



Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019

April 2016

A Message from the President and the Chief Executive Officer

These are exciting and challenging times for the Simon Fraser Student Society. In 2015, we committed to a number of bold initiatives that will lead to important changes in how we govern, engage, communicate and provide effective services to meet the ever-evolving needs of our members. 2015 will also be remembered as the year when we secured the student support and the financing required to proceed with the most ambitious project that students at SFU have ever undertaken: the construction of a new student union facility.

In a year full of change, perhaps the most significant commitment that we have made is to formally separate how the Simon Fraser Student Society is governed from our day-to-day operations. The student-led Board of Directors has adopted new governance policies to help guide its work, to provide high-level direction to the Chief Executive Officer and to clarify and reinforce its role in setting the strategic direction for the Simon Fraser Student Society.

Our 2016 – 2019 Strategic Plan represents our first formal, significant effort to identify key initiatives that we will be pursuing for the next three years. Having a strategic plan will help us:

- Ensure that there is continuity for key initiatives, even with significant annual turnover on our Board of Directors
- Create the future, rather than let it “happen to us”
- Focus our attention and our resources on initiatives that will generate the greatest positive returns for members
- Regularly evaluate our progress and share results with key stakeholders
- Adjust our services and operations to ensure that they aligned to our strategic direction

With the confirmation that we will be building a new student union building and the possibility that a new stadium project may also be in the offing, we understand the need to take some new, significant steps that will bring SFSS to “the next level”. Our first ever strategic plan, in addition to the recently adopted governance reforms that we have undertaken, represent two significant commitments that we are making to better serve our members—undergraduate students at SFU. The third key commitment—a review of our internal operations—will be undertaken in our 2016/17 fiscal year.

We will continue to focus our energy and attention on engaging our members and other key stakeholders, providing services information and support to improve the undergraduate student experience and ensuring that we bring a strong, consistent and effective voice to the issues that matter most to our members.

While we will be undertaking some important changes in the coming years, we will not lose sight of what makes us unique. We will ensure that undergraduate students are engaged in

our work, that we remain transparent in our operations and governance, and that we continue to create more opportunities to listen and respond to issues, opportunities and concerns expressed by our members. We are excited about the future and we look forward to working with our members, our Board, our staff and other key stakeholders to deliver on the promising future that we see for the Simon Fraser Student Society!

Enoch Weng
President, Board of Directors

Martin Wyant
Chief Executive Officer

Simon Fraser Student Society: Planning for the Community We Serve

Introduction

The Simon Fraser Student Society was established in 1967. Since our inception, we have developed and maintained a strong tradition of working together with our members and other stakeholders to improve the undergraduate student experience at SFU. In the last 49 years, we have:

- Been involved in hundreds of campaigns
- Hosted thousands of unique events
- Developed and delivered many key programs and services
- Advocated for many important changes for students
- Supported hundreds of thousands of students become more engaged with their school community and with each other

While we have regularly grown to meet the needs of our members, we have done so without the benefit of a long-term plan to help guide our decision making processes. As with many other non-profit organizations, we understand that our strengths are best realized if we take a planned approach that:

- Brings the full advantage of our connections to students, student groups and other stakeholders to the members we serve
- Strengthens existing and cultivates new strategic relationships that leverage our assets
- Identifies key priorities, related to our mission, to help us determine how and where we should invest funds, staff time and other resources
- Ensures that our operations are effective, efficient and focused on adding value for members
- Communicates regularly and effectively with our members and other stakeholders

It is with this sense of purpose and intent that we embarked on our first strategic planning process in the fall of 2015. This document briefly outlines the internal and external environments for the Simon Fraser Student Society, reviews the processes that we used to gather information from key stakeholder groups and outlines our Strategic Plan for the next three years, along with the outcomes we expect to achieve in each year.

While we are pleased that we have developed the Strategic Plan, we also know that a number of unknown factors may influence implementation. As such, we will be regularly reviewing our progress and, as required, adjusting the plan to meet emerging member needs and material changes in our internal and external environments.

The Internal Environment

The Simon Fraser Student Society has a dedicated and diverse staff team, comprised of permanent employees and temporary student employees. Employees are involved in the delivery of programs and services for students and in providing the administrative support that is required to successfully operate our organization.

The majority of our employees are unionized. Roughly half of our employees are attached to our Food and Beverage operations, which include the Highland Pub, the Ladle and the Higher Grounds coffee bar. The rest of our employees are attached to our Administrative operations, which includes our Student Union, Build SFU, Communications, Campaigns/Policy/Research, and General Offices.

