

SFSS Board of Directors Semester Report

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Vice-President University Relations

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Executive Summary

Hi! I'm Shina, the Vice-President of University Relations. This semester, I have been chaired the University and Academic Affairs Committee and been part of the Vancouver Campus Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, and the Fall Kickoff Committee.

Some projects I've completed include updating the UAA Committee Terms of Reference, extending the SFU Free Shuttle Service in collaboration with students and the RHA, and the SFU x SFSS Welcome Day collaboration. I am currently working on the SFU Budget Consultation, the Gondola working group, political engagement on campus, establishing SFSS presence at the Vancouver campus, and more.

My biggest pain points this semester has been internal communication issues. The additional lack of clarity around procedures as well as changing procedures gave me inaccurate information leading to misunderstandings and tension.

A recommendation I have would be to ask questions and reach out when you're confused. People want you to succeed in this position but they are not able to help you if they don't know you need it.

Another recommendation is to collaborate with other board members on projects! It makes your time as a board member much more enjoyable and creates new ideas.

This semester has been a rollercoaster of emotions and process and learning. I am grateful for all the lessons so far and am looking forward to executing all the plans in the fall and spring semesters!

Projects Completed

SFU Critical Incident Review Committee

Summary

Following the incident on October 3rd at the Burnaby campus and the way SFU handled it, the office of the Vice-President Academic created a steering committee to review our critical incident response. There was an external review done and the committee's job was to review the recommendations from the consultants, accepting the ones we saw fit for the campus.

Outcomes

Through review with a holistic approach to critical incident response at SFU

- Administration and staff from various departments at SFU were involved with this committee
- Having student representation through the VP UR role helped the administration see the impact of the recommendations through a student lens

Results

- The committee went through the entire list of recommendations
- VP UR added comments and notes to any recommendations that were student facing
- The new changes were delivered to the staff through the chief officers and senior directors

SFU Lennon Wall

Summary

A group of SFSS executives were approached by a student about the make-shift lennon wall posters being vandalized, with an initial request for the SFSS to provide a rolling board as a lennon wall. VP UR spearheaded the project with an initial request to staff to

provide the board. The request came back with meeting requests with Campus Public Safety, ensuring the safety of the staff that would be supervising the board was top priority. Getting approval from the board of directors, the SFSS staff, Campus Public Safety, Student Services, and the other tenants in the MBC took longer than expected. After addressing communication errors and safety concerns, the SFSS was able to put out a statement supporting the right to protest without fear of vandalism and provided the lennon wall to students.

Outcomes

SFSS taking a stance on the political issue between Hong Kong and China

- Shows the society is not going to be silent when matters of safety are brought up regarding students

Increased engagement with focus on dialogue, not silencing

- The wall creates opportunities for students to debate this important topic instead of staying silent
- Provides students with the peace of mind that their thoughts will not be vandalized under SFSS supervision

Results

- Lennon Wall is still up outside the SFSS offices and is populated with positive messages

UAA Committee Terms of Reference

Summary

We updated the name from University Advocacy and Lobbying Committee to The University and Academic Affairs Committee, as it was a better fit for the work we strive to do. The current terms of reference mentioned lobbying and since the committee does not work with government relations, that term did not fit. We also added student outreach and engagement initiatives and student information campaigns, ensuring the work for the upcoming 2 semesters will be reflected accurately in the terms of reference.

Outcomes

Accurately reflect the upcoming work of the committee in the terms of reference, including the name change and adding student engagement.

Results

The committee can refer back to the TOR for an updated account of the expectations of committee members and stake-holders.

SFU Free Shuttle Service

Summary

SFU added a free shuttle service from residence to Fraser International College to cornerstone beginning in April 2019 to address the Tower Road closure. It is a pilot program that was scheduled to run until August 31, 2019. However, the shuttle started being used by students, staff, and faculty and became an extremely popular program and when students found out it was ending in August they wanted action taken to address this. There was an online petition started by a student living in residence, highlighting how useful the shuttle is, especially for women at night. The petition took off and I met with the director of parking services to discuss this issue. Working with the Residence Hall Association, we highlighted how this pilot needs to continue throughout the fall and spring semesters since more students will be back on campus. Also ensuring the weather changes are taken into consideration, it gets dark early in the winter and makes it unsafe for students to walk from FIC to residence or cornerstone and this shuttle address that problem. Through student support, RHA support, and SFSS support, we got the shuttle service extended until August 2020.

Outcomes

Making campus safer for students

- The shuttle will be helping students make the journey from residence to cornerstone and FIC at multiple hours of the day
- Students are able to travel across campus without concerns

Results

Reception

- Students are thrilled the service will be continuing on for another year!
- Parking services also added 2 additional stops to the route (Transportation Center Bay 2 and Gravel parking lot near SFU Residence townhouses)

SFU x SFSS Welcome Day 2019

Summary

The SFSS was approached by Student Services in June 2019 for a Welcome Day collaboration. There was a working group created to continue the conversation in terms of board commitments and ways we can support the onboarding of new students on campus. After discussions throughout the summer, and multiple meetings with student services, the SFSS agreed to a wide arrangement of commitments for not only Welcome Day but also Week of Welcome. Including handing out mini donuts and cotton candy, selling fall kick off tickets, hosting a pancake breakfast, providing a hand-washing station, and providing volunteers for these events.

