

SFSS Board of Directors
Semester Report
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May 2019 - Aug 2019

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Executive Summary

I am elated for the opportunity to serve you as the President of the Simon Fraser Student Society. Over this summer I have started, worked on, contributed to and been instrumental to a myriad of projects and initiatives, My big goal was to hit the ground running with some big improvements to the work of the SFSS. As you may have known, I ran in a very intense election after being at odds with the decision making authority of the SFSS - The Board of Directors for just over a year. Some of my aims were to improve the profile and the reputation of the Board of Directors, making it less intimidating for students to get involved, improve relationships with student groups around campus with which there were many fractured relationships - such as the independent student societies, to increase the advocacy that the student society does on behalf of students and the stance the society takes on various issues. I have shaped this report as a conversation between myself as the President of the Simon Fraser Student Society and with you as a student who elected me to serve. I am really honored and privileged to have had this opportunity. I worked on many of the commitments that I have made over the election period as well as worked with other board members to bring their ideas forward. This year will be a very eventful and rich year where we intend to ensure that students are truly thriving everywhere.

Students Over Profits

I ran on the premise of giving power to the average student and focusing on Students Over Profits when dealing with the University, Government, and other stakeholders. For example, we are now heavily involved in the onset in the SFU budget consultation process and are ensuring that students are not blindsided by Tuition Increases again. Though things won't be as ridiculous as last year, we do anticipate that the University will still be want some increases, which we will push back on. We are gearing up for yet another fight for Better Funding from Government and a Tuition Freeze Now. Students need a break from the continuous increases to tuition.

Other issues I ran on was the big space issue on campus due to the previous board deciding to double down on their decision to evict the Rotunda Community groups at the end of the completion of the Student Union Building without providing a way forward. I have since introduced a motion with a brand new proposal that is a accommodates the previous boards desire to provide semesterly space for clubs and student unions while also housing the Rotunda Community groups. These groups support students in fighting for social and environmental justice, as well as giving a voice to and space for marginalized students on campus a home in our Student Union Building. This motion is pending and awaiting a board vote which I intend to bring back to the Board, and subsequently students in short order. The fight continues.

Accountability, Communication, Transparency

We have done many good things in the summer to reform and change the perception of the SFSS. We have completed more projects highlighting and effectively communicating what we do as a Student Society.

We have launched the Board Month in Review to effectively communicate what we do as a student society. This involved showing what decisions were made over the month, where board members went for conferences, and/or what events were held. This is done in a very consumable fashion and is one of the ways we are aiming to more effectively communicate with the membership.

I have also aimed to introduce new policy proposals to improve the manner in which we vote, for example I have introduced a slate of motions over the summer aimed at undoing some of the 'not transparent enough' practices that the board has gotten used to. I have raised a motion to lost how each board member votes - which is now at the committee level for development.

Advocacy Works

We have achieved huge advocacy wins over the summer. Board members, in support of the Burnaby Mountain Gondola Project, worked with SFU and the SFU Advocacy group 'Build The SFU Gondola' to attend various civic council meetings and have been successful in getting the Burnaby Mountain Gondola to the consultation phases. The Burnaby City Council voted to support in principle the Gondola project. The Mayors Council on Regional Transportation followed suit. The Board will now have to work with its partners to ensure that the consultation phase has as much student input as possible.

Strategic Plan includes big wins for students

The SFSS Board worked on the new strategic plan. One of the big principles is the society needed to be much more proactive for students. As such we passed a new strategic plan with a mission to "support students to reach their full potential by providing resources and services that represent, connect and benefit our membership". Our strategic priorities have included key points that I have pushed for over the last few months including improving University Relations, Student Engagement, Student Wellbeing, Student Financial Health, Government and Stakeholder Relations and lastly Organizational Development. Our Guiding Principles are Equity, Integrity, Community, Sustainability, Accountability and Empowerment. All of which really sets the stage to empower the masses of students as well as protect the voices of students who have been drowned out for years - as board is making a transition to see issues through a lens of equity (where we see disproportionate impacts on students from different communities)

Events and Student Engagement

Over the summer I worked in collaboration with the Events Committee to also ensure that board members are putting in the promotional work for the Fall Kickoff. Though I wasn't physically present to push ticket sales until the last week of August, we have gained a lot of traction for relaunching Fall Kickoff this year after a failed attempt under last year's board term! Many other events were held over the summer and I was elated to lend my support!

