

simon fraser
student society

**SFSS BOARD
OF DIRECTORS
SEMESTER
REPORT**



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Education Rep

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Executive Summary

Hello there! My name is Emerly Liu, and I am the current Faculty of Education Representative for the 2020/2021 Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) Board of Directors. Within the SFSS, I sit on the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Events Committee, and the University and Academic Affairs Committee. Within the Faculty of Education, I am the appointed student representative for Faculty Council, the Undergraduate Programs Committee, and the Student Experience Think Tank.

This semester, I have spearheaded and collaborated on the following initiatives:

- Faculty of Education COVID-19 Student Focus Group
- Open Educational Resources FARM Letter Campaign
- SFSS Women of the Year Award Trophies
- Education 101
- Education Student Association
- Psycho-Educational Assessments
- Faculty of Education Resource Package
- Anti-Racism Education within the Faculty of Education Programs
- Open Educational Resources Student Campaign

As a returning Faculty of Education Representative from the 2019/2020 SFSS Board term, my objective for this term is to expand my project portfolio. Last term, my work predominantly revolved around maintaining student engagement within the Faculty of Education and supporting SFSS clubs and student unions. Since then I have constructed a strong foundation for continuing community building within the Faculty of Education. As such, this term, my focus has shifted to work that involves improving student well-being, financial health, and academic experience.

Due to COVID-19, the Society has undergone some significant changes. Fortunately, the transition to remote work has not been difficult for me, but I recognize that this is not the case for everyone. I am immensely appreciative of my fellow Board members and the SFSS staff who have persevered and continue to sustain the work that we do at the SFSS for our membership during these unprecedented and arduous times.

A challenge that I have encountered with working from home is establishing healthy boundaries between professional and personal life. There is a saying that you should not bring work home with you, and understandably so. I was constantly thinking about and doing work in between my schoolwork and other commitments which generated a lot of stress. In these unavoidable circumstances, I would recommend constructing guidelines for work habits and designing an environment specific for work.

This summer term has been different than the previous year in many ways, but at the same time, it has been just as rewarding. To watch the long-term projects that I have put much of my time and effort into gradually come to fruition is truly gratifying. Not being able to see the positive or immediate results of these initiatives can be discouraging, but good things take time, and this is the mentality that I uphold in all of my work.

Projects Completed

Project One: Faculty of Education COVID-19 Student Focus Group

Summary

In late May 2020, I collaborated with the Faculty of Education Associate Dean of Academic and Faculty Development to conduct a virtual focus group for the Student Experience Think Tank (SETT). The purpose of this focus group was to help the Faculty of Education understand how COVID-19 has affected the undergraduate education student experience. My task was to recruit education students and co-host the focus group alongside the Associate Dean.

Outcomes

10 undergraduate education students, including myself, the Associate Dean of Academic and Faculty Development, the Director of Undergraduate Programs, and the Manager of Undergraduate Programs participated in the focus group. Faculty and I developed questions inquiring into the students' current experience with remote coursework. Dialogue revolved around what the students like and dislike about remote learning, and if they have encountered any challenges with the course formatting, technology, and work environment. The students also discussed issues regarding community-building and academic dishonesty.

Timeline

[May 19] Initial email correspondence
[May 20 – 26] Participant recruitment
[May 27] Focus group meeting

Results

The students provided the Faculty with feedback and suggestions from diverse perspectives. The Associate Dean of Academic and Faculty Development presented the findings at Faculty Forum on June 8. Instructors were encouraged to take the insight obtained from the focus group into consideration for their remote practice.

Project Two: Open Educational Resources FARM Letter Campaign

Summary

I started this project in the spring of my 2019/2020 Board term with the support of the previous SFSS VP University Relations, Shina Kaur, and the previous SFSS At-Large Representative, Rayhaan Khan. The letter was drafted for Open Education Week in March, but the campaign was delayed due to COVID-19.

Open educational resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research resources created with the intention of being freely available to users anywhere. They may include, but are not limited to, textbooks, readings, multi-media files, software, games, assessment tools, and even entire courses. Most are covered by open licenses that allow for using, re-mixing, and sharing.

