

SFSS Board of Directors Semester Report

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At-Large Representative

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Executive Summary

Hi! My name is Rayhaan Khan and I am one of the At-Large Representatives for the 2019/2020 SFSS Board of Directors. I'm going into my fifth and final undergraduate year and will be graduating with a Major in Business (Marketing & Human Resource Management, Honours) and a Minor in Psychology. I decided to run for this position after volunteering with the SFSS for nearly a year, as well as several other SFU clubs and groups, including the SFU Red Cross Club and the Hi-FIVE Movement for Mental Health. This semester, I have been part of the Accessibility Committee and University and Academic Affairs Committee. I was also appointed to serve as Chair of the Board for the Summer semester while our President was away at his internship.

The projects I have worked on so far and completed include the SFU/SFSS Welcome Day Collaboration at the Burnaby campus. This was an event aimed at increasing engagement with new SFU students, as well as promoting the SFSS and the services we offer.

The following are among my projects that have yet to be completed:

- Open Education Resources
- Burnaby Mountain Gondola Project
- Get Out The Vote Campaign

The projects I have not yet started include establishing FASS' presence at the SFU Surrey campus. This is a project aimed at engaging students in FASS, particularly those in their first year.

My main pain point for this semester as an At-Large Representative was the uncertainty in the role. As a Board member, I struggled with the clarity surrounding procedures for the Board as a whole. This made it difficult to move forward with meetings and halted projects throughout the semester.

My biggest recommendation to future Board members is to learn the roles of your fellow students and staff as fast as possible. This will allow you to ask the right people questions and be guided towards a successful procedure.

Another recommendation would be to take time for yourself. Working with the SFSS, along with any classes or other jobs/volunteering you may be a part of, has the potential to become overwhelming. To mitigate this, try to join projects gradually to avoid taking on more than you can handle. A former Board member advised me that I should try and

take weekends off from SFSS work. This has worked well for me, giving me time to recuperate and work harder throughout the week.

In a personal sense, I have been fortunate enough to cultivate positive relationships with most of my fellow Board members. I was lucky enough to know several of them personally prior to this appointment, making it much easier for me to be relaxed around them. Many of those I did not reached out to me to introduce themselves, paving the way for strong bonds to form. Additionally, I have had the chance to meet with our great staff on a regular basis and form connections with the student body as a whole.

In a professional sense, I have been able to serve in a role that allows me to develop my professional skills on a consistent basis. Serving as Chair of the Board this semester put me in a position where I would be responsible for facilitating Board meetings and keeping them running as smoothly as possible. It was, at times, a nerve-wracking experience, especially when sensitive issues were brought to the table and invested students came to voice their opinions. Thankfully, I had the guidance of our amazing staff and support of the Board which allowed me to successfully get through these situations. Now that my time as Chair has come to an end, I am motivated more than ever before to work on SFSS projects; I have reached out to several committees that I am not officially a part of, but that I would love the privilege of working with on upcoming projects. Thankfully, they have all agreed to let me join them and work towards a successful Fall semester.

Projects Completed

SFU/SFSS Welcome Day Collaboration

Summary

Welcome Day is a chance for all incoming SFU undergraduates to be introduced to the university and become more comfortable with the campus. On this day, new students are able to meet their professors & peers, find out more about their program, and receive free merchandise. This year, the SFSS collaborated with SFU and spoke with new students about the services the Society provides to them, as well as provide information for upcoming SFSS events.

Outcomes

Engaging incoming SFU undergraduate students

- The SFSS Board of Directors was aiming to provide incoming students with a brief overview of what they can expect from us
- Fall Kickoff was promoted as the largest SFSS Event of the year and tickets were sold
- A feeling of inclusivity on the campus was fostered with incoming students

Results

- Students left with newfound knowledge about the SFSS
- Our office location, services, and upcoming events were outlined
- Over 40 Fall Kickoff tickets were sold online and 12 were raffled off at the event

Projects in Progress

Open Education Resources

Summary

Advocacy for Open Education Resources has already started with the SFSS Board. There was initial groundwork done in the 2018-2019 Board year to start the conversation with SFU. The University and Academic Affairs Committee will be working on a social media campaign to highlight the professors that currently use Open Education Resources (OER) in their classrooms. These professors will be featured and interviewed regarding OER and asked why it is important to them and why they have implemented it. Additionally, the UAA Committee will reach out to the Board's Faculty representatives, requesting that they send letters of support for Open Education to their respective deans.

Outcomes

- An increased access to open education will address issues with education affordability for many students
- Recognition for faculties that have already implemented this into their curriculums
- Increase education surrounding how OER's work and how students can access them

Timeline

- September 2019 - Create the working group
- October 2019 - Social Media Campaign during Open Access Week
- November 2020 - Letters to deans through FARM Reps

Burnaby Mountain Gondola Project

Summary

The SFSS supports the Burnaby Mountain Gondola and has done work to show support on the municipal, provincial, federal, and local level. The project has been approved in principle by the Burnaby City Council and the Mayor's Council on Regional Transportation for Metro-Vancouver. Translink will be doing consultations with the public starting in November and the UAA committee will be hosting a student information

campaign. We will be educating students on the three route options and getting feedback and questions from student to submit to Translink.

