

Faculty of Communication, Art & Technology Representative

2019-2020

Fiona Li - Exit Report

A Year Overview

For the past year, I have been hands-on with getting to know the student unions in my faculty and the staff members. The Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology spans across more campuses than any other faculty at SFU. There were countless occasions where I visited all 3 campuses in a day to attend student union meetings, or to meet with faculty staff. This meant that as a faculty rep, and as a full time student working 2 part time jobs, it was incredibly difficult to find any time to sit down and work. Because of this, I experienced burnout after burnout and I found it difficult to keep up with the SFSS, with my jobs, and in my courses.

This is not meant to scare any FCAT students from approaching the FCAT rep position. In this role, I've had the opportunity to connect with some of the brightest, most talented, and most passionate minds at SFU. There's this wave of 'abstraction of everything' that's embodied in the architecture at Harbour Centre, Surrey Central and Woodward's. After interacting with the students there, you'll find yourself inspired with the motivation to work hard and pursue your dreams.

FCAT incorporates a conjunction of arts in its endless forms, and I've had the pleasure of supporting the growth of our DSUs. I would urge the future FCAT reps to explore your faculty as well. Learn about interactive media, graphic design, dance, film, music, theatre, critical communication theories. The enrichment that comes from your multi-disciplinary interactions with your faculty is unparalleled.

As a fan of the arts, this past year has been an absolute delight ❤️ I am so proud of my faculty and I'm even prouder to have been their 2019/2020 representative!

Core Projects

FCAT DEPARTMENTAL STUDENT UNION PRESIDENT'S MONTHLY MEETINGS

In FCAT we've got a handful of DSUs, with the largest ones being the Communication Student Union (CMNSU) and Interactive Arts and Technology Student Union (IATSU) that put on annual events. The DSUs at Woodward's also put on annual events but on a much smaller scale. For the most part, the DSUs are a well-oiled machine, what my role entailed was to **make sure the road was smooth** for them to ride on.

I set up meetings every month for DSU presidents, myself, and the FCAT Director of Student Affairs to attend. To be fair, I made for every meeting to be at a different campus but this did not increase the average attendance for each meeting. It was suggested to me by Dance Student Union that **more meetings should be held at the downtown campus** due to most DSUs being downtown. I would recommend testing this method out! Allowing people to **attend virtually** is also a great plus!

At SFSS, we have a **fluctuating grants system**. Whether grant applications would be accepted, for how much money, and on what conditions, are not always predictable. Even on annual events where the same request is submitted every year. During times like this, it's your responsibility to **talk to SFSS staff and your fellow board members** on how to negate this problem.

These meetings are **very valuable** for the FCAT rep to get an overview grasp of how all the DSUs are doing. If a president is unable to attend in person nor virtually, I would always **ask them for a short paragraph** of how their month has been. Reading this out at the meeting for attendees and including the snippet in the meeting minutes proved to improve everyone's **sense of community**.

Core Projects

SEI X SFSS BULLETIN BOARD PROJECT

Working with the [Student Experience Initiative](#), myself and 2 other SFSS members (Shina Kaur, VP University Relations & Jennifer Chou, FASS Representative) decided to **revamp the bulletin boards** around all SFU campuses, starting with Burnaby.

We went through a few SFU surveys including the [2017 SFSS Student Survey Results](#) to look for a pain point that we can realistically tackle before our SFSS term came to an end (in 5 months). We noticed a lot of students stressed the lack of information and knowledge of campus events, which led to a **low, overall satisfaction and participation rate for campus events**.

From there, it was clear we needed to improve the way we promoted student events. The bulletin boards at the Burnaby campus are currently a free for all in the wild west. Our SFSS staff have been monitoring these boards around campus but even then, **we don't have the capacity to keep these boards in check all the time**.

The Bulletin Board Project will include installations of **new boards** with clear **category outlines** and **community guidelines**. By making it clear that a new system is in place and listing out clear posting rules, we are empowering our students to self-regulate. This will at the same time **improve the visibility and clarity of campus events, and also lower the workload for our SFSS staff**.