We have a number of permanent employees who have been part of the SFSS team for many years, which is balanced by the student employees who weave in and out of our workplace while they are attending school.

We also have a committed, passionate and engaged Board of Directors, who are elected each year to govern the Simon Fraser Student Society and represent the interests of our members. Board members are elected to either executive or to faculty/at large roles. Board members represent a broad diversity of views and help ensure that we stay connected to the students we serve and the issues that matter to them.

Our internal environment is also significantly influenced by our relationships with:

- SFU administration
- University-affiliated boards and committees
- Leaseholders
- Student unions, Council, clubs and other student-led groups
- On-campus organizations who receive student fees but operate independently

While we have a dedicated staff team, an engaged and energetic Board of Directors, and a large contingent of volunteers, we also have a number of challenges that we need to address as we move forward, including:

- Clarifying and separating governance (Board) and operations (staff) roles and responsibilities
- Defining and strengthening our relationship with key stakeholders
- Addressing the implications of being seen as a “commuter” university
- Being distributed across a multi-campus environment

- Building brand strength and awareness with members
- Improving our internal and external communications
- Strengthening the relationship between staff and Board
- Modernizing our business processes
- Ensuring that our programs and services are effective, efficient and valued
- Providing the training, orientation and other support necessary to build capacity in Board, staff and volunteers

Finally, it is important to note that we represent undergraduate students in three different campus locations, but the majority of our personnel, offices and other resources are housed on our Burnaby campus. As we move forward with our strategic plan, we will need to ensure that we allocate our services, support and resources fairly, transparently and in ways that meet the unique requirements of our members in all campus locations.

The External Environment

The Simon Fraser Student Society operates in an external environment that includes a number of key stakeholders who have an important impact on our organization and the members we represent, including:

- Federal government
- Provincial government
- Municipal (Burnaby, Surrey, Vancouver) governments
- Other student societies
- Off-campus organizations who receive student fees but operate independently

The nature of our relationships with each stakeholder varies. Our federal government traditionally provides access to funds to support students (e.g. student loans, scholarships, summer job programs, etc.), provides transfer funds to provinces to help pay for the majority of the costs associated with providing postsecondary education, and also provides research and development funds.

In addition to its legislative role, the province is responsible for determining where and how funds will be provided to postsecondary schools. The Ministry of Advanced Education has the overall responsibility for postsecondary education and training in British Columbia and, as such, has a direct and significant impact on the education of undergraduate students.

While municipal governments do not typically fund education, they are often involved in decisions regarding zoning, transportation and other areas that can have an impact on undergraduate students. All levels of government also take positions on a variety of issues, (such as pipeline development) and provide funding for infrastructure, services and supports (like transit and affordable housing) that are important to students.

Education, like health care, is often a “hot button” issue with senior levels of government. Rising tuition fees and other costs, student debt after graduation, the length of time required to graduate and the lack of sufficient funds to maintain SFU’s buildings have all been topics that are regularly discussed by our students.

Stakeholder Engagement

As we approached the task of developing our first strategic plan, we understood the need to balance the urgency to get the plan completed with the need to conduct an effective consultation process with undergraduate students, staff members and the student leaders who comprise our Board of Directors. The majority of the planning work was completed by the Strategic Planning Committee, which included Board representatives with staff support.

We began with a survey of our undergraduate students, completed over a three-week period in the Fall of 2015. The survey was administered in-person at our Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver campuses. We also sent out mass e-mail messages with links to the survey, employed social media and hand-distributed cards that included a link to the survey.

We received 1,775 responses, a sizeable return for our first-ever comprehensive student survey. Survey questions generated important feedback in a number of key areas, including:

- Overall knowledge of the services and support provided by the Simon Fraser Student Society
- Views regarding the events that we stage for members
- Where we are seen to have strength
- What we need to improve
- Service priorities
- Member communication preferences

The survey responses gave us a good deal of information regarding member preferences and issues that they wanted to bring to our attention. The information we gleaned from survey responses is influencing priorities in our strategic plan and the knowledge we gained regarding the development and implementation of the survey will help us continue to refine our information gathering procedures in the years ahead.

We also conducted World Café exercises for our Board of Directors and our staff team during separate planning sessions. We focused on four core themes at each planning session:

- Discussing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the Simon Fraser Student Society
- Reviewing the alignment of our programs and services to our mission of *improving the undergraduate student experience*
- Confirming our mission
- Identifying new opportunities to strengthen engagement with members on all SFU campuses

Our stakeholder engagement work, along with additional input from our Strategic Planning Committee and our Board of Directors, has provided us with a significant amount of information that we are using to inform our strategic plan. We would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed their time, energy and ideas. Your input has been critically important and it has helped us chart our course for the next three years.