Some of the Motions I Introduced to Board:

- Space Allocation in the SUB to include the Rotunda Groups and 8 suites for Clubs and DSUs
- List Voting Record of All Board Members at a Board Meeting
- Co-sponsored support of Freedom of Expression in light of the Hong Kong Protests

The rest of the year I anticipate will be very tough, yet very exciting. There will be disagreements, but you can count on us that we will not come to a standstill on issues, that we can work together as a board. While I fight to ensure that for issues that board has disagreements on are not solely based on what 16 individuals think, but that students outside of the political establishment are engaged. Thank you again and I hope you have pleasure in reading what I have been able to work on or complete over the course of the semester.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

Board Orientation

Summary:

Shortly after the Elections, I worked with the Executive Director to organize the Board Orientation. This was not very hectic and required me to set up one on one meetings with each and every board member to get acquainted with their intended goals and to incorporate it into programming for the Board Orientation. Additionally, we had presentations from our lawyers relating to labour law and the societies act. We also received a governance 101 workshop.

Outcomes and Results:

- Board members were made aware of the Societies Act, the SFSS Bylaws and the SFSS Board Policies which govern how the board operates. We also have a better understanding of each other through facilitated SDI assessment that mapped board members personalities and styles of leadership while in their comfort zone as well as when in conflict.

Completed May 1 and May 2

Board Retreat

Summary:

The Board went to an Airbnb at North Vancouver. We had tough conversations regarding our time during elections, we talked about plans for the year ahead and we chose the various committees. We also played basketball, held many fun activities such as video games and even partied a bit. Mixing fun with seriousness. This was a good start to have people who have never had conversations before now be able to come together and co-participate in various activities.

Outcomes and Results:

- I conducted a feedback survey that showed mixed results as expected due to the challenging election and the Board being composed of multiple people from multiple campaign groups.
- I recommend that more conversations happen to have board members start to trust each other and build camaraderie.

Completed May 3 to May 5

Clubs Days

Summary:

I collaborated with the Member Services Coordinator to organize Events Clubs Days participation. I talked with and gave popcorn to each and every club and organized Board Member participation for Clubs Days.

Outcomes and Results:

- Students felt very supported. We had many students come and interact with Board Members as we handed out popcorn. Many students expressed that they were happy that they felt so engaged.

Completed: May 14 to May 16

SFU Lennon Wall and Freedom of Expression

Summary:

A group of SFSS executives were approached by a student about a make-shift Lennon Wall of 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 and Results:

- 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

Completed:

This all happened in late July and the Lennon Wall is still up outside the SFSS offices and is populated with positive messages

SFU Free Shuttle Petition

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. I helped the petition get traction while VP University did the groundwork to ensure that the shuttle is extended by meeting with multiple parties.

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:

- 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)

Completed: August 2019

SFSS Strategic Planning

Summary:

The SFSS held their strategic planning session on July 4! Our strategic priorities include University Relations, Student Engagement, Student Wellbeing, Student Financial Health, Government and Stakeholder Relations and lastly Organizational Development. Our Guiding Principles are Equity, Integrity, Community, Sustainability, Accountability and Empowerment.

