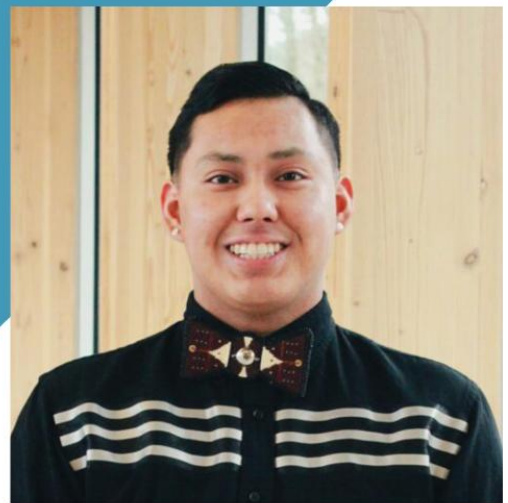


simon fraser
student society

SFSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS SEMESTER REPORT



Matthew Provost
VP Student Services

Sep 2020 - Dec 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Oki, Niitaniko (Hello, My name is) Matthew Provost, I am this year's VP Student Services of the SFSS! The fall semester I was able to take on amazing work, I am always thankful for the support from the other Board members as well as our amazing staff. A lot of the work I do would not have been possible without their hard work and dedication.

I am currently chairing the Nominating committee as well as co-chairing the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour committee. I have also been a part of various working groups such as the Emergency Response Working Groups which was struck to find ways to support students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I have also done my best to support Anti-Racist working groups as well as supporting the Indigenous communitiy through their own advoacy efforts.

There have been many highlights to this semester as well as being able to advocate and push for services that are underserved currently. I worked with SFU Surrey Campus to help with funding to support food security initiatives through Farm to Campus. I set out this semester to complete a lot of goals, and I really am looking forward to seeing the continuous work that can be done. As an Indigenous student and also in consultation with other large community members I wanted to ensure that there

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are supports in place for various students within the SFSS. Being in my current role of VP Student Services I've really worked hard to support the students who felt like the student society wasn't a place where they could see themselves. Throughout the fall semester I have seen so much student engagement as well as being able to provide support that is meaningful and accessible. It drives me to continue this work in a good way.

Most of our board term has been online and with that I'm really happy to see the work that the current board of directors has done throughout the fall semester. We have really worked hard to ensure that we are supporting students even in these difficult times. It's still crazy to think that the amount of work that we have done has been remote but we've honestly been doing our best despite the circumstances. I just want to say that I acknowledge there are many students struggling right now and that doesn't go unnoticed, and I want to make sure that we are doing our jobs and we continue to create space and change that will help and support our membership.

I just want to say thank you for trusting me to do this work, because it means a lot to have this support. I will always do my best to do this work with an open heart and an open mind. Please do not hesitate to reach out because I'm always open to having conversations or hearing the ways in which I can support you.

Respectfully,

Matthew Provost
VP Student Services

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COMPLETED PROJECTS

Orange Shirt Day:

Intention: Advocacy, Awareness, & Student Engagement:

September 30th is considered and recognized as Orange Shirt Day, part of my platform has been advocacy and prioritizing Reconciliation efforts within the SFSS. I was able to run this campaign this fall with the support of our Communications coordinator Sindhu. [Orange Shirt Day](#) recognizes the Indian Residential School Survivors, and the long lasting impacts of intergenerational trauma that has been caused by these schools. Running this campaign was essential in recognizing the harms that have been caused to Indigenous communities through the education system. The education system was the main tool used to drive assimilation processes.

The Simon Fraser Student Society has committed to reconciliation efforts and this is one of the ways in recognizing the importance of supporting and creating space for Indigenous students at SFU. It is also essential to ensure that we are raising awareness and being in solidarity with Indigenous community members while being on stolen occupied territory.

- We created digital content for Orange Shirt Day
- Collaborated with Indigenous Student Centre and the First Nations Students Association for resources
- Compilation of current resources for Orange Shirt Day:
 - Indigenous Podcasts, Indigenous Authors, as well as resources to share with SFU students and community members



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AGM Report Compilation:

