

# At-Large Rep Exit Report

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*2019-20  
SFSS Board of Directors*

# INTRODUCTION

Hello! My name is Rayhaan Khan and I am one of the At-Large Representatives for the 2019/2020 SFSS Board of Directors. This semester (Spring 2020) marks the end of my time on Board as well as my undergraduate career. I will be graduating with a Major in Business (Marketing & Human Resource Management, Honours) and a Minor in Psychology. The purpose of this report is to provide a brief snapshot of my time on Board. It is my hope that this is seen as a strong overview of my overall experience working for the SFSS.

During this term, I have been able to work on several projects, including the creation of the Student Resource Card, Burnaby Mountain Gondola Project, and Psychology Student Union (PSU) Social, among others. I also had the honour of serving as Chair for the Board during the majority of the Fall semester while our President was away on an internship.

As an At-Large Representative, I was afforded a much larger degree of freedom in selecting projects to work on than any other Board member. Due to this, I was able to work on projects with various student groups on campus, as well as with the university itself. This, coupled with the work I did on behalf of certain SFSS committees, gave me a well-rounded experience of being on Board.

I recommend that future At-Large Reps be prepared to take advantage of the flexibility attached to the role. More than anyone else, you can shape your time to be what you want it to be. For all future Board members, I recommend putting in the effort to be kind and respectful to those you are working with. The staff, your fellow Board members, and all the people that you represent/collaborate with can all be strong sources of support or frustration. Make it a priority to foster relationships that encourage the former.

My time this year has been tumultuous, to say the least. I was able to gain incredible professional experience, particularly through serving as Chair of the Board. I was also afforded several opportunities to represent the SFSS by aiding in initiatives hosted by several groups at SFU. Yet, there were times when it felt that the work environment hindered the work of the Board as a whole. This stemmed from several issues, including the different ideologies and goals each Director brought to the table. Thankfully, there were times when we were able to come together and act to promote the well-being of the students.

## HIGHLIGHTS

There are countless opportunities to serve and represent the membership through projects on campus. This is done in addition to how work is primarily done by Directors, via the various Board committees. Being on Board also allow for the chance to attend various conferences to gain professional knowledge and promote the SFSS.

### SFU & Student Groups

One example of a prominent project on campus was FASS Formal Event that was held in December 2019. Our FASS Rep and I had the opportunity to collaborate with the FASS Department Student Union (DSU) to help plan and market this excellent end-of-year party. Another example was the inaugural “How I Raised My GPA” event in late January. Both I and our FASS Rep had the pleasure of acting as panelists at this event. It was here that I shared my experience of increasing/maintaining my GPA to students, as well as provided advice for having a more engaged, enjoyable university experience. I am also scheduled to appear as a panelist in the upcoming virtual iteration of the event in early June. There was also the “Welcome Day Consultation” session that I attended on behalf of the SFSS. This session was held to provide feedback to SFU staff about how-to best revamp and optimize Welcome Day.

As an At-Large Rep, I did not have a particular faculty to which I would be our direct liaison with. While this did not provide me with as much structure as other FARM Reps, it did give me more freedom to pursue projects that interested me. Due to this, I spent time volunteering with the Muslim Student’s Association (MSA) and Psychology Student Union (PSU) because they were two groups I had invested interest in. With the former, I represented the SFSS by supporting their events (such as the weekly Brothers Halaqas) and assisting in the planning of the annual United Islam Awareness Week event. After joining the latter, I worked with the PSU Executive team to host a Social at Club Ilia that exceeded expectations and had a much larger turnout than expected (thankfully, Club Ilia was able to accommodate us). I am very passionate about these aforementioned events, as one of the Board’s strategic priority’s is student engagement.

### Committees

#### UAA Committee

I was able to collaborate with our VP University on a variety of projects as part of this committee. Most notably was the Open Education Resource (OER) Faculty Letter, where we worked to draft a letter for the SFSS faculty representatives to distribute to their respective deans. This was to highlight the importance of OER materials and how they can benefit both students, as well as the faculty. Through consultations with the rest of the UAA Committee, we were able to complete the letter but ultimately had to postpone launching the campaign due to COVID-19. Instead, it was decided by the committee to make this part of the UAA 2020/21-year plan, where it will ideally be received in a less hectic time.

Other projects that I worked on include the Federal Election Debate, Board Town Hall, and the Burnaby Mountain Gondola Open House. All three of these had the express purpose of promoting engagement with students related to particular university-related matters. The Federal Election Debate was part of the Get Out The Vote campaign, which aimed to

increase the turnout of informed voters to the federal election. The Board Town Hall was a chance for students to see the work our Board had done and ask questions ahead of running for a position as well. The Gondola Open House had the purpose of educating students about the current state of the gondola, as well as the three route options that were currently being considered by Translink. Feedback was collected from students regarding the routes and was reported to both the SFU External office, as well as Translink's office by our Campaigns, Research, and Policy Coordinator.