Outcomes

- SFSS presence at Welcome Day with over 2000 students in attendance
- Ability to create a good first impression on incoming students and show what SFSS can do for them
- Create memories with the students at Welcome Day and Week of Welcome

Results

Increased knowledge of SFSS resources for incoming students

Promotion of Fall Kickoff to over 2000 students

Excitement surrounding the beginning of the semester

Ability to make a great first impression on incoming students

Continuing the relationship SFSS has with Student Services

Projects in Progress

SFU Budget Consultation

Summary

SFU increased their tuition fees the standard 2% for domestic students and up-to 20% for international students in specific programs. These reaction to these increases created the Tuition Freeze Now movement, which the board endorsed in the 2018 - 2019 year. The President and I are following up on the campaign by being involved early in the budget process for the 2020 - 2021 academic year.

Outcomes

Be involved in the consultation process for the budget

- Together with the Graduate Student Society, the SFSS is meeting with SFU monthly in the Joint Operations Group meeting for updates to the budget
- Through regular consultation, we are able to provide a student voice to this concern and address any additional increases for the upcoming academic year

Timeline

- Monthly JOG Meetings which started in July, next meeting is September 16
- October 2 → public consultation with student body
- January 2020 → Board of Governors meeting with the first budget discussion
- February 2020 → another consultation with the student body, UAAC will attend and provide letters of support
- March 2020 → Board of Governors meeting to finalize the budget for 2020/2021

Burnaby Mountain Gondola Working Group

Summary

The SFSS supports the Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit (BMGT) project and I am working closely with SFU as well as the UAA committee to lead student information campaigns and show support for this project. Currently, there are three route options

being considered by Translink for this project, I would like to lead a student information campaign to teach students about the potential route options and collect feedback about their comments and questions. Over the summer, I attended the Burnaby City Council meeting with the President and members of the UAA committee to show student support for the project. On May 27, it was approved in principle by the Burnaby City Council and on July 25, it was approved in principle by the Mayor's Council on Regional Transportation for Metro-Vancouver.

Outcomes

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

Timeline

- September 2019 → Create 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 information campaign with SFU to advertise route options and collect student feedback and questions for Translink

Open Education Resources Working Group

Summary

Open Education Resources have been on the board's list of priorities for a while, there was groundwork done in the 2018- 2019 board year to get the conversation started with SFU. After attending the Semi-Annual General Meeting for the British Columbia Federation of Students, I was inspired with campaign ideas. I want to work on a social media campaign to highlight the professors that use open education in their classrooms. They will be featured and asked questions along the lines of why OER is important to them. I also want to work with the Faculty representatives to set up meetings with their respective deans and discuss OERs at SFU.

Outcomes

- Addressing education affordability with increased access to open textbooks
- Appreciation for the faculty that have added this to their curriculum for the semester
- 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

Free Menstrual Products

Summary

Following in the footsteps of the New Westminster School System, we created a working group to get free menstrual products in the campus washrooms. Working with the Graduate Student Society, Women's Center, and Out on Campus Center, we drafted a proposal to submit this as a pilot project for the Student Experience Initiative. We are hoping to gain initial funding for this through SEI and then eventually from the federal government.

Outcomes

- Provide access to free menstrual for self-identifying women on the Burnaby campus
- Create a culture of normalizing menstruation

Timeline

- May 2019 → Created the working group and figured out our goals
- June - July 2019 → Drafted and finalized the proposal for SEI
- August 2019 → Submitted proposal and waiting on response

Car2Go on Campus

Summary

I had a student address the lack of Car2Go on campus, and requested me to look into whether this was possible at the Burnaby Campus. I set up a meeting with the Director of Parking Services and he was excited about the idea. He requested more logistics (comparing Car2Go to other car sharing services that exist on campus). I created a [briefing note](#) with the financial difference between Car2Go and Evo and sent this to David. We set up a meeting with Car2Go and addressed the interest of SFU students to have this service on campus.

Outcomes

- Increased options for Ride Sharing on campus
- Providing the most affordable ride-sharing service to students

Timeline

- June 2019 → Initial meeting with David to address this gap
- July 2019 → Creating the briefing note
- August 2019 → Meeting with Car2Go
- September 2019 → Follow up with Car2Go on our proposal

Engagement at Woodward's

Summary

The SFU Woodward's campus has had a lack of engagement from the SFSS for a considerable amount of time, so to address this, the chair of the Vancouver Campus Committee (Fiona Li - FCAT Rep) created opportunities. We have been in contact with the engagement coordinators at Woodward's throughout the summer semester to have the SFSS involved at the Welcome Back BBQ as well as the Vancouver Campus Resource Fair in September.