Outcomes and Results:

- Here is the Strategic Plan: <http://sfss.ca/the-sfss-launches-new-strategic-plan/>
- SFSS Now has a plan that we will tie all future events and initiative to

Completed: July 2019

SFU x SFSS Welcome Day and Outdoor Movie Night 2019

Summary:

SFU held a Welcome Day which we collaborated in. I gave a speech introducing the Simon Fraser Student Society as well as gave out prizes courtesy of the SFSS. We had a booth where we gave away mini donuts and promoted Fall Kickoff. This was a very rich experience that really helped our visibility and showed that we care about incoming students. This project had some hiccups as we did not fully get to approve this event as a board or in any committee and there was some miscommunication with the approval that was intended. I signed off on our end of the bargain which was also taken as additional commitments. My recommendation is for a President or anyone else signing off on a commitment be very specific on what you are committing to on behalf of the board. In the end everything ended up going really well.

Outcomes and Results:

- Many students felt the Society's presence at the event and we enjoyed participating
- Fall Kickoff profile was increased massively at the event as we got to showcase this in front of 500-700 students

Completed August 29, 2019.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

SFU Budget Consultation and SFU/SFSS/GSS Joint Operations Group

Summary:

We re-established the Joint Operations group to allow for GSS, SFSS, and the SFU to all be at the same table and bring matters of importance. This body consists of SFSS President, SFSS Exec Director, GSS External Relations and GSS University Relations and the GSS Executive Director, in addition to the SFU Student Services, SFU VP Finance and other persons as the body agrees on from time to time. We are using JOG to bring our issues regarding consultations and other issues of importance to the Society that needs to be flagged to the University.

Outcomes:

- Since establishing the joint operations group, we have successfully pushed for and increase from 1 Budget Consultations to 3.
- These Will be promoted to students across all three campuses

Timeline

May 2019 to November 2019

Tuition Freeze Now

Summary:

The Tuition Freeze Now campaign is continually engaging students. Every month there is a General Assembly and I am continuing to collaborate and play a big part in organizing students to make their voices heard. Over the summer, Tuition Freeze Now presented in person at the BC Budget Consultation and the recommendations of increasing funding to post-secondary education and to regulate max increases to international students tuition have made the report.

Outcomes:

- The recommendations of increasing funding to post-secondary education and to regulate max increases to international students tuition have made the report.
- TFN will continue right up through the Board of Governors vote raising awareness about high tuition increases once again.

Timeline:

May 2019 to April 2020

Burnaby Mountain Gondola Project

Summary:

The SFSS supports the BMGT and has done work through different board members 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, as well as obtaining feedback and

questions from student to submit to Translink. Additionally I took part in an interview when I attended the Burnaby Council Meeting where the Gondola was supported in principle.

Outcome:

- Address transportation as a concern for students in our undergraduate survey
- Inform students about route options and collect feedback
- Work with SFU to create excitement among the student population
- Burnaby City Council supported in principle on May 27
- Mayors Council on Regional Transportation support the Gondola in principle

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 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, which includes 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

Fall Kickoff Sponsorship Team and Promotions

Summary:

Fall Kickoff has relaunched! I am a part of the Fall Kickoff sponsorship team and I am also helping to promote and create hype around the Kickoff.

Outcomes:

- Trying to get other board members to share and promote the event.

- None of my sponsorship sendouts have yet been accepted but the Sponsorship team as a whole has had multiple successes and Kickoff is going in full steam
- Many tickets have been sold and we are 4 weeks away from a huge event!

Timeline: Kickoff Scheduled for Sep 20, 2019

Federal Elections Debate Planning

Summary:

I, along with the VP University Relations 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

Rotunda Groups in the SUB

Summary: The previous Board moved to adopt a space allocation model in the Student Union Building and since then there has been multiple back and forth conversations between groups that are disproportionately hurt by this decision, specifically the Rounda Community. There are several suites and rooms in the Student Union Building such as 22 Bookable open rooms, and 7 Organizational Suites with each housing 2-3 offices and one lounge. The Rotunda Community groups were consulted in the creation of the Student Union Building architectural plan and have been consulted throughout the process leading to 7 organizational suites and there being 6 Rotunda Community groups. The lease between