With the interruptions of COVID-19, this project has been delayed and will likely be implemented after my SFSS term. The project plan has been completed with funding almost secured with SEI, and we have a project manager from Facilities. All 3 of us will be staying on the project to see through its implementation and success.

Core Projects

ENGAGING THE VANCOUVER CAMPUSES

As Chair of the Vancouver Campus Committee and the FCAT rep, I feel a great sense of responsibility to our students downtown. I am a Communication myself and spent the majority of my 2nd-4th years at Harbour Centre, I understand the lack of resources in comparison to Burnaby or even to Surrey.

We don't have prior history or experience with downtown campus, so this year **we started from ground zero**. On my committee was **Nick Chubb**, Applied Science Representative, and **Shina Kaur**, VP University Relations. **They have given me tremendous amount of support** and I could not have built a successful foundation with the downtown campus without them.

From my experience working at SFU, I reached out to staff members I knew who worked downtown for opportunities. The staff were pleasantly surprised at our participation at the **Woodward's Welcome Back BBQ, Harbour Centre Resource Fair, and at the Winter Warmup Event**.

Because there was only the 3 of us, we all took time out of our schedules to **coordinate rides there and back, who will be bringing our VCC and SFSS materials**, as well coming up with **fun ways to engage our students**. There have been talks with **coordinating a locker** for us at Harbour Centre, but at least for my term, I don't see a need for it. These conversations could definitely be continued with the next FCAT rep, if they plan to host even more events downtown.

I'm positive that our downtown contacts will reach out for the SFSS's participation again for their annual events. Hopefully, the next FCAT rep could carry on the relationships I've built and bring forward even higher engagement rates!

Core Projects

ENGAGING THE SURREY CAMPUS

I joined the Surrey Campus Committee because I have finished my Communication major and am just working on my IAT minor at the Surrey campus. The IATSU has a huge presence there and I would recommend the next FCAT rep to also join the Surrey Campus Committee.

The committee was chaired by Nick Chubb, Applied Science Representative, who did an amazing job bringing the Surrey campus student organizations together. Many Surrey-based student clubs and DSUs are within his Faculty and he has helped him out as much as he could as the SCC chair.

With the help of our extraordinary SFSS staff, Shelley Durante, we have put on multiple high-engagement events in Surrey. This includes 2 clubs days, pancake breakfast, photobooth events, club socials, pub nights, and etc.

This year was a huge success for SCC and we have established a great presence as well as a great relationship with many of the large student groups in Surrey.

For me, being on the committee meant I understood more of what's going on in Surrey, which led me to better support IATSU and find areas for collaboration like the Halloween photobooth event (IATSU helped us set up the lighting)!

Other Projects

ACCESSIBLE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS INITIATIVE

This is another project we have partnered with the [Student Experience Initiative](#) on. This has been a **multi-organization collaboration** between the Graduate Student Society, Women's Center and Out on Campus. The project plan has been approved by the SEI and the project manager has been hired.

We have successfully coordinated a process with campus leaders in Burnaby, Surrey and Downtown campuses, as well as with Facilities on this project. The original plan was to pilot this project in **Spring 2020**, but that **timeline has been delayed due to COVID-19**.

For now, the project manager will continue to conduct consultations with community members, SFU students and stakeholders, as well as other institutions who've also implemented accessible menstrual products.

Plain and simple, this is something that should have already been implemented. As a completely natural biological process of being a human, **we should have access to basic necessities like menstrual products**. Just like expecting toilet paper, hand soap and paper towels when we walk into a bathroom, it should be normalized that menstrual products be provided for those in need.

Other Projects

FCAT DEAN SEARCH COMMITTEE

I joined the FCAT Dean Search Committee representing the undergrad students in the faculty. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a graduate student to join the committee so **I am the only student representation** on the board.

It was interesting to see the right process of ensuring committee members understood the various degrees of bias we incorporate to our daily decision making process. The training definitely helped me feel more confident in deciding which candidates were at the top of my rankings.