I finalized the OER letter in May and drafted an email template for Faculty and At-Large Representatives (FARM) to distribute to their respective Deans and other relevant faculty. These materials were circulated in a timely manner given that instructors were preparing for the Fall term.

Letter: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IKEM900bGytItR-2nTSubDJmF4IFFbFY/view?usp=sharing>

Email template:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CnIR6W_a9GeJ1a2U9UuHRsZZyZrXu5Lc/view?usp=sharing

Outcomes

The purpose of this campaign is to advocate for adoption and adaptation of OER and textbook affordability. Our objective is to increase the use of OER at SFU and encourage instructors to report this information to their faculty or department and the SFU Bookstore to track OER usage at SFU.

Instructors that adopt or adapt OER directly aid in their students' success by ensuring that there are no financial barriers to take their course. The instructor provides the student with what they need to succeed for free, or at a significantly lower price than what it would have been if they required them to use an all rights reserved, commercial textbook. As such, OER directly contributes to textbook affordability and student savings.

Timeline

[June 12] Motion passed at the Board meeting to delegate FARM with the task of outreach

[June 15] FARM distributed letter

[June 17] FARM check-in

[June 24] Provided progress updates at the OER Working Group meeting

Results

The Faculty of Education and Faculty of Environment received positive responses from their faculties. The Undergraduate Associate Dean for the Faculty of Environment forwarded the letter to the Faculty's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The Director of Undergraduate Programs for the Faculty of Education forwarded the letter to all faculty and posted it on the Community of Practice for Remote Teaching Canvas site. The other 8 members of FARM did not receive a response. Members of the OER Working Group noticed a surge in OER

workshop attendance soon after the campaign. They also noticed that instructors in the Faculty of Business, the only Faculty that has yet to partake in OER projects at SFU, indicate interest in adopting or adapting OER for certain 200-level courses.

Project Three: SFSS Women of the Year Award Trophies

Summary

During my 2019/2020 Board term, I collaborated with SFU Young Women in Business (YWiB) to organize the annual YWiB International Women's Day Gala & SFSS Women of the Year Awards. Although this event was ultimately cancelled due to COVID-19, the SFSS wanted to commend the 8 winners for their accomplishments in the SFU community by awarding them with personalized trophies. The SFSS Events Coordinator, Dipti, and I considered different contactless options to distribute the trophies to the winners and decided to ship them to their homes.

Outcomes

To honor self-identified women who set the bar high and empower others to create positive change in their faculties and communities.

Timeline

[June 5] Motion passed to approve funding for the packaging and shipment fees of the SFSS Women of the Year Award trophies

[June 11] Compiled and forwarded the shipping information of each winner to Dipti

[June 16] Dipti contacted the engraving company about a spelling error on one of the trophies

[June 16/17] Dipti packaged and mailed out the trophies

[June 18] A winner contacted me about their cracked trophy, and I reached out to Dipti to have it replaced

[June 26] Dipti received a quote from the engraving company

[July 3] Motion passed at the Events Committee to order a replacement trophy for one of the winners whose trophy broke during the shipping and delivery process.

[July 29] Dipti packaged and mailed out the remaining two trophies

Results

All of the Women of the Year Award winners received their trophies and were appreciative of the SFSS's efforts to celebrate their achievements despite the cancellation of the event and COVID-19.

Project Four: Education 101

Summary

The Faculty of Education hosts a pre-enrollment each year to usher incoming Education students into the SFU community. I collaborated with the Academic Advisor to organize volunteers and facilitate activities.

Outcomes

To welcome newcomer students, provide them with the necessary information and resources to help them prepare for their first semester, and get them excited for their post-secondary experience.

Timeline

[June 4] Education 101 event planning meeting

[June 17] Education 101 preparation meeting

[June 22] Education 101 event

Results

The event was successful in engaging the 40 students who attended the event. The participants left the event with a better understanding of academic advising and support, the Bachelor of General Studies program, enrollment, and course planning, and how to get involved in the Faculty and community.