SFU and SFSS for the SUB states under 'use' that 'offices for the Society and other non-profit organizations whose primary function is to serve students of the University' which is similar to the language in the lease for the current Rotunda space under 'Society's Covenants'. The previous board had since decided to allocate 11 offices within these organizational suites for clubs and DSUs and would have 22 open bookable rooms for general students and groups that would not be as efficiently used as is the current case with the 100+ other bookable rooms around campus which are underutilized and already available for students and clubs to book. Not allocating space in the SUB for the Rotunda Community would create a possible risk of displacement of these groups from campus. Whereas, it is preferred to determine an alternative model (see Recommendations below) of space allocation to ensure the best outcomes for all groups such as the independent student societies, clubs and DSUs, and student-serving groups on campus; Whereas, allocating 8 of the Open Bookable rooms to Clubs and DSUs would still leave Open Bookable rooms that would be available and shall have minimal impact in terms of availability of bookable rooms for students and groups; I brought forward a motion that allocated the 4 organizational suites be allocated to SFPIRG, Embark, CJSF and SOCA, and 8 of the 22 Bookable Open Rooms be assigned to clubs and DSUs for a period of one semester with the possibility of extension by additional periods of one semester at a time.

Outcomes:

- The motion I brought to the has since been postponed to a time that I wish to bring back the motion to the board table.

Timeline:

- September/October is when the motion will come back to the table.
- SUB opens sometime early 2020

Rebuilding Independent Student Society Relationships

Summary:

Relationships with the Independent Student Society was fractured. I pushed to have the Executive Director get a mandate to rebuild relationship with these groups by attending Student Society meet-ups on a monthly basis. I ensured that I try to share information and boost the services that the other student societies provide as well by attending interviews, sharing their events and resources and creating better communication between the groups.

Outcomes:

- SFPIRG conducted an Equity and Inclusion Workshop on behalf of Board
- Working with Embark to operate garden in the SUB and having more collaboration
- Held interviews with CJSF after the election, and working with them on collaborations
- Continue to invite the Peak to various board meetings

Timeline: Ongoing

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

SFSS Board Transparency Motions

Summary:

I believe past boards have not done enough to be transparent with the student body. As such I have brought motions to the board table that improves our transparency. For example, I put forward a motion to include the Elections Report on the Society Website, and also to resume a process of listing votes of board members at board meetings. This was however referred to the governance committee and the board is awaiting recommendations.

Outcomes:

- Motion referred to committee for development

Timeline:

Should be back to the board by the end of the term

SFSS Advocacy Office

Summary:

I ran on this commitment during the election for us to investigate the possibility of an advocacy office

Outcomes:

- Board members are currently in research mode to have this possibly brought to the Board after consultation with multiple parties including the Executive Director to see if this is a viable service and a possible timeline.

Timeline:

Next board term if advances are made

Board Meeting Review

Summary:

I started a personal portfolio project to do a summary of Board meetings that I've chaired. For example, for the month of May and June I created a Board Meeting Review for these meetings and have shared them openly so that students can easily see.

Outcomes:

- Students feel as if it is easier to consume as opposed to the Meeting Minutes which may be hard to consume for students.

Timeline:

Will be ongoing for any meeting I chair

Board Month In Review

Summary:

Helped establish the Board Month in Review so board communicates the events, projects and activities that need to be highlighted over that month.

Outcomes:

- Released the Board Month in Review for May, June, July and August
- Students Appreciate that Board is making an effort to communicate what we are doing

Timeline: Ongoing until the end of the term

Single Use Plastics Task Force

Summary:

I was invited to the SFU's task force to reduce Single Use Plastics on campus. I then invited the Environment Rep to be on the task force who has been involved throughout the summer. This is an initiative led by multiple partners such as SFU Ancillary Services, SFU Sustainability Office, SFSS, GSS, Ban The Bottle Club and other partners.