We have interviewed all our candidates and decided on the final short-list. Due to Covid-19, we are unsure when we can meet the candidates in person but we have decided that we definitely want to meet them in person before we decide on anyone. **I will be continuing as a committee member after my SFSS term due to the timeline delay.**

I will be voicing my opinions and perspectives as an FCAT student to make sure the next FCAT Dean represents our best interests.

Other Projects

SFSS X SFU WEEK OF WELCOME

Student Services reached out to the SFSS for their participation in the Week of Welcome. I volunteered as a welcome leader and reached out the FCAT Director of Student Affairs for ideas on making this a fun learning experience for incoming students.

I reached out the all the FCAT DSUs and asked them to **film a short 1 min video** introducing their team and what they do, as well as any upcoming events they are hosting. It was super fun to help CMNSU film their video and the end product was super entertaining (lots of happy laughter in the crowd)! I would recommend the next FCAT rep do this again with the new DSU teams. This is a great opportunity for them to introduce themselves to the new students.

The FCAT team also asked me to speak for a few minutes about **student engagement, getting involved, and student politics**. I took the chance and introduced SFSS resources available like the Health and Dental Plan, the UPASS, food banks, women's centre, out on campus, and etc. The only recommendation I have is to try to squeeze as many jokes or use as many examples as possible to make it memorable. **Don't waste those 5 mins!**

Final Thoughts

Thinking back over the year, I had a great time as the FCAT rep! I made so many connections and new friends along the way and I'm very grateful for this experience on the SFSS.

The largest struggle for me was finding a balance. I am a full-time student taking extremely intensive, team-focused courses while working part time jobs. I found myself sleeping an average of 4 hours, working on group projects 7 days a week and often times working until 2 to 5 in the AM! Adding to that, I was constantly commuting between all 3 campuses trying to meet with my DSUs as often as I could. Being based out at the Surrey campus, I was unable to attend board meetings as they were only at the Burnaby campus and attending virtually comes with the feeling of disconnect. I recommend everyone to prioritize self-care, and don't over-pack your schedule. **By doing a little less, you will actually be doing more in time.**

I felt that the SFSS, as large of an organization as it is, is absolutely lacking when it comes to supporting students at Surrey or Downtown campuses. At Surrey, we have only one SFSS staff who works tirelessly to support the student groups there. Considering the amount of clubs we have based in Surrey we should have a much larger support system set for them. As for downtown, it's as if we don't even think about it. The only resource we provide to our students downtown is an SFSS lounge. It's great, but far from enough. The Vancouver Campus Committee also has the lowest budget out of all committees at \$5000. I understand that Vancouver is underdeveloped, but if we don't invest any time or effort, it will always be underdeveloped. Instead of waiting for students to advocate for more support, we need to recognize where we are lacking and do better.

As an equal member on the SFSS board, I experienced first-hand the lack of thought we have put into SFU being a multi-campus institution. Non-Burnaby-based students should have equal capabilities to carry out the full duties of a board member.

Other than my frustrations with SFSS's system of operations, I had the best time as the FCAT rep! It comes from a genuine place of authenticity when I say that I LOVE FCAT!! I only hope the future FCAT reps have the same passion for their faculty as I feel ❤️❤️❤️

SlideShow of Photos

Like a 2019/2020 yearbook, I'll be ending this document with photos documenting some of my many experiences on the board.



VCC at Woodward's Welcome Back BBQ



VCC at Harbour Centre Winter Warmup



VCC at Harbour Centre Resource Fair

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SCC's Halloween
Photobooth Event



SCC's Valentines Day
Photobooth Event



SCC's Pancake Breakfast

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CMNSU's Fall Welcome Back Event, EVOLVE 2019



Me and Giovanni attending EVOLVE 2019



Me, Giovanni and Rayhaan attending YourEduConnect

SlideShow of Photos

Like a 2019/2020 yearbook, I'll be ending this document with photos documenting my experience on the board.



Me, Shina, Osob, and Giovanni at BCFS



Me, Shina, Osob, and Giovanni met Melanie Mark



Me and Shina at the President's Dinner Event