Key Themes Guiding this Strategic Plan

The key themes that have emerged from our stakeholder engagement include:

- 1) Finding new and better ways to engage with members on all campuses.
- 2) Improving our internal and external communications.
- 3) Continuing to move forward with our governance reforms.
- 4) Prioritizing the review of our operations.
- 5) Linking more demonstrably our advocacy efforts to member needs and interests.
- 6) Strengthening our relationships with key internal and external stakeholders.
- 7) Understanding more clearly and regularly the needs of our members and having this understanding reflected in our services, programs and communications.
- 8) Harnessing technology more effectively.
- 9) Building a stronger sense of community among the undergraduate students.
- 10) Keeping clearly in sight “what has been working well”.

Simon Fraser Student Society Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019: Synopsis

<p align="center"><u>Strategic Initiative 1</u></p> <p align="center">Provide relevant, top quality services to meet current and emerging member needs.</p>	<p align="center"><u>Strategic Initiative 2</u></p> <p align="center">Cultivate a leadership role in member engagement.</p>	<p align="center"><u>Strategic Initiative 3</u></p> <p align="center">Build an effective, efficient and sustainable organization.</p>
<p align="center">Objective 1.1</p> <p>Evaluate current and proposed services against standardized criteria.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 2.1</p> <p>Develop new and effective approaches to member engagement.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 3.1</p> <p>Secure and develop the spaces and amenities required to enhance the student experience.</p>
<p align="center">Objective 1.2</p> <p>Develop and implement an information and referral service for members.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 2.2</p> <p>Strengthen our presence, services and support at all campuses.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 3.2</p> <p>Ensure that services and profit centres are delivered cost-effectively.</p>
<p align="center">Objective 1.3</p> <p>Identify and assess emerging member needs.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 2.3</p> <p>Strengthen our relationship with under-engaged students.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 3.3</p> <p>Be an “organization of choice” for employees.</p>
<p align="center">Objective 1.4</p> <p>Develop annual operational plans for core service areas.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 2.4</p> <p>Ensure that all in-person and virtual service touchpoints are engaging.</p>	<p align="center">Objective 3.4</p> <p>Invest the resources necessary to deliver top quality services.</p>

Simon Fraser Student Society Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019: Synopsis

<p><u>Strategic Initiative 4</u></p> <p>Communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders.</p>	<p><u>Strategic Initiative 5</u></p> <p>Govern with distinction.</p>
<p>Objective 4.1</p> <p>Develop and implement a communications plan.</p>	<p>Objective 5.1</p> <p>Regularly review and refine Board governance policies and procedures.</p>
<p>Objective 4.2</p> <p>Strengthen our brand.</p>	<p>Objective 5.2</p> <p>Develop and implement annual Board work plans.</p>
<p>Objective 4.3</p> <p>Provide regular and meaningful opportunities to communicate with members.</p>	<p>Objective 5.3</p> <p>Ensure that Board performance is regularly reviewed.</p>
<p>Objective 4.4</p> <p>Be an effective voice for our members.</p>	<p>Objective 5.4</p> <p>Ensure that individual Director performance is reviewed.</p>

Simon Fraser Student Society Strategic Plan: 2016 – 2019

Strategic Initiative 1:

Provide relevant, top quality services to meet current and emerging member needs.

Objective 1.1: Evaluate current and proposed services against standardized criteria, including:

- Strength of alignment with our mission and values
- Demonstrated need
- Performance benchmarks
- Financial viability
- Projected outcomes
- Member satisfaction

Targeted Outcomes:

- All existing and proposed services are considered against the criteria
- Existing services will be adjusted, as required, to meet criteria

Strategies/Timing:

- Develop evaluation tools (2016/17)
- Test-implement on existing programs (2016/2017)
- Refine the tool; formalize and adopt implementation procedures for existing programs (2017/2018)
- Include results of service evaluations in annual Board reports (2017/2018)

Objective 1.2: Develop and implement an information and referral service for members.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Members will have ready access to timely and relevant information regarding the SFSS services and support that is available to them
- Members will receive the referral support for on-campus and select off-campus services

Strategies/Timing:

- Develop the roster of internal SFSS and SFU services to include, and key external resources (2017/18)
- Gather key information regarding each service (2017/18)
- Determine the most effective methods of storing and updating the information (2017/18)
- Develop the appropriate mechanisms to share information with students (2017/18)