The "Re-use for Good" initiative is a multi-phase action plan to raise awareness and work towards eliminating the most common SUPPs at SFU. The initiative grew out of a task force of student, staff and faculty change-makers. Led by the SFU Sustainability Office and Ancillary Services, the task force includes the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), the Graduate Student Society (GSS) and Ban the Bottle student club. Input from the Centre for Accessible Learning and engagement with student accessibility groups will ensure that specific needs are met. A further project goal is to involve students in experiential learning through class research and case studies.

<https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2019/08/sfu-to-reduce-single-use-plastics-and-products.html>

Outcomes:

- Project announced and media coverage being done.

Timeline: Project rollout and communications plan to be kicked off over the Fall Semester

PROJECTS TO START

Black History Month Awareness Campaign

Summary:

In light of the SFSS formally recognizing Black History Month last year. I plan to coordinate a #BlackOnCampus campaign to raise why Black History is important to the black students on our campus.

Motion: Whereas The Parliament of Canada has been officially recognizing Black History Month following a motion introduced by the first Black Canadian Woman elected to the Canadian Parliament - The Honourable Jean Augustine; Whereas the SFU Students of Caribbean and African Ancestry has been recognizing and celebrating Black History Month since 1994 in its inception as Black Students Association, now requesting that the Simon Fraser Student Society recognizes Black History Month; Whereas Black History Month is relevant and very important to the Black Community and is a time for reflection, introspection and serves as a time to reconcile and address the specific needs of the Black Community; Whereas Black History Month in Canada is essential since it educates Canadians on the contributions and history of black Canadians, with few Canadians know that slavery once existed in Canada, or that many of the British Loyalists who came here after the American Revolution were Black; Whereas Black History Month is a reminder to all Canadians that racism is not a matter just of the past. Be it Resolved that the Simon Fraser Student Society, officially recognizes and celebrates the month of February as Black History Month at Simon Fraser University

Timeline:

In January I will start working with other board members to draft a plan.

Sexual Assault/Violence Awareness Month

Summary:

SVSPO had a campaign every January. I had a meeting with them in May about upcoming plans for the year and a big area of collaboration is the Sexual Assault Awareness Month in January. This month is a time to raise awareness and understanding about sexual assault and what we can all do to prevent it, by creating a culture of consent.

Timeline:

November -> Start talks with SVSPO with how we can magnify a campaign from SFSS

Pain Points

1. People should voice their concerns early not late

There has been multiple gaffes during the summer with board members not being responsive when something is raised in the onset and then there comes a problem when a particular initiative is almost complete stage. This is a problem of bad communication which was very hard for me to reconcile. We have since tried to reconcile this by having people who are bringing up a certain initiative give a deadline by which to answer and that you announce what you interpret silence to be. So that in the event that something is raised two months down the line, there can be proof or a written record of what took place.

2. Lack of Team Synergy requires additional assistance

Due to the issues of the board not having synergy and alignment as much as it should be, I have recognized that we need help. Therefore we are looking into having a session facilitated by an external party. We are able to work on projects that we can all agree on, but we should be doing better in being respectful when we do have disagreements. An external facilitator may help in this regard.

Recommendations

1. **Keep pushing forward to have students voices heard.**

If you believe what you are doing is in the best interest of students, don't be silent because you think others won't agree. It is admirable to make sure you research the facts, get student feedback and have your voice heard at the board table. It might be hard when you are in an obvious minority on an issue, but you weren't elected to be silent. You were elected to have a voice. Be that voice.

2. **Understand that you act on behalf of the students, not just the board.**

The Society's Act to which the SFSS is under, explicitly states that a board of director should act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the society. You should always come back to what you as a reasonable person thinks is in the best interest of the society as a whole, the membership, the students. Without the students, the board would not exist. It is essential that you recognize this and this will guide your decisions.

3. **Be willing to work with people you don't agree with**

In a very diverse board, you will have many cases where there are differing views and differing styles and personality types. However, it is important that you create alignment where you can and work with other board members on projects that you can get maximum output on. This will make the board better as a whole and being stuck on one issue does not stop the whole board from functioning. A board that is divided on various issues, can still accomplish a lot!