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SFSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS: FALL SEMESTER REPORT

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Executive Summary

Hello! My name is Andrew Wong and I am the current Business Representative for the 2019-2020 SFSS Board of Directors. This upcoming fall semester marks my fourth year at the Beedie School of Business. I am currently the chair of the Nominating Committee while sitting as a member of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Projects I have collaborated on include but are not limited to include improvements to the SFSS website through the Nomination Committee, Beedie involvement, SFSS Month in Review, and the Beedie Dean Search Committee. The summary, objectives, and results of projects completed, projects in progress, and projects to start will be presented below.

This past semester felt a lot smoother than previous semester where I was getting used to everything. I feel more comfortable as I have transitioned into this position as well as finally solidifying my two concentrations in Beedie: Finance and Marketing. Taking three courses during my Board term has served well as I had enough time to put good effort in and increase my GPA. As for the Board, I feel like although we will never be “best friends” we can collaborate in a professional manner better than the first semester. The tensions seemed to have died down which is what I prefer. I wish we got along better so that we could have Board socials and get to know one another better.

Overall, my term has been full of ups and downs, but I am grateful for how much I have learned through the SFSS, projects, and its membership. As it is my final term on Board, I tend to reflect on if my tenure was what I had expected it to be. And the answer is no. There were projects I was looking forward to completing that were not possible for just one student to complete. On the other hand, there were projects I never had imagined possible of being apart of that I have learned the most from. I feel as though this is a microcosm of life; you never know what opportunities will come your way and it is up to you to take advantage of them. I recommend to future faculty reps to stay in touch with your DSU and Student Engagement Office as opportunities will arise and expect to be flexible and willing to adapt to changes in your plans. Lastly, I cannot wait to get into the new SUB... hopefully by the end of our term! From the tours we have been on and provided to our membership, it looks amazing!

Projects Completed

Nomination Committee: Improvements to Website

Summary

I was browsing through the SFSS website and noticed how hard it was for our membership to find the “Join a committee” tab. It was originally under the “About Us” tab even though there was a “Get Involved” tab. In addition, the descriptions of the committees that were hiring did not match the committee description under the “Committees” and were also outdated. Next, the application forms varied from committee to committee and there was no cohesion between the applications. Also, the webpage looked dull and needed some excitement. Once I jotted down these notes into a google doc I sent an email to Sindhu so that we can meet and further discuss this. She recommended Sarah sit in as our bylaws restrict certain changes to committees.

Outcomes

I wanted these changes to be implemented as soon as possible because there are always students interested in joining committees. Once the SFSS website is updated, students will be able to easily access the committee descriptions and application form built directly into the webpage. From our discussions, written testimonials and pictures were going to be included as well to give better expectations prior to joining the committee. After our meeting, Sindhu reached out to all committee chairs to ask for updates to the terms of reference, written testimonials from current at-larges, and any pictures from the committee. There was also space to update any committee-specific interview questions. Meanwhile, Sarah invited me to the Governance Committee meeting as the Nomination Committee policies are outdated and do not accurately reflect what we are currently doing. Policies regarding the selection process and appointing process were updated.

Results

Once we received responses from most committee chairs, the website was updated and looks the way it currently is. The accessibility of finding the applications was greatly improved. The committee descriptions are up to date as well as past projects and accomplishments with pictures. I recommend that the committee description, projects, and pictures be updated every year to ensure it accurately reflects the committee. A pain point was the Events Committee did not include pictures, but I will have that updated. This change took two meetings in total and communication from Sindhu and Sarah to the chairs of each committee that hires at-large representatives. If you ever see changes that can improve students lives, go for it.

Beedie Involvement

Summary

I attended or represented three events throughout Beedie this semester. First was the climate strike accommodation on September 27, 2019. This was an urgent issue where each faculty released a statement whether they were going to grant academic amnesty to all students in the faculty. There was no update from Beedie so I emailed the Dean, Ali Dastmalchian. The Associate Dean, Peter Tingling got in touch with me but supported Andrew Petter's message but could not provide accommodations for all of Beedie. Next, I contacted BASS and had them post on their social media to contact myself if they needed help getting accommodated for the climate strike. Although no one personally contacted me, I was thankful for BASS' support and spreading awareness. Second was the Beedie Club President meeting. This was the first meeting where we met the newly hired SEO staff and I represented the SFSS. There were some questions for the "SFSS" but were directed to the SFSS staff and not myself, which needed clarification but now they understand. There was not much consensus to continue these President meetings possibly because everyone is so busy and the value from updates were not worth the time. Third was the Beedie Protégé lunch where I represented the SFSS. I had the opportunity to introduce the SFSS and connect with first year Beedie students.

Outcomes

I believe that the most prominent outcome from these events were spreading awareness of what the SFSS does, what the Board does, and what my position consists of. At times it is challenging to tell students what the SFSS does because we provide so many services and have many staff that have their own portfolios. It is also challenging answering the question "What does the Business Representative do?" This is hard because there are no specific duties and a lot of it is up to you.

Results

Spreading awareness for the SFSS and interacting with students were my desired outcomes from these events. There has been an increase in Beedie at-large representatives sitting on committees, specifically the Events Committee. There has also been a strong turnout from Beedie students at SFSS events because of the strong presence on the committee. Its always important to attend and prioritize these events because there are only a handful that present themselves to you. I recommend all faculty representatives to stay in touch with their DSU and their respective Student Engagement Office to be in the loop for future opportunities.

Projects in Progress

Month in Review

Summary

The SFSS Month in Review an initiative I have taken the lead on. I am passionate about this project as it provides an overarching perspective of the work our Board has achieved in each respective month. A graphic illustrating key events that took place in the month is posted on SFSS social media and the SFSS website. This graphic is accompanied by a written statement explaining each key event and a timeline. Since last semester, I updated the design of the graphic to maximize the size of the pictures so our membership views it easier while browsing facebook or our website.