Objective 1.3: Identify and assess emerging member needs.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Relevant data is defined, collected and incorporated into strategy and decision-making

Strategies/Timing:

- Assess and refine information gathering and reporting procedures related to SFSS services (2016/2017)
- Select and secure the necessary tools to assist in surveying members (2016/17)
- Complete member needs assessment (twice annually, beginning 2016/17)

Objective 1.4: Develop annual operational plans for core service areas.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Key stakeholders (Board, members, staff, partners) will be aware of our long-term and short-term plans
- Investments in people, research, service development, facilities and technology will be targeted to our strategic and operational plans

Strategies/Timing:

- Strategic goals for core services are presented to staff and Board for feedback (2016/17)
- Operational plans will be completed in advance of the annual budget planning cycle (ongoing, beginning 2016/17)

Strategic Initiative 2:

Cultivate a leadership role in member engagement.

Objective 2.1: Develop new and effective approaches to member engagement.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Members will increase their engagement, as seen by greater participation in the following SFSS initiatives:
 - Clubs and student unions
 - Student elections
 - Student events
 - Surveys
 - SFSS Board of Directors, committees and other volunteer opportunities

Strategies/Timing:

- Review our traditional approaches to engagement to assess “what worked/what didn’t work” (2016/17)
- Research best practices in member engagement (2016/17)
- Pilot new member engagement approaches (2016/17)
- Develop and implement new member engagement approaches (2017/18)
- Develop student volunteer program (2018/2019)

Objective 2.2: Strengthen our presence, services and support at all campuses.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Members from all campus locations will have a greater understanding of the role of the SFSS and the services available to them

Strategies/Timing:

- Determine the proportionate investment of resources to make in each campus location, based on enrolment in classes held at the various campuses (2017/18)
- Engage with students in Surrey and Vancouver to determine their campus-specific needs (2017/18)
- Establish effective and proportional representation on all campuses (2016/17)

Objective 2.3: Strengthen our relationship with under-engaged students.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Under-engaged students will increase their engagement, as seen by greater participation in the following SFSS initiatives:
 - Clubs and student unions
 - Student elections
 - Student events
 - Surveys
 - SFSS Board of Directors, committees and other volunteer opportunities

Strategies/Timing:

- Identify student groups who are typically under-engaged (2016/17)
- Identify existing constituency groups with an interest in supporting under-engaged students (2016/17)
- Research best practices in engaging with under-engaged students (2016/17)
- Pilot new member engagement approaches (2017/18)
- Develop and implement new member engagement approaches (2017/18)

Objective 2.4: Ensure that all in-person and virtual service touchpoints are engaging.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Members will feel valued
- Member feedback will be incorporated into service delivery

Strategies/Timing:

- Develop an effective member service program for staff and Board (2017/18)
- Train existing staff and new hires to provide exemplary member service (2017/2018)
- Develop performance benchmarks (2017/18)
- Assess performance against benchmarks and adjust service delivery as required (2018/19)

Strategic Initiative 3:

Build an effective, efficient and sustainable organization.

Objective 3.1: Secure and develop the spaces and amenities required to enhance the student experience.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Members will have the access to improved student-centric spaces and amenities in each campus

Strategies/Timing:

- Complete construction of student union building and stadium (2018/19)
- Survey students in Surrey and Vancouver campuses to determine their priorities for space and amenities improvements (2017/18)
- Develop plans to address needs in Surrey and Vancouver (2017/18)
- Implement Surrey and Vancouver plans (2017/18)

Objective 3.2: Ensure that services and profit centres are delivered cost-effectively.

Targeted Outcomes:

- We will be able to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of our services and profit centres

Strategies/Timing:

- Develop a fully-costed service delivery model for each core service and profit centre (2018/19)
- Identify opportunities to increase efficiency, decrease cost and maintain service quality (2018/19)
- Develop and assess performance benchmarks for each core service and profit centre (2018/2019)

Objective 3.3: Be an “organization of choice” for employees.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Employees will feel valued, engaged and part of the SFSS team

Strategies/Timing:

- Identify the non-monetary working conditions that are most valued by staff and determine whether/how we can formally embed these into a renewed working conditions policy (2016/17)
- Identify turnover and staff satisfaction benchmarks to be pursued (2016/17)
- Expand the employee recognition program (ongoing, beginning in (2016/17)
- Add human resources support (2016/17)

Objective 3.4: Invest the resources necessary to deliver top quality services.

