referenda questions** were placed before the membership. The questions that successfully passed a vote by the membership included one to replace and update the Society by-law governing the Ombuds Office; a straw poll regarding student preferences on a reading break; one that made changes to the by-law governing the Electoral Standing Committee; and one that saw a change to the by-laws to reflect the Society's move into the new Maggie Benston Student Centre. To date, the Society has not received the report of the Electoral Standing Committee

Ombuds Office Activity Report

May 1997 - April 1998

The following categories will be used to report on the activity at the Ombuds Office: (1) **Case Work**, which refers to cases brought to the Office worked in by either Laurine Harrison, Ombudsperson (Staff), the Ombudsperson (Student),¹ or both; (2) **Office Administration**, which relates to office management and bureaucracy; (3) **Policy Analysis**, which includes analyzing and offering suggestions for SFSS and University policies, procedures, and regulations; and, (4) **External**, which refers to contacts outside of the Simon Fraser Student Society and the University.

I. Case Work

The Ombuds Office handles a large number of cases each year.² These cases vary substantially in scope, complexity, time commitment, and degree of Ombuds Office involvement. The following is a general list of the types of cases handled by the Ombuds Office:

- Senate Appeals Board/Committee to review undergraduate admissions
- Residence Appeals
- Library Issues and Appeals
- Student Discipline
- Issues related to the Registrar's Office, including complaints
- Financial Aid and Awards Issues
- Grade Appeals Program Withdrawal and Re-entry
- Graduate Issues
- Complaints against faculty members, staff, administrators and students
- Issues related to employment
- SFU Services
- Simon Fraser Student Society
- Off-Campus Issues

As mentioned, the time required to handle cases varies substantially depending on a number of factors. These factors include: the extent of the breach of fairness; commitment of the client; the willingness of SFU or SFSS members to work with the Ombuds Office; and, the ability of the client to handle the issue him or herself. The case load in the Ombuds Office is very high, particularly at the beginning and end of each semester. Because of the significant repercussions of the issues presented on the lives of our clients, the Ombudspersons make every effort to ensure that thorough information and assistance is provided to everyone that approaches the Office.

Individuals approach the Ombuds Office in a number of ways. The primary methods of contact are through phone or e-mail. The following charts offer information on the number of calls and e-mails received by and replied to by the Ombuds Office³. From the telephone contact chart it can be deduced that for each call to the Ombuds Office there are approximately two calls which need to be made in response. The discrepancy between the incoming and outgoing e-mails can be explained by the high number of separate attachments from those using e-mail as the primary means of contact.

Telephone Contact: May 1, 1997 to April 30, 1998

Telephone Contact	Call Count
Incoming	2142
Outgoing	1520
TOTAL	3662

Ombuds Office Activity Report

E-mail Contact: May 1, 1997 to April 30, 1998

E-Mail Contact	E-Mail Count
Incoming	302
Outgoing	193
TOTAL	493

Individuals regularly stop by the Ombuds Office for information. Individuals may stop by to pick up information on the Office, to ask whether their case can be handled by our Office, or to make an appointment with one of the Ombudspersons. When possible, the Ombudspersons deal with the cases immediately.

In Person Drop-In Contact: May 1, 1997 to April 30, 1998

In Person Drop-In Contact	In Person Count
TOTAL	126

Normally, the Ombudspersons prefer to make an appointment for the individual to come by the Office. The Ombudspersons allow plenty of time for reviewing materials, examining relevant SFSS or University policies and procedures, and for suggesting options. The Ombudspersons have found that appointments, rather than phone calls, e-mails, and drop-ins, create a far more comfortable and productive environment.

As part of case work, various committee and board meetings are attended, and meetings with faculty members are held. The following chart offers an idea of what these committees and boards are and who, in general, attends them. This is a general list only, and is meant to illustrate that case work involves communication with committees, boards and individuals within the wider SFU community.

Attendance at Case-Related Meetings

Type of Meeting	Attended by Whom
Residence Appeals Committee	Ombudsperson (staff), Ombudsperson (student)
University Board on Student Discipline (UBSD)	Ombudsperson (staff), Ombudsperson (student)
Meetings with Registrar	Ombudsperson (staff)
Meetings with staff members from Campus Community Services ⁴	Ombudsperson (staff), Ombudsperson (student)
Meetings with Faculty Members ⁵	Ombudsperson (staff), Ombudsperson (student)
Meetings with campus union representatives	Ombudsperson (staff)
Meetings with staff and executive members from the Simon Fraser Student Society	Ombudsperson (student)

As is shown through these charts, the commitment to case work is very high and professionalism is taken very seriously by the Ombudsperson (Staff) and the Ombudsperson (Student). Flexibility in terms of hours and days worked is a requirement of the positions. Every effort is made to assure that those who contact the Office have their concerns dealt with quickly and fairly. As many have told us, this ethos has lead to the granting of a great deal of respect to the Ombuds Office by the University community.

