2020-2021



simon fraser student society

VP STUDENT SERVICES' EXIT REPORT

Matthew Provost Simon Fraser Student Society

Executive Summary

Oki/ Niiksokowaiks (Hello Friends),

Niitaniko Matthew Provost, Nomohtootoo Piikani, Kainai, Siksika Blackfoot Territory Treaty 7 Southern Alberta. Kiitsiksimatsitsi xwmə θ kwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Selĭlwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), kwikwə λ 'əm (Kwikwetlem) and qicə'y(Katzie) Nations. Hello! My name is Matthew Provost I am an uninvited guest on Coast Salish Territories and I come from Blackfoot territory and this year I had the privilege of being on the board of directors of the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) as the Vice President Student Services. This year I was the Chair for the nominating committee as well as Co-Chair of the newly established Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) Committee. I sat on various committees and supported the work of other board members through the Accessibility Committee and Governance Committee.

I worked on various projects to ensure students had adequate and stable support through our services as well as brought up the opportunity to incorporate reconciliation efforts within the society. I wanted to ensure that spaces were prioritized for BIPOC folks within the SFSS, since this had not been present in past years from my experience prior to being on the board of directors. I focused on advocacy efforts that addressed various issues and supported many groups on campus to fight for real change and equity. Many projects and advocacy efforts are ongoing and this year's work that has happened will only continue to grow so setting the foundation and building off from others before me has been such an amazing opportunity. I ran on a campaign that wanted to support marginalized folks on campus because there are so many barriers we face in these communities while completing our degrees. I wanted to ensure we took an intersectionalist approach to how we support the diversity of our community members. I truly believe that this work needs to be done with an open heart and open mind. To have compassion and be able to understand that our experiences as students is very unique, especially this year throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I thought a lot about how this role impacts our community members, and with that I held it with high regard. I wanted to help make intentional changes and ensure that the work I was doing always centered around how can this support someone today.

One thing I remember or that I reflect on quite a bit is we want to leave this place better than we left it, this means doing the work to support our community members. I feel as though this year I really hope the work I have done has reflected that, and I am thankful always for the opportunity to have represented not only the students who voted but also the Indigenous community at SFU who have put their trust in me to do this work, and I want to just acknowledge a few folks who helped me be here today:

From back in the day Giovanni Hosang, Osob Mohamed, Balqees Jama thank you for your ongoing support and care this year, this would not have been possible if you did not believe in me to do this in the first place. To the current board of directors you have all helped me in so many ways this year thank you for having me and this work we have done together will always be memorable and will always mean so much to me. The First Nations Student Association Board of Directors without you and your support I would not have had the courage to take on this role to do this work with you all, also past FNSA Alumni you have taught me so much and there was not a day I did not think about any of you while in my position because I want to see us all do well and we always deserve to be here and have these opportunities, we are important our voices matter. FNSA brought me to where I am today and I would not have been here today without this community. Marcia Guno and the Indigenous Student Centre community your knowledge and community commitment has taught me how to work with so many different individuals your ongoing advice and guidance has shaped how to truly do work with an open heart and open mind. My family and community ties from Blackfoot territory I want to recognize that I will always hold Siksikaitsitapii ways of knowing in any position or place I go, these values keep me committed to ensuring I try hard everyday, iikakimaat. My little brother Zach, I do this work for you so that when you go to university you can enjoy being a student and have an amazing experience. I wish that these institutions will have your best interests at heart, you deserve an education worthy of your presence and I hope that you always feel included, safe and supported wherever you go.

Matthew Provost

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Overview

The Student Services portfolio is very vast and covers a lot in terms of projects, initiatives, and advocacy. One key aspect is ensuring the efficiency but also the amount of support our services provide to students. For this role it's essential to ensure that our services are going under review to address if they are properly supporting students but also working towards finding ways we can improve current services. The Student Services portfolio works closely with our staff and administration on various projects.

Key Services:

- Food Bank
- UPass
- Legal Clinic
- Student Care

It was my responsibility to work with staff collectively to ensure that the services are utilized as well as promoted to membership so they understand what their fees go directly to and what they have the ability to access through the SFSS. My role is also a support role to various executives as well as faculty representatives, this role has the flexibility to collaborate with other executives and their portfolios since projects tend to overlap. Some of the key responsibilities is completing the Annual General Meeting (AGM) final report and supporting the AGM through its entirety.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic I wanted to ensure that our services did not lose capacity and could be fully utilized through an online platform. This was essential especially since students need access to all available resources. With our food bank program there was the option to receive food bank vouchers as well we were able to expand for the Fall semester an actual in person food pick up. From here we also collaborated with Embark to support the Farm to Campus initiative which brought more accessibility and support for SFU students in Surrey.