Targeted Outcomes:

- SFSS will be viewed by its members and other stakeholders as a top level non-profit organization

Strategies/Timing:

- Redevelop website to improve its ease of use and overall functionality (2016/17)
- Secure consistent, professional IT support (2016/17)
- Ensure that staff and Board members have the tools they need to succeed in their work (2017/18)

Strategic Initiative 4:

Communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders.

Objective 4.1: Develop and implement a communications plan.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Stakeholders will be more informed about our mission, services, events and our position on important issues

Strategies/Timing:

- Develop, and implement a communications plan with specific strategies for members and key stakeholder groups (2016/17)
- Develop an internal communications plan for Board and staff (2016/17)
- Build key relationships with local and regional media leaders (ongoing, beginning 2016/17)
- Publish stories on relevant student issues (ongoing, beginning 2016/2017)
- Develop and share stories that profile our services and our people (ongoing, beginning 2016/17)
- Develop social media strategy (2016/17)

Objective 4.2: Strengthen our brand.

Targeted Outcomes:

- The SFSS brand will be better recognized by our stakeholders.

Strategies/Timing:

- Appropriate signage will be prominently displayed at all SFSS events and in all SFSS offices, meeting rooms, conference rooms and food and beverage locations. (ongoing, beginning 2016/17)
- Develop and stage signature events (ongoing, beginning 2016/17)
- Distribute useful, SFSS-branded promotional items (ongoing, beginning 2016/17)
- Redevelop logos for all SFSS services (2016/17)

Objective 4.3: Provide regular and meaningful opportunities to communicate with members.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Members will be informed about key issues and will have the opportunity to shape their student society

Strategies/Timing

- Stage annual engagement opportunities to encourage members to provide SFSS with feedback (annually, beginning in 2016/17)
- Regularly determine member views on key issues (multiple times each year, beginning in 2016/17)
- Incorporate feedback opportunities into annual general meetings (annually, beginning 2016/17)
- Provide members with the opportunity to provide direction, by referendum, on potential changes to member fees, bylaw changes and other significant matters (annually, beginning 2016/17)

Objective 4.4: Be an effective advocate for our members.

Targeted Outcomes:

- SFSS will achieve measurable progress on issues that are important to members

Strategies/Timing

- Facilitate and convene dialogues that address key issues (twice annually, beginning 2016/17)
- Involve members in determining key advocacy campaign efforts (annually, beginning 2016/17)
- Bring member issues to relevant stakeholders and achieve tangible results (annually, beginning 2016/17)
- Communicate our results to our members (regularly, as results occur, beginning 2016/17)

Strategic Initiative 5:

Govern with distinction.

Objective 5.1: Regularly review and refine Board governance policies and procedures.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Governance policies will continue to meet the emerging needs of the Board of Directors

Strategies/Timing

- Provide ongoing governance training for all Board members (beginning 2016/17)
- Ensure that the Governance committee is appointed early each term, meets regularly and is well-supported by staff (every May, beginning 2016/17)
- Include a review of key governance policies as part of regular Board meetings (three times per year, beginning 2016/17)

Objective 5.2: Develop and implement annual Board work plans.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Each Board will work to be clear on its annual priorities

Strategies/Timing

- A Board work planning process and template will be developed (2016)
- Each new Board will dedicate at least one full day together to plan its work (annually in early May, beginning 2016)
- Staff will prepare and deliver the necessary background information required for the Board to be aware of ongoing commitments and strategic initiatives for the year (annually in early May, beginning 2016)
- The Board will ensure that SFSS standing and ad hoc committees have members appointed (annually by mid-May, beginning 2016)
- Standing and ad hoc committees will recommend priorities to the Board (mid June, beginning 2016)

Objective 5.3: Ensure that Board performance is regularly reviewed.

Targeted Outcomes:

- The Board will be aware of its overall performance and will be able to adjust, as necessary, to achieve the Board work plan and to govern effectively.

Strategies/Timing

- Develop a Board evaluation tool and accompanying process (2016/17)
- Conduct Board evaluation (twice annually, beginning 2016/17)
- Share evaluation results with members (twice annually, beginning 2016/17)

Objective 5.4: Ensure that individual Director performance is reviewed.

Targeted Outcomes:

- Directors will receive the feedback they need to grow as a Board member

Strategies/Timing

- Develop a Director evaluation tool and accompanying process for executive and non-executive members (2016/17)
- Conduct Director evaluation (twice annually, beginning 2016/17)