Ombuds Office Activity Report

II. Office Administration

This section will address the following issues: (1) Equipment; (2) Filing system and the need for additional space; (3) the Ombuds Office Coordinating Committee; (4) Staff Meetings and working conditions; and (5) the Simon Fraser Student Society Forum meetings.

Equipment

One of the most pressing issues concerning the Ombuds Office is the need for several pieces of equipment. Among the pieces of equipment needed are a second, networked computer, a facsimile machine, and a shredder. This equipment is desperately needed for the Office to operate in a more efficient manner. On numerous occasions, the Ombudsperson (Staff) and the Ombudsperson (Student) have stressed the need for this equipment.

Filing System

The Ombuds Office has a great deal of paperwork, client files, and general information which requires a thorough and sophisticated filing system. It also requires space. It is clear that the space provided in the Ombuds Office, while much better than in the past, is simply inadequate to have a functional space for files and information and for interviews and meetings.

Ombuds Office Coordinating Committee (OCCC)

The OCCC met six times during the last year. The Composition of the Committee allows for the Ombudspersons and a Forum member and an Executive member. Members of the Committee in the last year have provided the Ombudspersons with thoughtful advice on operational and administrative matters. In addition, the Committee serves as the Ombudsperson (Student) Selection Committee. The service of the following members of the OCCC is appreciated and we would like to acknowledge their contribution to the provision of service to the Ombuds Office.

Phil Zirkwitz, Executive Representative, 1997-1998

Paul Olynek, Forum Representative, 1997-1998

Bevin Worton, Executive Representative, 1998-1999

Jade Burnside, Forum Representative, 1998-1999

Staff Meetings and Working Conditions

The Ombudsperson (Staff) is required to attend bi-monthly staff meetings. These meetings require approximately two to three hours per week. The Ombudsperson (Staff) has been in discussion with the Student Society over the last year on safety and workload issues as they affect the work of the Office.

Simon Fraser Student Society Forum Meetings

The Ombudsperson (Student) attends each Forum meeting and the Ombudsperson (Staff) attends on occasion. Attendance at these meetings provides valuable information to the Ombudsperson (Student) on issues of concern to the student body and on the policies and procedures under review or consideration. Since the Ombudsperson (Student) is assigned the task of reviewing issues of concern related to the Simon Fraser Student Society, attendance at these meetings is extremely important.

Ombuds Office Activity Report

III. Policy Analysis

The following are details on the four types of policy analysis conducted by the Ombuds Office.

Policy analysis which takes place as a result of a case:

There are many times when a case brings about a critical analysis of a University policy or procedure. Sometimes the policy analysis is very minor, and simply involves a quick examination and a letter or phone call to the individual who enforces it. In this scenario, the analysis of the policy or procedures may be limited exclusively to the case in question.

Repetition of a concern over a policy or procedure, or a major concern over the policy or procedure may lead to a more thorough examination. The result may be a major study which details the concern, possible remedies, and methods for implementing these remedies.

Policy analysis of proposed University policies and procedures:

When the University proposes a new policy or procedure, the Ombuds Office makes an effort to review it in great detail. In these cases, there are usually forums where concerns or questions can be forwarded to. Because of the high case demand, responses to proposed policies and procedures is not always possible. When a response is made, issues such as fairness, due process, administrative repercussions, and the effects on students are analyzed.

Policy analysis of proposed SFSS policies and procedures:

This type of research is done exclusively by the Ombudsperson (Student). Research on SFSS policies and procedures would emerge based on previous cases, the nature or the proposal, and the possible consequences of its adoption. Prior to Forum, all proposed policies and procedures are reviewed in detail.

Researching potential policies and procedures:

This type of research takes place where a policy or procedure is absent and the Ombudsperson (Staff) or the Ombudsperson (Student) feels one should exist. In these situations, a report is drawn up for the relevant authority detailing the problem, the reason a policy would remedy the problem, suggestions for the proposed policy, and information on implementing the proposed policy.

IV. External

The Ombudspersons meet regularly with individuals and groups outside of the Office. These include officials from various departments, presentations to University classes, seminars, and conferences, and attendance at regional and national meetings. These meetings take place to explain the activities of the Ombuds Office, to discuss specific issues of concern, and to make contacts. Between May 1997 and April 1998, the following external activities took place.

Meetings with Individuals

The Ombudspersons, particularly the Ombudsperson (Staff), meets regularly with members of the University administration and staff. Sometimes the meetings are to cover general concerns, other times the meetings are case specific. Members of the administration and staff have been very helpful over the last year and as with previous years are prompt to respond to requests for meetings.

Presentations

Throughout the year the Ombuds Office is called upon to participate in panels and workshops offered on campus for members of the University community. The following is a partial list of our outreach and educational endeavors over the year.