Project Five: Education Student Association

Summary

I have been working closely with the Education Student Association (ESA) over the summer. As the previous President of ESA and an active member of three years, I liaise between the Faculty of Education and ESA, and I play a support role for the student union. I assist the executive members, particularly the current President, with chairing, SFSS-related matters, decision-making, and maintaining working order.

At the beginning of my 2020/2021 SFSS Board term, the ESA experienced some drastic changes. Many of the senior ESA members graduated and only a handful of individuals remained. Fortunately, the ESA was able to recruit more first and second year students to become executive and at-large members.

Outcomes

The number of ESA members for the summer semester almost doubled that of the spring semester. With a larger team, the ESA ran a lot smoother and was able to organize and host events more efficiently. The ESA increased the number of Events Coordinators and event occurrences per month to two instead of one. In doing so, the ESA was able to capture a larger audience. The ESA was very active on social media, particularly on [Instagram](#), through which we were able to speak out in support of Black Lives Matter Movement and raise awareness about relief for Lebanon. The ESA donated \$50 from the core fund to each of the following organizations: the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund, Black Youth Helpline, and the Conscious Kid General Fund.

Timeline

[May 7] Zoom Room Social

[June 25 & 30] Music Madness

[July 22 & 27] Painting with Bob Ross

[August 17 & 20] Zoom Escape Room

Results

Over the summer, the ESA has expanded its membership, made events more accessible, cultivated an engaging and inclusive virtual space for students to have fun and de-stress, and raised awareness for social justice issues and contributed to different causes for social change.

Projects in Progress

Project One: Psycho-Educational Assessments

Summary

The SFSS Campaigns, Research, and Policy Coordinator, Sarah, and I have been collaborating with Studentcare and SFU Centre for Accessible Learning to develop a policy to integrate psycho-educational assessments in the SFSS Health and Dental Plan. Psycho-educational assessments can provide a diagnosis of learning and developmental disabilities, ADHD, and identify any other socio-emotional, behavioural, or psychological problems. The psycho-educational assessments will be covered as an extra-contractual benefit, paid for on a case-by-case basis directly from the SFSS Reserve Fund.

Outcomes

SFU students will access psycho-educational assessments at a subsidized cost through the Health and Dental Plan. With the assessment, students will be able to request and receive the necessary academic accommodations through the Centre for Accessible Learning.

Timeline

- [June 19] Submitted work order to Sarah to begin drafting the psycho-educational assessment policy
- [July 19] Met with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to discuss project updates
- [July 28] Email correspondence with the Studentcare Director of Partnerships & Development, Kristin
- [July 29 to August 26] Attempts to schedule a virtual meeting with Kristin were unsuccessful
- [August 15] Received information about the UVSS's LDA policy and usage from the UVSS Director of Finance and Operations
- [August 18] Meeting with Sarah, the Director of Centre for Accessible Learning, and a member of SFU DNA (Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance)
- [August 26] Meeting with Sarah, SFSS VP Student Life, and VP Finance to touch base about the project
- [August 27] Meeting with representatives of Studentcare

Project Two: Faculty of Education Resource Package

Summary

During the summer, I did research around the volunteer and work opportunities that SFU and the Faculty of Education provide. I collected information on some popular programs for Education students and prospective teachers to present in a digital guidebook. For each resource, I reached out to two or three Education students that had experience in that area to write a testimony about their involvement and how it benefited them in some way. This guidebook will be distributed to Education students, particularly targeting first and second year students.

Outcomes

The purpose of this resource is to inspire more students to get involved in the Faculty of Education. By compiling information—what the opportunity is, why it is valuable, and what actions they can take to get involved—in one convenient location, the students will be more inclined to take participate.

Timeline

[July to August] Research

[August 14 to August 30] Design

Project Three: Anti-Racism Education Within the Faculty of Education Programs Summary

In June, I began to work with Jasmine Peachey, a teacher candidate in the SFU Professional Development Program (PDP), on the advocacy of anti-racism education in the Faculty of Education. In a letter to the Faculty of Education Dean, Director of Undergraduate Programs, Director of Professional Programs, and Associate Director of Professional Programs, we pushed for the instatement of mandatory anti-racism courses to all Faculty of Education undergraduate and graduate programs.