## **Events Committee**

During my time on the Events Committee, I created the Student Resource Card (SRC) to be handed out at all events. This is meant to be a tangible resource for SFSS members to see what services are available to them on/off-campus. The current iteration of the card outlined resources such as the U-Pass and Health and Dental Plans, as well as lesser-known resources such as the legal clinic and food bank program. Along with being distributed at various events, the cards have been set aside in the SFSS offices on all three campuses for students to take.

I also spearheaded several events that were to be hosted towards the end of the Spring semester but were ultimately cancelled due to COVID-19. This included the SFSS Club/Student Union Executive Social, March Mayhem afterparty, and PSU end-of-semester social. The Executive Social was to be hosted by myself and our Education Rep to allow different student group executives to socialize and potentially form partnerships for future events. Unfortunately, this event had to be cancelled the day of due to the pandemic. The March Mayhem afterparty was intended to provide a chance for those who worked on the March Mayhem event (led by our Environment Rep) to celebrate after its completion; this was originally booked to be a pub night, but logistics shifted it towards becoming a luncheon. The PSU end-of-semester social had been in the planning stage with the PSU Executive team and was to be similar to our first successful social earlier in the semester.

In addition to the events held on Burnaby campus, I was able to volunteer for events at the Surrey campus as well. The Surrey Campus Committee (SCC) Chair (our FAS Rep) looped me in on the various events being held at the Surrey campus that I was able to support by helping plan, set-up, and takedown. These included various holiday events, including those for Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day.

## **Conferences**

In late February, I had the opportunity to attend the YourEduConnect 2020 conference with our President and FCAT Rep. This is an initiative that aims to provide students and professionals with a platform to connect, network, and exchange knowledge that goes beyond the traditional classroom. It featured speakers who are leaders, influencers, and experts from various industries who are passionate about their experience and are looking to share their insight. The SFSS had an opportunity to showcase material, network and have SFSS brand and material provided to attendees. I had also been scheduled to attend the Federal Lobbying Trip to Ottawa in late April with our VP External. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions brought upon by COVID-19, this trip was cancelled.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After this year, I have two main recommendations to provide. One to future At-Large Representatives and one to future Board members in general.

To those who will take on the role of an At-Large, take advantage of the flexibility. You are not tied down to a particular role or faculty, so you can pursue what truly interests you. This means that you have the ability to spearhead any project you want or support your fellow Board members in theirs. This degree of freedom is unmatched and should be taken advantage of. If you find trouble deciding on what to do, look to those who represent your own faculty. Our Business and FASS Reps were both a huge help to me in finding projects to work on.

To all future Board members, remember to be respectful and kind to everyone you work with. The fact that you were elected in the first place means that you most likely have a large amount of peer/friend support already, but you must not neglect the relationships you make at the Board table. Your fellow Board members know better than anyone else what you are going through. As such, they are the ones who you will be able to turn to when facing specific society-related issues. While it may be unreasonable to expect that anyone be on completely positive terms with all 15 other Directors, try to have at least a couple who you can work through projects and concerns with. In addition to this, get to know the staff and lean on them for support in your endeavours. Many of them have seen the dynamics of previous Boards, so they can provide a high level of counsel.

## CLOSING REMARKS

As one combs through the Exit Reports from this year's Board of Directors, certain patterns may emerge. One disheartening, yet important one is that of a team divided, consistently hindered by unhealthy internal relationships. While it is understandable that 16 individuals with diverse backgrounds would come to clash over topics, it can very quickly change from professional disputes to more personal ones. To anyone intending to join this Board (or any other organization), it is important to be prepared for this possibility.

While I was fortunate enough to maintain a mostly positive relationship with the majority of Board members, I was not exempt from unfriendly tension and feeling isolated as well. To mitigate this, I did decide to take a step back, mainly focusing on working with other groups or supporting events held by the Board. However, I am thankful that there were times when we were able to come together on initiatives when needed (such as the COVID-19 emergency funding). I believe that there was potential for us to have been a fully cohesive team. It is my hope that future Boards are able to do this.

To all those considering becoming a Director: Being a part of this organization provides tremendous opportunities for professional and personal growth. The various opportunities allow for exploration of any topics that may be of interest (including but not limited to, hosting events, lobbying, and finance management). Always remember that joining Board is a big responsibility as students have entrusted you to represent them well at all times. With this in mind, the only way that you will be able to do right by the people you represent is if you do right by yourself first. Prioritize your time, be kind, and stay healthy.

All the best,

Rayhaan

**Cheers to the  
journey ahead**