Role Breakdown

Challenges

Screen time:

Being online definitely took its toll, especially throughout the duration of the year screen time has been something I have had to navigate. Sometimes being on the computer for hours at a time has contributed to burn out and less time for breaks. I also understand that since board members all worked remotely our day to day was mainly through zoom and back to back meetings.

Overworking:

Working remotely I have it difficult to not work while being at home. Sometimes it felt like I did not have breaks since my workspace is in my personal space. Especially because of the pandemic I found myself working all hours of the day and night to keep busy just because of the isolation. It was very easy to over work ourselves because of just being at home and not having much else to do.

Coordination with projects:

Learning this job remotely took a bit for me to be coordinated with other board members, coordinating projects at times was also difficult because of just so many projects that were ongoing. Definitely so much has been done this year and we managed to have some amazing outcomes but sometimes we found ourselves finishing things last minute because of the communication barrier of being online.

Learning Experiences

Keep in mind that your decisions impact real people, always be empathetic and supportive. Have self compassion and understand that you can do your best. I have learned so many things from this job in terms of understanding governance structures, working as an employer and sitting on hiring committees as well as the bargaining committee.

I learned so much about consultation as well as for this role it is key to reach out and be engaged with students. I was able to work with so many different and amazing people that were great opportunities for myself. Always be open to building projects and as long as your work is done with good intention I believe it will turn out. I learned to handle a lot under stress, pressure and deadlines.

Key Contacts

Indigenous Student Centre Health and Counselling Services Student Care First Nation Students Association Students of African and Caribbean Ancestry Simon Fraser Public Interest Resource Group

Various staff in our departments, one key contact was our communications coordinator as well as other internal staff that supported a lot of the work we do.

Projects and Initiatives

Nominating Committee:

At the beginning of the term I was appointed as the chair for the nominating committee, this committee includes receiving all applications for our at-large positions for standing SFSS committees. Myself, Corbett, & Mehtaab gave our recommendations of applicants to committee chairs and proceeded to ensure empty seats were filled on committees as well. Majority of this work happened within the summer semester of the board term, and occasionally throughout the year if there was a need to fill empty at-large seats.

BIPOC Committee:

One of my first priorities for the year was to establish an advisory committee that supported Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) voices. I was able to establish the BIPOC committee and draft the terms of reference with this year's At-Large Representative Balqees Jama (BIG SHOUT OUT BECAUSE THEY DID SO MUCH AMAZING WORK) that went through the Governance committee. My goal was to ensure that there was mandated space to ensure BIPOC voices were amplified and there was adequate representation designated.

My goal was to make a long standing change, this is the first committee within the SFSS that has been created to advocate and support the BIPOC Community. The BIPOC Committee has prioritized voting seats for both Students of Carribean and African Ancestry (SOCA) as well as the First Nation Students Association (FNSA), a important to piece to note is that any changes made to the standing order for this specific committee has be done in consensus from both FNSA and SOCA since this committee cannot be dissolved without

consultation or consent. Prior to this board term there has never been designated space for advisory counsel that came from either the Black or Indigenous community members within the SFSS. It means so much to me to be able to have this space, and to work with so many amazing folks.

There have been many projects that BIPOC Committee has taken up this year:

- SFU Team Name Change
- FNSA Let Us Speak Campaign
- Our Decision Campaign
 - Name Change Consultation Support
- Issues Policies
- BIPOC Committee Feedback on Scarborough National Charter on Anti-Black Racism
 & Black Inclusion

The work that has happened on this committee has been incredible, as well as the amount of advocacy and campaigning that has been done within the year. I'm extremely grateful and excited for what will happen within the next year and so forth. We have been able to address so many issues and hold accountability to institutions on many levels. We have been able to address anti-racism, reconciliation, and what proper equity, diversity and inclusion looks like from BIPOC students since this is our experience.

Black, Indigenous and People of Colour Terms of Reference

Reconciliation Efforts:

FNSA Coordinator:

During my board term I am happy to say that we were able to finalize the hiring process of the First Nation Student Association Coordinator. Of course there was so much work prior to this from past FNSA board members to get this established. I do not want it to go unrecognized this position has been a long time coming.