Outcomes

- Address transportation as a concern for students in our undergraduate survey
- Inform students about the three route options and collect feedback
- Work with SFU to create excitement among the student population for the gondola

Timeline

- September 2019 - Create the gondola working group
- October 2019 - Get the working group knowledgeable and informed about updates and create a script they can use to talk to students/staff
- November 2019 - Host an information campaign with SFU to advertise route options and collect student feedback

Get Out The Vote Campaign

Summary

With the federal elections coming up, the UAA committee wants to create political engagement among the student population. The Get Out The Vote campaign will be a holistic effort to inform students about their options in the upcoming elections; i.e. who is running, what their platform is, and how students can vote. We will be working in conjunction with Elections Canada to highlight the early voting polling stations that will be on campus.

Outcomes

- Increase political engagement on campus
- Inform students and faculty about their options for the upcoming federal election
- Create a strategic plan for a holistic campaign hosted with the FPMLA Committee

Timeline

- September 2019 - Create working group

- September 2019 - Work with the SFSS Communications Coordinator to create infographics for distribution (addressing who, what, when, where, how)
- September 2019 - Tabling sessions and a pop-up voting booth
- October 2019 - Advertise Elections Canada polling stations
- October 2019 - Distribute infographics and inform students about ability to vote

Projects To Start

FASS Presence at SFU Surrey

Summary

In mid-June, I accompanied Jennifer Chou (FASS Representative) to a meeting with Rose Baik (Surrey campus FASS Coordinator) and Jasmine Padam (President of the Society of Arts and Social Sciences). At this meeting, we discussed possible ways for SASS to get involved at the Surrey campus and how to increase engagement with students (particularly those in their first year). The SFSS Surrey Campus Committee was discussed as a possible group to collaborate with. I reached out to Nick Chubb, Applied Sciences Representative and Chair of the Surrey Campus Committee, to see if he was open to speaking with Rose about this, which he was. In August, I spoke with Nick again about my attending Surrey Campus Committee meetings in the Fall, where I intend to gather more thoughts on increasing FASS presence.

Outcomes

Strengthening connections between the Faculty and the Surrey Campus

- Hosting more events at the Surrey Campus for first-year FASS students
- Strengthening the relationship between FASS and the SFSS

Strengthening connections between the Faculty Student Union (SASS) and FASS students at the Surrey Campus

- Engaging FASS students (majors, minors, or other) through events hosted at the Surrey Campus

Timeline

June: Met with Rose Baik (FASS coordinator at SFU Surrey), Jasmine Padam (President of SASS), and Jennifer Chou (FASS Representative) to discuss increasing FASS' presence at the Surrey campus during the Fall semester.

August - September: Aid in the planning of events. Work with the Surrey Campus Committee to collaborate with Surrey Campus' FASS Coordinator

October - December: Plan and host events at the Surrey Campus.

Pain Points

Uncertainty

As an At-Large Representative, I am allowed more flexibility than the other FARM representatives (who are specifically associated with their specific faculty) to work on projects I choose. While I do enjoy this, it left me with a fair amount of uncertainty about who I should reach out to and how I could best communicate with SFU's various DSUs & FSUs. Since the beginning of the term, I have reached out to the Board's Business & Arts (the two faculties that I belong in) representatives to see if they would be willing to have me attend meetings with them concerning these faculties. They have both graciously accepted and I have been able to attend a couple of faculty-specific meetings already, including a FASS Fest planning meeting.

Learning Curve

Despite having worked with the SFSS for nearly a year on last year's Events committee, I still struggled with the more formal aspects of the job. In particular, Chairing meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order proved to be a daunting task for my first couple Board meetings. Beyond that, there was a ton of information to take in from our Board orientation, including rules and policies that I was entirely unfamiliar. This problem was not exclusive to me, as some other Board members found their projects stalled due to procedures being followed incorrectly.

Recommendations

Engage with Your Fellow Board Members & Staff

There will inevitably come times when you face a problem or have a question that you will have no way of being able to solve or figure out on your own. In times like these, it pays to know who around you specialize in what. Regarding Board Members, find out if any of them have previously served on Board. For me, these people were invaluable in learning the finer points of the job. Regarding Staff, many of them have a wealth of experience, as well as specialized knowledge that can help you in almost any situation. Take time to speak with them early on, as they make the experience much easier and can get you through problems that may seem incredibly daunting.

Take on Projects Gradually

Being on Board can quickly become overwhelming if you take too much work on. This does not even consider the courses you are taking or the other organizations that you may be a part of during your term. Try to take on projects gradually so that you get a sense for what you can handle; this will allow you to put your best effort into what you deem most important.

Take Weekends Off

In order to avoid burning out, I recommend taking weekends completely off from SFSS work. This will allow you to recuperate from the week, focus on other commitments (and yourself) and start the week off fresh.