The Faculty of Education, namely PDP—SFU’s reputable teacher education program—prepares hundreds of students to teach in British Columbia each year. Although the Faculty does offer a minor about social justice in education and there are various Education courses that deal with Indigenous studies, racism, and related topics, not all students will choose to take these courses or adopt this minor. We see it as necessary for all student teachers to attend courses that explicitly discuss BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) experiences, unlearn and unpack anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity, and dismantle structural racism.

Letter: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d5kZ5u_8cPdT6ydU5QemGEc10DqeLYwD/view

Outcomes

We want to ensure that students and future educators receive the necessary education and training to teach and talk about anti-racism in schools and support diverse groups of children and their families. Everyone will be an educator to someone in some way, shape, or form, so it is important that these students receive the education they need at SFU to not perpetuate racism in their communities.

According to the Dean of Education, PDP is collaborating with community educator-activists to develop an anti-racism education series for the EDUC 400 module for this coming fall 2020 semester. Equity Studies faculty and the Executive Committee plans to continue to include anti-racism education and anti-oppression pedagogy in EDUC 240 and 100. EDUC 100 is a core mandatory lower division course for the Bachelor of General Studies and Bachelor of Education degrees, while EDUC 240 is a popular lower division course for many students.

Timeline

[June 11-20] Draft letter

[June 23] Emailed letter to Faculty

[June 25] Mandatory Anti-Racism Education meeting with Jasmine, SFSS VP University Relations, Health Sciences Representative, Environment Representative, and Science Representative

[July 30] Meeting with Jasmine and Director of Undergraduate Programs

[July 30] Meeting with Jasmine to discuss next steps

[August 11] Updates from the Dean of Education

Projects to Start

Project One: Open Educational Resources Student Campaign

Summary

Last 2019/2020 Board term, I worked on developing an OER student campaign video. The SFSS Communications team, the previous SFSS VP University Relations, Shina, and I filmed testimonials from students about textbook prices and collected information about SFU Bookstore statistics and OER statistics from BCcampus. I interviewed members of the SFU OER Working Group to provide background information about OER and the Grants program at SFU.

Complications arose when the Communications Department was editing the video. The student testimonials were inaudible and thus unusable. However, the rest of the video footage is usable. Moving forward, I plan to obtain new student testimonials by recruiting students to film themselves talking about the cost of their textbooks. I hope to have this video ready by Open Access Week 2020 or Open Education Week 2021.

Outcomes

To raise awareness of OER among students, start a conversation, and unite the undergraduate to advocate for textbook affordability. According to BCcampus, SFU ranks 5th in their “Top 5 adopting institutions (student savings)” as of 2020 but does not rank in their “Top 5 adopting institutions (number of adoptions)” category. As students become familiar with OER and its benefits, I hope that they support and contribute to the SFSS’s efforts to persuade SFU instructors to adopt or adapt OER in their courses.

Pain Points

I have developed numerous bad work habits during the pandemic. When I wake up in the morning, one of the first things I do is check my email while I am still in bed. Throughout the day, I will work erratically. For instance, I have noticed that I will switch in between working on a project, to writing an email, to doing a course reading, to working on a class assignment, in no particular order—simply based on how I feel. I will do SFSS-related work at varying times in the days, oftentimes late at night or early in the morning. Due to the current situation with COVID-19 and remote work, everything has been thrown in disarray, and I feel the weight of unfinished work or unread emails constantly hanging in the back of my mind.

Recommendations

Do the bulk of your work within a consistent schedule. If you have committed to writing an email or working on a project, do not bounce around or multi-task. Focusing on one task at a time is more efficient and will lead to better productivity. Set and maintain a time to ‘sign in’ and ‘sign out’ of work. Just because you can respond to a work email before or after your predetermined work hours does not mean you should. It is unhealthy to let work encroach upon time for school, self-care, family, friends, or other commitments. If you find it hard to control yourself, you can log out or restrict usage for any work-related apps. Making the distinction between work and personal life can be challenging, especially if you work from home, but it is essential to your socio-emotional, mental, and physical well-being and the quality of your work.