



[2019/2020]

SFSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS EXIT REPORT

[Emerly Liu]

[Faculty of Education Representative]



Overview

The Faculty of Education Representative plays a significant role in liaising with the Faculty of Education and supporting Education students to enhance the undergraduate experience. As a member of the Board, the Faculty of Education Representative must strive to do work that will benefit all students, too. The following report outlines the work that I have accomplished during the 2019/2020 Board term through Faculty engagement and Committee initiatives that uphold my duties as the Faculty of Education Representative. I hope that this report is a source of inspiration and insight for future SFSS Faculty Representatives.

Faculty of Education

Undergraduate Involvement

As the previous President of the Education Student Association (ESA), I am familiar with the inner workings of the student union, and as such, I was able to help the executive team facilitate discussions and organize monthly events, most memorably the second annual Fall Welcome event, EDventure Day, and the fourth annual Holiday Gala. ESA also held two events in collaboration with the Faculty of Education, a Spring Welcome event and a craft event. All of ESA's events were successful in engaging undergraduate students and cultivating a positive Education community.

I have worked closely with the Faculty of Education Academic Advisor on projects aimed at engaging and informing Education students, particularly first-year students. In the Summer 2019 semester, I helped the Academic advisor organize a new student enrolment event and the Welcome Day Faculty Session, wherein I also served as a speaker. In the Spring 2020 semester, we held a virtual Lunch & Learn to talk about getting involved, academic and financial supports at SFU, and health and wellness in light of COVID-19. These informational events are just as important as social events in maintaining strong relationships within the Education community, especially during stressful times, such as the transition to post-secondary education, or a pandemic.

In the Fall 2019 semester, I launched a Facebook group, [SFU Faculty of Education Undergraduates & Prospective Teachers](#), wherein undergraduates who are majoring or minoring in education, aspiring educators, students who are taking education courses,

Faculty of Education alumni, and anyone who is interested in the broad field of education can interact with each other. Within the past eight months, I have watched the number of members grow to 239, and I have observed these individuals ask questions about the teaching program application process, share feedback about courses and professors, post about volunteer and work opportunities, and discuss ways to get involved in the SFU community. This online peer support system has provided students with the necessary information and resources to help them thrive in their academic studies or their future teaching career, or both while encouraging peer-to-peer dialogue.

Liaison Work

The Faculty of Education has always shown great interest in the undergraduate perspective. There are a variety of Faculty committees that I have had the privilege of participating in, such as the Learning Space Design Committee and the Ad Hoc Nominations and Awards Committee; however, the committees that I believe are most relevant to the role of the Faculty of Education Representative is the Student Experience Think Tank (SETT) and Undergraduate Programs Committee (UPC). As a member of SETT and UPC, I was able to assist Faculty and staff to develop and improve student-oriented initiatives.

During this Board term, I have worked in liaison with the new Dean of Education, the Director of Undergraduate Programs, and the Manager of Undergraduate Programs. In our meetings, which are held on a semesterly basis, we exchange information and updates pertaining to the students. In preparation for these meetings, I communicate with ESA and Education students through the SFU Faculty of Education Undergraduate & Prospective Teachers group to collect student feedback, questions, and concerns to relay to the Faculty. In doing so, I can foster an awareness of various student issues among the Faculty and acquire answers for students. I believe that this has been effective in bridging the gap between Faculty and students.

Committee Involvement

Accessibility Committee

Continuing the work of the previous SFSS Faculty of Education Representative, I have outreached to the Director of Centre for Accessible Learning to develop an assessment service to identify students with disabilities. The Learning Disability/Psychoeducational

Assessment Pilot Project primarily focuses on individuals with learning disabilities (LD) and providing them with the necessary resources and services to accommodate their diverse needs so that they can achieve academic success.

In the Summer 2019 semester, I met with Director of Centre for Accessible Learning to evaluate viable options for implementation which includes a partnership with another institution, reimbursement, hiring of a neuro or clinical psychologist, or negotiating with Student Care to incorporate the assessment into the Health and Dental Plan. After much deliberation and research, I chose to pursue the Student Care route.

In the Spring 2020 semester, the SFSS VP Student Services and I met with Student Care representatives to discuss the potential of including Psychoeducational Assessments in the SFSS Health and Dental Plan, similar to the Uvic model which covers 80% of assessment costs. I learned that the assessments can be easily added to the Health and Dental Plan without a referendum, which is a huge relief. Although it is disappointing that I could not complete this project within my Board term, I will continue to work on the logistics of coverage and the policy.