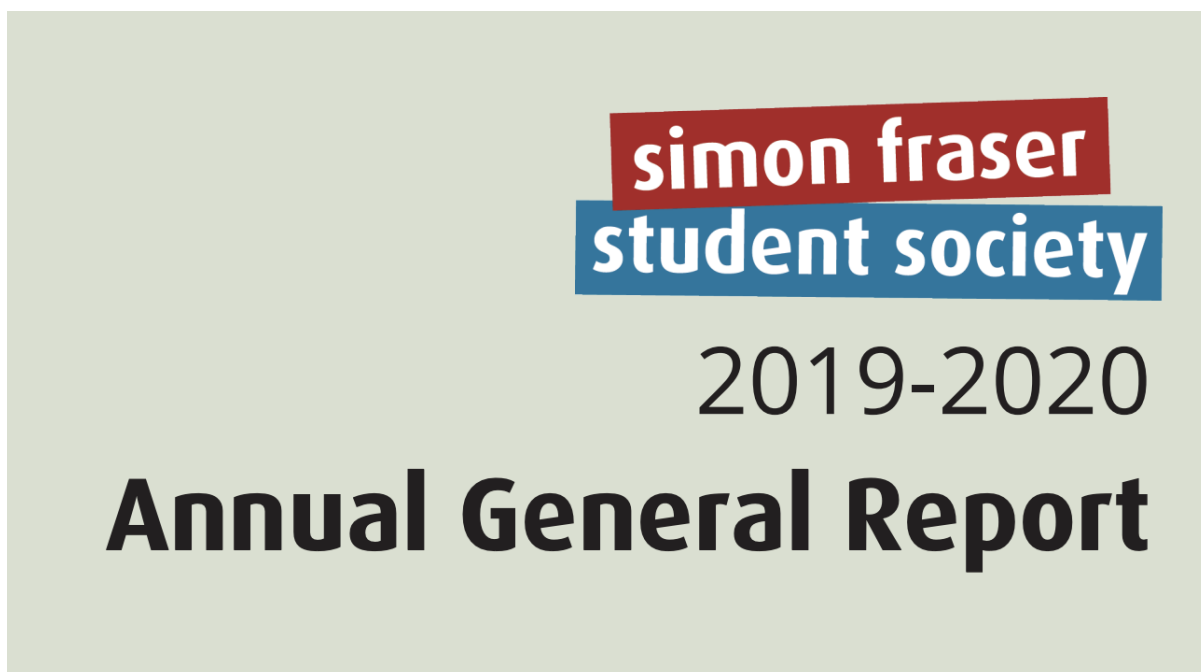
Intention: Student Engagement

As VP Student Services it was my responsibility to take on the compilation of the AGM Report. For this I was able to work with our communications coordinator Sindhu as well as the greatly needed support from Sarah our Research, Policy Coordinator as well as other staff within the society. This report consisted of compiling information of the previous board of directors and the work they did within their term. This also has information about past projects as well as services with the SFSS.

You can check out the full report here:

[AGM Report 2019 - 2020](#)

- Compiled information from previous board term, highlighted events and campaigns from the previous board members
- Noted information from SFSS resources and current services



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AGM Media & Digital Campaign:

Intention: Student Engagement

I worked closely with Sindhu, our Communications Coordinator, to effectively promote the SFSS Annual General Meeting that took place on October 26th 2020. Together we created a digital plan to ensure that promotional materials for the AGM were on all platforms of our social media. I was able to coordinate different posts and infographic material that would be posted on cross platforms, as well as coordinating with the board of directors, council and membership to create videos, posts, to further ensure the AGM was visible and well known.

While being on the AGM working group this was my core responsibility to promote and execute digital material for our online AGM.

- Created digital content i.e. Instagram infographics, AGM launch video, Facebook posts
- Scheduled posts and outreach to share with membership about AGM
- Executed a full online campaign



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HCS Development Session:

Intention: Student Support

Mental wellness supports have been a key priority for me and strengthening the current relationships with SFU Health and Counselling services is an undertaking that I have been working towards during my term on the board. I wanted to support our current board of directors by prioritising mental wellness resources for the board. I thought this was essential especially while being online for the majority of our term. Burnout has been something I have been keeping in the back of my mind while most of the current board members are taking a full course load plus our role within the SFSS. I worked with the executive director of HCS and Jacqueline to coordinate this development session in order to discuss mental wellness and ways to support ourselves in leadership roles.

This development session focused on resources as well as building support amongst the board.

- Collaborated with SFU Health and Counselling to develop a session focused on mental wellness in leadership positions
- Scheduled with board members to attend



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FNSA Agreement:

Intention: Reconciliation and Relationship Building

This Fall I was able to assist in the completion of ensuring the FNSA and SFSS agreement was signed. I was able to coordinate with our current President Osob ... and current FNSA Treasurer as well support from our current VP Finance Corbett... to fine tune the FNSA x SFSS agreement.