Since the establishment of the FNSA in 1994 there has not been a coordinator supporting the work of Indigenous students within the FNSA. Now that there is support there will be less stress put on board members to coordinate and take on a whole role. Our current coordinator has been doing a great job and I am excited to see what will be ongoing from this. This role is crucial to ensuring there is support from the SFSS to the FNSA from coordination as well as continuity for the work that will be ongoing. Indigenous students feel a lot of pressure as well as burn out since there is so much to address and support within the Indigenous community. Moving forward I am very pleased to see the amount of support and work that is occurring and this position is ensuring there is space for Indigenous staff within the SFSS as well.

Indigenous Peoples Day Campaign:

June 21st is recognized as National Indigenous Peoples Day, also recognized as summer solstice. This day recognizes the importance of Indigenous culture and celebrates Indigenous resilience within so called canada. This was one of the initial online campaigns I was able to prioritize at the beginning of my term. I was able to work our communications coordinator Sindhu and get social media posts up on all SFSS platforms, and write the posts that would be shared.

This was just the beginning of ensuring Indigenous presence was recognized within the SFSS to commit to reconciliation efforts and being in solidarity with our Indigenous communities and recognizing these important days.

As an Indigenous student I have not seen myself properly represented in the SFSS and I took this as an opportunity to ensure we recognize Indigenous students and take the time to recognize and acknowledge these important dates. I hope that moving forward the future board of directors will keep these ongoing because this is how we ensure that Indigenous students feel recognized and supported by our student society.

"The SFSS would like to celebrate and acknowledge that it is National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21st). The SFSS prioritizes Indigenous voices, and we acknowledge that the SFSS is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the x^{wm}əθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Selĭlwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), k^wik^wəÅəm (Kwikwetlem) and qicə̈y (Katzie) Nations. We want to acknowledge that this is a day to recognize and celebrate Indigenous people all over Turtle Island. We would like to also say congratulations to the Indigenous Graduates of 2020 and recognize your hard work and perseverance throughout your academic journey. The SFSS recognizes the significance of Indigenous presence on campus as well as the hard work and advocacy of the Indigenous communities that are at SFU. We hope students, faculty, and staff take this opportunity to learn and work towards reconciliation efforts. We hope you take the time to learn with open hearts and open minds, the SFSS is working towards supporting Indigenous students and ensuring that we are allowing that space so we can continue to support and work together in a good way. Happy Indigenous People's Day!"



Ratification of the First Nations Student Association Service Agreement:

The work that has occurred on my board has been amazing to see, I was so grateful to see the signing of the service agreement between our President Osob Mohamed and the current FNSA Treasurer. I was able to go through the agreement draft and ensure consultative feedback was done between the FNSA and SFSS to ensure long standing and solidified changes occurred. I was able to facilitate the discussions and provide feedback from both parties. It was really amazing to see this get signed during my board term.

The relationship between both the SFSS and FNSA prior to this board term I could say was not stable and very precarious throughout the years even prior to my board term, but from this agreement we were able to establish some key indicators of relationship and fiduciary duties that SFSS is accountable to FNSA. These are key instances that were intended to build trust as well as redress harms that have occurred in the past. This agreement was able to establish a working and reciprocal relationship that I believe will be maintained and it is recognized.



Indigenous Student Centre Development Session:

This development session was specifically intended to introduce this year's board of directors to key stakeholders in the SFU Indigenous community. Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) is one of the main places within SFU that works directly with Indigenous students to support them throughout their academic journey. I thought it was essential that the board understood the ways in which Indigenous student experience is very unique. I took the opportunity and initiative to invite ISC for a development session so we had the opportunity to talk first hand about how the SFSS could properly begin to support and advocate for Indigenous students. The board asked questions around protocol and services ISC provides, I think this development session was helpful since it brought another perspective on how we need to expand in order to support different student groups. ISC was able to discuss what they do and how they support current Indigenous students. There was an introduction as well as overview of what the ISC has been able to provide. This is key in relationship building especially with Indigenous community members, we need to understand that there are supports in place and we need to provide consultation and work with these spaces on campus so we do not reinvent the wheel. Working and supporting Indigenous students is an ongoing mandate and we need to work with ISC, FNSA, Indigenous Studies Department to ensure we are being diligent in outreach as well as advocacy.



Orange Shirt Day:

Another specific aspect of reconciliation is recognizing and showing solidarity with our Indigenous community members. Orange Shirt Day is to commemorate and take a day to reflect on the harms that have occurred to Indigenous communities through the Indian Residential School (IRS) System. Especially being in post-secondary we need to recognize that education is the tool that was utilized to drive assimilation practices against Indigenous People(s). For this I was able to create a digital campaign across all SFSS social media platforms. This included graphics, resources and information about Orange Shirt Day. We also collaborated with the Indigenous Student Centre to cross share resources and information.