Outcomes

This project communicates our monthly achievements to our membership in a fun, informal way. As we have learned, when students are unaware of the projects we are working on, they assume we are doing nothing. That is why posting this graphic and write up is beneficial to both us and students.

To achieve these outcomes, I first send out an email with a strict deadline to the Board with a link to a Google Drive folder where they can upload all photos that relate to SFSS events they participated in. Once all photos are in, I select one photo from each event and import them into a canva graphic. Next, I receive help from President, Giovanni HoSang, with the facebook and website write up. From here, I send the graphic and write up through Dipti's online work order form.

Possible obstacles that may occur each month is Board members forgetting to take pictures at their events. In my email I always remind people to take photos, so I am hoping it becomes an instinctual thing moving forward. Also, if a month is slow and has minimal events such as December during exam season, we just start again in January.

Timeline

My goal is to have the SFSS Month in Review posted within the first week of the following month. This gives Board members the opportunity to capture all their events up until the last day of the month, and then a few days to put together the graphic and write up and forward it to Dipti through a work order form.

Beedie Dean Search Committee

Summary

This committee is comprised of a VP Academic, two Deans, four Faculty Members, one Undergraduate Student (SFSS), one Graduate Student (GSS), one Support Staff, and up to two additional Faculty Members. The purpose of this committee is to review the incumbent's performance (Ali Dastmalchian) where that individual is eligible and seeking reappointment. We provide consultations within Beedie, the Deans and VPs, as well as external constituents. If the committee is satisfied with the review, it will recommend reappointment and a ratification vote will follow – needs 60% majority. Everything that is discussed during the meeting times are strictly confidential. Also, this committee occurs every five years because a Dean's term is five years.

Outcomes

As this committee just commenced, there will be a steep learning curve for me being the only undergraduate. It was quite intimidating sitting in on a meeting with qualified adults and where my voice is just as important as theirs. Also, most undergrads do not have much exposure to the Dean so speaking on behalf of students can be challenging at times. I hope to gain experience sitting on more “professional” committees and make connections with other members who possess years of experience.

Timeline

This committee has pre-set meeting times from January until May or June, depending on the length of the search, if applicable. In order to be on this committee, you must be able to attend all of the meetings, and I was lucky that my schedule aligned with the meeting times. Meetings are usually bi-weekly or monthly depending on the deliverables that are due.

Projects to Start

Nomination Committee: Length of At-Large Representatives

Summary

The Nomination Committee does not have strict guidelines regarding the length of at-large representative terms on their respective committee. This was initially preferred because it provided flexibility for students who want to continue their tenure or for those who want to end. However, most students have stayed on the same committee for almost one year as it is not strenuous work and it looks good on their resume. However, most committees have reached their maximum capacity of at-large representatives. The problem is we just had club days last week and as we promote our committees, only two out of five have vacancies.

Outcomes

Ideally, we should have more opportunities for students to become involved. Whether that is having strict start and end dates or have chairs reinforce inactive at-larges will be removed from the committee to open up space for interested students. If nothing changes, there is no reason to promote our committees if students will not be able to join them. Also, there is no length of term specified on the applications which could cause confusion.

Timeline

I will have to bring this issue to Sarah for policy guidelines and get her thoughts on the availability of committees. Because it is already the start to the semester, changes will likely have to take place for the beginning of the summer semester. Once we have an outline of when committees will be vacant, we can start promoting the available committees both online and in person during booting.

Pain Points

The hardest part about being a faculty representative is the lack of direction that comes with your role. Because each faculty is different, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all mold for everyone to follow. Also, each Business Representative from year to year has their own portfolio's and opportunities presented to them that cannot be copied. For example, the Beedie President Meetings that took place last year could not happen due to the Student Engagement Office being swamped with new projects and hiring new staff. Also, the consensus was that these meetings were not worth the time of President's. On the other hand, you are presented with opportunities because you are in this leadership position.

As for the Board in general, there are clearly two sides that do not get along very well. Unfortunately, two Board members decided to block me on Instagram for some reason. It does not affect me negatively, but I am just confused why they combine work with personal life. I guess I am just guilty by association with this "side" of the Board. Although being on Board is highly political, I do not like how these "two sides" affect us from getting to know one another. As this is the last semester, I think its too late to come together. From this, I have learned how important culture can be moving forward into the corporate world.

Recommendations

I recommend future Business Representatives to be flexible and not have a strict outline of their term because in reality, not everything can be accomplished, and you will get to take on other projects not initially expected. The unknown can be stressful at times but that is just the nature of being on the Board. Unforeseeable issues will arise as well as periods of slow work. Committee work will likely be short bursts of work instead of constant work. For example, the Nomination Committee hires at the beginning of the semester and supports chairs when the need additional at-larges. Currently, chairs have not expressed interest for hiring help because many members sit on committees much longer than a semester. Also, the Finance and Audit Committee meets monthly which is not intensive work. There are also opportunities to join more committees and take on new working groups. Overall, you must find a balance between your Board work, school work, and other extracurriculars.

I recommend future Board members to not be afraid to stand up for what you believe even though you know there will be many others that disagree with your opinion. For example, the current SUB space issue has been a confrontational issue, but it is important to stand strong even when people are fighting against you. In the moment you may think of why you are still arguing but the decision will impact thousands of students for years to come. Also, the disagreement can spark improved alternatives that were not initially thought of. For example, we are currently trying to provide a solution to meet somewhere in the middle between the two sides for the space issue. All in all, if you want to push yourself out of your comfort zone, join the Board. You will be exposed to so many new opportunities and ideas you never knew you could be apart of.