Ombuds Office Activity Report

September 1997: New Departmental Chairs Workshop, presentation to new and returning chairs and directors on dispute and complaint handling [Ombudsperson (Staff)];
October 1997: Graduate Student Supervisor Relationship, workshop for graduate student and faculty supervisors [Ombudsperson (Staff)];
January 1998: Non-Medical Emergencies, panel presentation to University staff on prevention and referral to appropriate services on campus;
February 1998: Political Science 151, presentation with the Deputy Ombudsman from the Provincial Ombudsman's Office [Ombudsperson (Student)].

Training, Memberships, and Conferences

During this reporting year, due to budget restrictions, the only skills development was computer training for the Ombudsperson (Student). The Ombuds Office is a member of the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons (ACCUO). Last summer the annual meeting was held at UBC and the Ombudsperson (Staff) was able to attend.

As you can see by this report, the work engaged in by the Ombudspersons is extensive. Even so, the positions of Ombudsperson (Staff) and Ombudsperson (Student) are incredibly rewarding. The individuals who come through the Office lend incredible perspective to the University and to its policies and procedures. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to provide even a small amount of assistance to others. It should be noted that these positions would be made far more difficult without the assistance and good humour of numerous people throughout the SFSS and SFU.

Thank-you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Laurine Harrison, Ombudsperson (Staff) or Alexandra Flynn, Ombudsperson (Student) by phone at 291-4563 or by e-mail at ombudsoffice@sfu.ca.

Endnotes

¹ During this reporting period the Ombudspersons (Student) were Tracy McCabe (until December 31, 1997) and Alexandra Flynn (from January 1, 1998).

² Statistics on the number of cases brought to the Ombuds Office were not available at the time that this report was submitted. Gathering statistics on Ombuds Office cases is difficult in that some cases fall under more than one or more "case type" and issues dealt with by phone are often considered "queries" not "cases." To avoid inconsistency, we would like to ensure that the statistics are accurate before they are publicly submitted.

³ The chart on e-mail contacts refers only to the e-mails received by and replied to by the Ombudsperson (Staff).

⁴ This does not include over-the-phone conversations with members of Campus Community Services or general inquiries.

⁵ This does not include over-the-phone conversations with faculty members, sessionals, tutor markers, or teaching assistants, nor does it include general inquiries.

Treasurer's Report

May 1997 - April 1998

My job, as Treasurer of the Simon Fraser Student Society, is to oversee the financial matters of the Society, and report on this to the Board (Forum) and the membership (principally through the Annual General Meeting). I am pleased to report to the membership that our Society has received an unqualified audit this year (for the 1997-98 fiscal year). This is the sixth year in a row we have received an unqualified audit. This means that our accounting practices meet the standards set by the Societies Act, under which we operate.

This year's audit was completed much earlier than usual. Timeliness of financial information was identified in past years as a key problem for the Society, so this is an important improvement.

The good news is that our finances are not in any dire straits at this point in time. Our membership dues continue to provide steady, stable income which funds most of our core activities. There are some problems, however, which merit our attention and diligence.

Members Equity

We have a members equity deficit of (\$149,130) which is larger than last years figure of (\$47,397). While this does not affect us immediately, it reflects cash flow difficulties. A negative equity is concerning, and should be rebuilt over the next few years. In light of this, the decisions to budget carefully in the 98/99 fiscal year and to eliminate the General Manager position are reinforced.

Mortgage

Last year our mortgage for the Maggie Benston Centre was negotiated through the University. Students' building fees are paying down the mortgage at a rate of about \$460,000 a year. The building will be paid off in six or seven years.

Operating Budget

Fee revenues were over budget by about \$20,000. Almost all non-retail areas of the society came in on target or under budget last fiscal year. In particular, there were savings from the elimination of the General Manager position, and in the General Office and Financial Office. These positive variances offset difficulties in the service areas.

Service Areas

Quad Books suffered a loss at the end of the year, as did the Printshop. Quad's losses may be attributed to a lack of volume of sales. The Printshop did increase its sales back to 1996 levels, regaining the sales lost in the move to the new building. However, both areas were budgeted to make increased sales, which did not occur.

The Food and Beverage Service (Pub, Atrium, Higher Grounds, catering) ended up with a loss of \$104,000. This was an improvement over the previous year, reducing the deficit by 20%. While labour costs were reduced significantly and one manager position was eliminated, these savings were not met with increased sales as budgeted overall. One exception to that is Higher Grounds coffee bar, which saw a significant increase in sales.

It should be noted that the FBS losses may be reduced somewhat when we resolve our lease dispute with the university. About \$25,000 of the loss may be attributed to increased lease costs, which we are disputing through legal channels.

On a personal note I would like to congratulate our Financial coordinators and our auditing team for an excellent job done on this year's audit and financial statements. The efficiency and timeliness of the statements increases our ability to make informed decisions, which is greatly appreciated.

Submitted in solidarity
Dave Crossley
SFSS Treasurer