Maintaining relationships with our constituency groups such as FNSA is crucial to ensuring we are properly supporting and working with them as stakeholders. The completion of this agreement was to solidify the support that the SFSS provides to the FNSA as well services and resources that will be provided. This is a long term way of ensuring we are supporting Indigenous groups on campus as well establishing concrete relationships.

- Coordinated with FNSA Treasurer and board members to go over the previous agreement
- Work with current SFSS President & VP Finance to update and fine tune agreement
- Consult with FNSA to finalize agreement



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Food Hub:

Intention: Student Services and Support

Food Hub on the SFU Burnaby campus was started as a pilot project in response to the Emergency Response Working Group to help support students through the Covid-19 Pandemic. As part of my portfolio under services I worked closely with the SFSS VP External Relations **Samad Raza** as well as Science Rep **WeiChun Kua** this fall supporting the Food Hub initiative at the SFU Burnaby campus. This service was intended to help support food security for students especially throughout the pandemic.

Students would sign up weekly online to come pick up essential food items that were brought from the food bank. We would have time slots allocated for students to do socially distanced pickups. There was a lot of positive feedback about having this program. Due to funding we are currently looking at options or other modes of programming to support the Food Hub. There was a survey that has been sent out to students who have participated or signed up for Food Hub.

I was able to help get footage to create a promotional video for the Food Hub, you can view it here:

[Food Hub Video](#)

- Established food security options for students
- More accessible options for students to receive services during pandemic

Farm to Campus in Surrey:

The Farm to Campus initiative was a project that I undertook to support and provide food security for students at the SFU Surrey Campus. I worked closely with Gretchen Ferguson and Aman Chandi to coordinate and find ways in which the SFSS could support and continue this initiative. The Farm to Campus was an already established project but due to COVID-19 the project had to take a step back. Supporting more equitable services was something that I campaigned on, having the ability to work with and secure a source of support for students was something that I really enjoyed.

My recommendation to the board of directors was:

My recommendation is that we support the Farm to Campus initiative and provide support up to \$1500.00 this will cover the extra costs associated with the sliding scale for the Community Supported Agriculture boxes. The \$1500.00 can contribute and cover the cost up to 300 Farm to Campus (CSA) Boxes. Keep in mind that the money allocated by the SFSS will be specifically directed towards SFSS membership.

This project went throughout the whole duration of the Fall semester and provided some security to students during these precarious times.

Feel free to read full briefing note here:

[Farm to Campus Briefing Note](#)



**Surrey
Food Hub
Survey**

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COVID-19 Health and Dental Plan Adjustment:

At the end of the Fall semester we put a motion forward to make adjustments to our current Health and Dental plan to accommodate and further support students throughout the pandemic.

This plan includes reimbursements for travel due to COVID. The board made the decision collectively to make changes to the plan to accommodate the needs of students especially international students who have been impacted by the pandemic.

Prior to this decision, we met with Student Care in a development session to discuss our current plan and through this we were informed that this could be an option. We were able to move forward with knowing that this could be a helpful option for students.

ON-GOING PROJECTS

Let Us Speak Campaign

Intention: Student Advocacy and Solidarity

This past Fall there were discussions around the First Peoples Gathering House (FPGH) and the First Nations Students Association, Indigenous students and allies shared their concerns with how the university has been handling the consultation process.

The FPGH was one of the calls to action in the original [“Walk this Path With Us”](#) document for the Truth and Reconciliation commission and reconciliation work that is currently happening at SFU.

On October 1st the [FNSA released a public statement](#) questioning the lack of student participation in the process of the FPGH. There have been multiple issues that have arisen and calls to witness that have been put forward from the FNSA and Indigenous community. Reconciliation is not a point a to b, there is no linear process and this work needs to be done in a good way with Indigenous students in mind. I helped support the FNSA in launching the Let Us Speak online campaign.

I wrote my own letters of support which you can read here:

[Matt Pro October 5th Letter of Support](#)

[Matt Pro November 18th Letter](#)

After the initial letters were submitted the FNSA board members and myself attended the Aboriginal Steering Committee meeting where as well we noticed the lack of

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student participation and lack of transparency that is being presented around reconciliation work at SFU.

The Peak covered the issues that were presented at the [Aboriginal Steering Committee meeting](#) and students' concerns.

