

Proposed Draft Issues Policy IP-2: Black History Month

Prepared by: Balqees Jama (At-Large Rep) and Nafoni Modi (Health Science)

Co-sponsored by: SFSS Black Caucus (Osob Mohamed (President), Balqees Jama, Nafoni Modi)

Preamble

Black History Month started as Negro History Week in the United States in 1926, led by the work of African-American scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson. In Canada, Black History Month was officially recognized by the Canadian House of Commons in 1995. This incredible milestone was spearheaded by the Honourable Jean Augustine, the first Black woman to sit in the House of Commons.

During Black History Month, it is important that the SFSS highlights the many Black achievements outside of trauma and struggle, and also focus on celebrating Black love, art, and joy. Celebrating Black History Month on a national-scale is crucial to fighting Black erasure and anti-Black racism in Canada.

Black erasure is the wide-scale marginalization and indifference of Black people, their history, and contributions across disciplines, rendering Black people invisible in society.

Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded passive or active discrimination specifically directed against Black and African-descent people in relation to their unique history with regard to colonization and enslavement. Anti-Blackness devalues Blackness, while systemically marginalizing Black communities, the issues that affect them, and the institutions created to support them.

The intentionality that the SFSS brings into Black History Month educating people on Black contributions in Canada should set the tone for how to appreciate Blackness all year-round, while recognizing the diversity of the Black community.

The SFSS passed a motion on February 1, 2019 to formally recognize Black History Month at Simon Fraser University. In addition, during June 2020, the SFSS took a stance by [standing in solidarity](#) with Black lives. It is important that we continue to tangibly uphold the statements that we made during this time, “working with Black student organizers and allies... holding our University accountable in any efforts for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice”. In doing so, the Society must celebrate the work and efforts of current Black people and organizations.

Policy

1. The SFSS supports:
 - a. Proactively celebrating and supporting Black History Month efforts led by Black students and groups
 - b. Education, awareness, and solidarity with self-liberation efforts of Black and African peoples
 - c. Educators and students embedding Canadian Black history in post-secondary institutions
 - d. Recognizing Black people in areas outside of solely racism and social justice, and celebrating Blackness year-round
 - e. Black student representation and empowerment in student governing positions and continuous efforts for recruitment
 - f. Amplifying of Black student organizers and groups on campus, and amplifying calls for specific protection and supports for Black communities as it relates to policies, practices, programming and resources within the SFU community
 - g. The ethical collection of disaggregated race-based data and research that could inform prevention, intervention and strategies to protect the human rights of Black communities, and support equity initiatives to reduce disproportionate impacts of anti-Black racism

2. The SFSS opposes:
 - a. Efforts to ignore or dismiss Black History Month initiatives or initiatives to support the equity and empowerment of Black communities
 - b. The co-opting of Black advocacy initiatives without redress and recognition of the work Black communities have been doing and continue to do
 - c. Efforts to censor Black activism and advocacy, or diminish the role and history of marginalization, slavery, colonialism and institutional oppression of Black communities

Motion

Whereas, the Parliament of Canada has been officially recognizing Black History Month since 1995 following a motion introduced by the first Black Canadian Woman elected to the Canadian Parliament - The Honourable Jean Augustine,

Whereas, Black History Month is important to the Black Community and is a time for reflection, introspection and serves as a time to reconcile and address the specific needs of the Black community,

Whereas, Black History Month is crucial to fighting Black erasure and anti-Black racism in Canada and educating people on the contributions of Black Canadians,

Whereas, SFSS BIPOC Committee recommended that the Board of Directors create an Issues Policy in support of recognising Black History Month and actively supporting Black-led efforts in celebrating it

Whereas, SOCA has been recognizing Black History Month since it's creation in 1994 when it was formerly known as the Black Students Association,

Whereas, the Board of Directors passed [MOTION BOD 2019- 02-01:07](#) that SOCA submitted requesting that SFSS Formally Recognizes Black History Month at Simon Fraser University at their February 1, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting,

Be it resolved that, the Board of Directors create an SFSS Issues Policy, Black History Month, as presented in the attached document titled "Proposed Draft Issues Policy IP-2: Black History Month".