Outcomes

- Ensuring the SFSS is inclusive to our diverse student population
- Bridging the gap between the Vancouver campus and the Burnaby Campus

Timeline

- June 2019 → Initial conversations with Engagement Coordinator at Woodward's
- August 2019 → SFSS presence at the Welcome Back BBQ and the Vancouver Campus Resource Fair

#BoardMemberMondays

Summary

Social Media campaign to highlight the board members that are part of the 2019 - 2020 board year. Including fun information such as pet peeves and favorite place to spend time, making the board members more personable and approachable. It also makes the board members take ownership over the fact that they represent the SFSS not only in person but online as well.

Outcomes

- Increase social media engagement with the SFSS channels
- Have scheduled posts for 16 weeks (feature one board member a week)
- Also provide a way for students to contact respective board member, making SFSS board more accessible

Timeline

- June 2019 → conversation started with SFSS communications coordinator and Applied Science Rep
- July 2019 → template created for the entire board to compile, ensuring everyone is answering the same questions
- September 2019 → begin the social media campaign after Fall Kickoff

Get Out The Vote Campaign

Summary

With the federal elections around the corner, 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, who is running, what their platform is, and how they can vote. Working in conjunction with Elections Canada to highlight the early voting polling stations that will be on campus as well as political engagement as a whole.

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 FPML 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

Federal Election Debate

Summary

I, along with the president of the SFSS am looking into the possibility of hosting a federal election debate on the Burnaby campus. The debate will be held with candidates from the four major parties in the Burnaby North-Seymour riding. We are coordinating with Elections Canada to host the event before they have early voting polling stations on campus. The purpose of the debate is to increase political engagement on campus and build excitement surrounding the elections. The event goes in line with the Get Out the Vote Campaign, encouraging students and staff to be politically active. It is also an opportunity for students to directly ask candidates questions they might have about their platform because we will be hosting a Q&A session at the event.

Outcomes

- Increase political engagement on campus
- Build/maintain a good working relationship with politicians in the Burnaby North-Seymour riding
- Provide space for students to directly ask questions to the candidates

- Work in collaboration with the Graduate Student Society and SFU

Timeline

- June 2019 → initial idea brought forward by president to VP External and VP University Relations
- July 2019 → groundwork being completed by the President, VP University Relations, and the GSS
- August 2019 → Seeking approval for the event by the board since the event is outside the strategic plan
- September 2019 → (pending approval of the board) confirm candidates, moderator, venue, and start marketing the event
- October 2019 → (pending approval of the board) host the event at the beginning of the month, before early voting stations on campus

Pain Points

Learn to say No

This report showcases the projects I worked on and started in the summer semester, and I believe I took on too much work. My time was not utilized in the most efficient way because I decided to take on every project that came my way. With the creation of the SFSS Strategic plan and learning more about what my expectations are in this role, I am able to learn what fits my portfolio. Also, allowing myself more time to learn the processes involved in making these projects happen in the correct way could have saved a lot of miscommunication that occurred this semester. Going forward, I will firstly complete all the projects in progress and then take on more work as the semester continues.

Prioritize projects

This goes in line with my previous point of doing things that don't fall under my portfolio and then feeling overwhelmed with the amount of things I have gotten myself into. Since this was my first time on the board, I got excited looking at all the possibilities and opportunities I had to help students. I wanted to maximize my one year on the board and help students in different aspects of their experience. However, that led to preventable errors on my part by doing too much at once. For the duration of the fall semester, I want to perfect the process for the life cycle of a project that I can complete as VP UR.

Communication Issues

There was consistent miscommunication and misunderstandings occurring throughout the summer which caused controversy and tension internally. If more updates were given by all board members frequently, these could have been prevented. Going forward, I will motion for committees to update the board at the board meeting, ensuring everyone is on the same page and feels supported in their various projects.

Silence/Delays/Lack of Voicing Concerns Early

Multiple board members have:

- Stayed silent on an issue until a few weeks later, when the issue was brought to the whole board,
- Delayed responding to time-sensitive messages/emails, or
- Did not voice concerns until the issue has been festering for a while.

These actions cannot continue as we were all elected for our respective position to share our voice. They create a culture of apathy within the board and make it seem as if the members that brought forward the issue are not being supported or even respected. I will do my best to foster a culture of openness and ability to ask questions when someone is confused to prevent silence and delays in responding.

Recommendations

Ask Questions

When confused, stop the meeting and ask questions. If you require clarification, there is a good chance someone else does too. Help each other learn together and ensure you are making informed decisions when voting at the board table.

Be Prepared for Meetings

When the agenda is sent out for the board meeting or a committee meeting, make sure you read the agenda as well as the documents attached. Feeling prepared also makes you more confident on the knowledge you have on the issue and makes it easier to request clarification. Remembering you were elected to represent your constituency and they put their trust in your vote.

Collaborate!

Working with external partners such as SFU or even other board members on projects makes them so much more enjoyable. Not only am I getting another set of eyes at my work to catch any mistakes and improve, but there is also that space created for a flow of new ideas. You are able to bounce ideas off each other and really figure out how to efficiently make this project successful and when you have meetings with other stakeholders, the bigger the projects gets. Figure out the interests of other board members during this semester so you can fall effectively for the fall and spring semesters.