I worked closely with the FNSA Board Members and community to help get letters of support from community members which you can see here:

[Letters of Support](#)

I also helped create and support the petition that received 594 signatures:

[Let Us Speak Petition](#)

As part of my campaign promises I wanted to ensure that we support Indigenous advocacy efforts since this was not a priority I saw on previous boards. Supporting Indigenous movements is a key piece in how the SFSS can support Indigenous students as well as work towards and maintain good relations in the future. This is an ongoing project due to the current calls to action that have not been met, we will continue to push for transparency and commitments from the university to ensure Indigenous voices are prioritized and heard. Indigenous students deserve to have spaces that are safe and created with good intentions. As a student impacted by this project I will always work towards supporting our community.



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BO Hiring Committee

Intention: Organization Support

In the later half of the fall semester I motivated myself to be on the appointment of the hiring committee for the Board Organizer. From here we were able to start the process to create the board organizer application. From this point we opened the application process and for the duration of the semester we had our first set of interviews just before winter break and we were able to review the applicants. From here we decided to do a second round of interviews that would wrap up in the new year.

- Helped and supported to draft up the interview questions
- Completed various interviews
- Worked the rest of BO hiring committee

HCS Updated resources

I wanted to work closely with SFU Health and Counselling services this is something that I feel is really needed for student support. I collaborated with SFU health and counselling services to update their resources on their website and make recommendations on what I thought would be more helpful for students. I was able to make recommendations based on community support and external resources that I currently know are available. For example First Nations Health Authority offers external counselling resources for Indigenous folks in BC, I thought this would be a great resource to have on their website since there has been a greater need for counselling services and wellness support for students. I have also been trying to look into additional resources that other students can access based on location as well as providing accessible resources such as apps and websites that can be used for low cost.

I truly believe that mental Wellness supports should be accessible for students especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen a lot of students struggling and I want to ensure that there are more additional supports in place. I have been in continuous conversations throughout the fall semester with health and counselling to collaborate on various projects. This was just one that has been ongoing and I will continue to work with HCS to find ways in which the SFSS and HCS can work on projects in order to support students.

Link to updated resources:

[Indigenous Student Resources](#)

Personal resource for students:

[Resource made by Matt](#)

Black, Indigenous, & People of Colour Committee

Intention: Student Advocacy and Engagement

This Fall Semester the BIPOC Committee had some major wins towards supporting our communities. At the beginning of the semester we were able to host a meeting between us and SFU Health and Counselling for working towards ensuring support groups for Black and Indigenous folks at SFU. We also discussed the need for resources that are accessible to the community.

We also pushed the Our Decision Campaign which was spearheaded by Marie Haddad. Marie brought the SFU Team Name Change as a movement organizer, with the support of the BIPOC committee we were able to support the Our Decision Campaign and also advise the Board of Directors to support this campaign.

We set up a meeting with Joy Johnson SFU President and Rummana Khan Hemani SFU Vice President Students and International to discuss the ongoing issues that BIPOC community members are facing on campus. We discussed our calls to action, recommendations, and key considerations for moving forward. We asked for specific commitments regarding the SFU Team Name Change and harm caused to Black Athletes as well as Indigenous student exclusion.

Read full briefing note here:

[Full Briefing Note](#)

[Our Decision Campaign](#)



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PAIN POINTS

Screentime:

Working in an online setting as well as taking online classes has been a struggle some days. The increased screen time is something that I have been still adjusting to. I am doing my best to stay focused but sometimes I feel myself having a hard time being fully present. This is especially difficult when you are spending a minimum of 9 hours a day online, and back to back zoom sessions which includes classes and work meetings. Increased screen time I find myself getting tired and burnt out from being on my computer as well as phone.

Student Engagement:

One thing I was looking forward to in this role was working with and meeting students. In an online environment I found it difficult to do outreach as well as support students. I am consistently trying to find new ways to work with students and I have found that the SFSS committees have been a great way to maintain these connections. I wish there were easier ways of doing outreach but due to COVID this has been difficult.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Asking for Support:

I found that without the support of the board of the other board members or our staff I would not have been able to complete some of these projects. With this role I found it is really easy to take on too much, so I want to say that asking for help is something that we should all highly consider. It's important that we normalize supporting each other, especially in remote working environments, it's also important to take the time to check in with each other and as much as you ask for support, find ways in which you can support others as well.

Making Time to Socialize:

I have found that it is really easy to just focus on work, but to not feel burnout it's essential to plan or even just schedule in things that you enjoy. Whether that is going for a walk or watching a movie with your friends online. With the current board we do plan movie nights and also we do play Among Us. While working remotely we have found that making this time has been just as important as some of the work we are doing.

I also do my best to make sure I find time to plan things with my family and step away from online socializing, this has been helpful especially when I spend the majority of my time online.

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