Events Committee

As the Collab Portfolio Manager, I have worked with numerous clubs, most notably SFU Better Life and the SFU Canadian Cancer Society (SCCS). The SFU Better Life x SFSS Food Drive fundraised \$301.30 towards the SFSS Food Bank Program and were able to raise awareness by distributing information flyers in lecture halls and hallways. Furthermore, the Greater Vancouver Foodbank received 123 non-perishable food items. Donators included students, SFU faculty members and staff, and notably, doctors and staff at the SFU Health Clinic. The SCCS x SFSS Relay Rally fundraised \$646.60 from the BBQ towards the Canadian Cancer Society and united the community in support of cancer patients. I highlighted these events because they had a positive impact inside and outside of the SFU community.

For six months, I had been working with Young Women in Business for their annual International Women's Day Gala wherein the SFSS would be hosting the SFSS Women of the Year Awards. This collaborative event was intended to celebrate not only women but every individual in our community; however, this was not fulfilled due to COVID-19. Despite this, the SFSS was still able to celebrate women across all faculties through the announcement of our

award winners. Even more so, I was able to film the [SFSS Women's Month video](#) in which SFU students shared their thoughts about women in their lives which were powerful and inspiring.

I had created the SFSS x Club/Student Union Collaboration Pilot Project to develop relationships between the SFSS and our clubs and student unions, but I quickly realized that it was not having the intended effects. It was a challenge to promote the project each month, evaluate the submissions with the Committee, meet with the student group in a timely manner, and organize all the logistics. Due to these constraints, I chose to discontinue the project; however, I continued to accept requests on a case to case basis and considered an alternative approach to improve engagement between the SFSS and student groups. I planned a club and student union social to encourage interaction and potential partnerships between student group executives. Although this event was canceled due to COVID-19, I believe the SFSS should pursue events that connect clubs and student unions to foster a stronger community.

[University and Academic Affairs Committee](#)

As a member of the SFU Open Educational Resource (OER) Working Group, I spearheaded the OER Student Campaign Video initiative with the support of the SFSS University Relations and the SFSS Communications Department. The purpose of the video is to raise awareness for OER and textbook affordability by including student testimonies of their textbook purchases during one semester, followed by SFU Bookstore statistics, and information about OER and how OER can mitigate the financial barrier between a student and their education. In 2019, the SFU Bookstore reported that the average price of a textbook is \$72, and the average spend per semester is \$200 for textbooks alone. Students should know that there are feasible alternatives to textbooks in the form of OER and that their professors can help make education more accessible for all students by adopting and adapting OER that is free, or cheaper than traditional textbooks. This video will supplement the OER campaign letter some University of Academic Affairs Committee members and I have drafted to send to Faculty Deans and other relevant Faculty members to advocate for adoption of OER and textbook affordability.

Recommendations

- 1. Connect with your DSU and Faculty.** The Education Student Association and the Dean of Education, and other key Faculty members, are people that you will be working closely with, so it is necessary to introduce yourself and familiarize yourself with what the DSU does and how the Faculty works.
- 2. Foster positive working relationships with other SFSS Board of Directors and SFSS staff.** It goes without saying that a work environment should be safe and welcoming, and this begins with developing and maintaining positive and respectful relationships with your colleagues. This will make work more enjoyable and efficient.
- 3. Maintain consistent communication with SFSS staff.** Any project that you partake in will most likely require assistance from a staff member, usually either from the Student Centre, Communications Department, or Events Department. If you are unsure about SFSS policies or procedures, do not hesitate to ask. Use email, or schedule a meeting in-person, and always follow-up.
- 4. Always do your due diligence and go to meetings prepared.** It is necessary that you read the meeting agenda and review the supplementary documents to understand what you will be voting on or discussing to be an active participant and to have more productive discussions. This will not only be beneficial for yourself but also the undergraduates you represent by making informed decisions.
- 5. Do not try to do everything at once.** Going to school full-time, attending SFSS and Faculty-related meetings, supporting DSU events, and working on committee projects will be physically and mentally taxing. It is difficult to multitask and do it well, and it may be even more frustrating when the outcome is not as you would have liked. It is crucial that you learn to organize and prioritize work, so you do not spread yourself too thin.

Concluding Remarks

My time on the SFSS Board of Directors has certainly been a unique and meaningful experience. I appreciate my successes and failures as they were valuable moments of learning from which I grew stronger and more resilient. I am proud of the work that I have accomplished over the course of this term and I am extremely grateful for my fellow Board members and the SFSS staff and the support that I have had the privilege of receiving.

The opportunities that I have had to collaborate with my Education students, the Faculty, other Board members, SFSS staff, and other people within the SFU community have widened my perspective, deepened my respect for changemakers, inspired me to pursue greater heights, and contributed to my professional development and I look forward to learning more from them every day.

It has been my honor to serve as the Faculty of Education Representative for the 2019/2020 SFSS Board term. It is my hope that I have fulfilled my duties and promises, but even more so, I hope that I have helped improve the undergraduate student experience for our membership in some degree.