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.

Orange Shirt Day Statement





Let Us Speak Campaign:

This campaign was to address the lack of consideration or inclusion for Indigenous students with reconciliation efforts specifically in regards to the First Peoples Gathering House. These spaces are essential to building community and ensure there are safe spaces for Indigenous students to succeed. The lack of consultation was really problematic and harmful to the community ties and in order to address this Indigenous students created a movement to ensure there was more inclusion and transparency on reconciliation efforts. I was able to support this movement by ensuring the board of directors were in solidarity with Indigenous students at this moment, it was very important to show support and ensure we were doing good work in order to help these be amplified and supported.

The FPGH was one of the calls to action in the original <u>"Walk this Path With Us" final report</u> for the Truth and Reconciliation commission and reconciliation work that is currently happening at SFU.

On October 1st the <u>FNSA released a public statement</u> questioning the lack of student participation in the process of the FPGH. There have been multiple issues that have arised 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.

Here are my letters of support:

Matthew Provost Letter October 5th 2020

Matthew Provost Letter November 18th 2020

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 Matthew Provost Semester Report 13 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 <u>Aboriginal Steering Committee meeting and students' concerns.</u>

Letters of Support for Let Us Speak Campaign

Let Us Speak Petition



Reconcili-Action Items:

Host Nations: As part of my campaign promises I am doing my best to work towards and push reconciliation efforts within the SFSS. I have been working towards connecting with Host Nations: x^wməθk^wəỳəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Selĭlwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) This is an essential and first step towards ensuring we are doing work in a good way. Connecting and consulting with the Host nations should be prioritized since the SFSS is located on occupied stolen territory. Food Security:

Burnaby Food Hub:

The outgoing VP External was the main organizer of this project but I was able to help support plan and converse with Tara Flynn. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we knew that students need as much support as possible, we wanted to create ways in which we could ensure affordable and accessible food support. The food hub ran on wednesdays, and we were able to plan and hand out free groceries from the convocation mall. This was established to address the implications of the pandemic and the instability many students were feeling due to precarious situations regarding food security as well as income. The Burnaby Neighborhood House and the SFU Office of Community Engagement collaborated on this project for the duration of the summer and also Fall semester.

The SFSS allocated \$5000.00 as well as worked to secure space to make the project happen. We also have various board members such as Samad Raza, Weichun Kua, Gabe Liosis, Anuki Karunajeewa.

Food Hub Report



Surrey Farm to Campus:

The Food Hub has been an amazing project that has come out of the Emergency Response Working Group (ERWG). The Emergency Response Working Group successfully launched their first day on July 22nd. The next steps are expanding out to our campuses for students to access. The ERWG have been in contact with Gretchen Ferguson and Aman Chandi who have been interested in working with SFSS in supporting other Food Hub initiatives at the Surrey campus. Farm to Campus is an already established initiative we can help support so we are ensuring equal access to resources between campuses. We need to ensure that we are supporting our students from other campuses. I have had various conversations with Aman and Gretchen and they have given me a description of both food initiatives that Surrey campus and SFSS would be collaborating with if we were to support this program.

This would include a collaboration with the initiative Farm to Campus at the Surrey campus:

Seeds of Change Food Boxes (Free) - Seeds of Change is a Surrey-based collective that just got funding to coordinate free food boxes to Surrey residents in need, including SFU students. The food comes from Sources Food Hub, which collects from retail stores (food that is close to expiry date, such as dairy, meat and produce) and by going out and picking fruit and produce at farms.

SFU Surrey-based students about the locations where they can pick up a box of food near them. I thought it was important to recognize that we don't have to choose either or, and that these programs are already established and we would just be supporting and collaborating with folks from SFU Surrey to help make these happen. It would be really amazing to see if we could have both options for students and I think it would be a good idea to have more options to open so students can have more resources. Farm to Campus - CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes (on a sliding scale \$3-\$5 for a small box and \$5-\$10) for a large box)

- We would like to source fresh fruit and produce from a local produce vendor Calvins's Farm Market and a local food rescue organization called Offbeat Produce
- Students can subscribe to this service on our website and pick up the boxes
- SFU Surrey has expressed willingness to have the new building be the site for students to pick up their weekly produce box. Details need to be confirmed.
- We are also in conversation with SFU Embark to generate more support around this project.

Since we have already given the Food Hub \$5000.00 for supporting costs I think it would be

appropriate to offer \$1500.00 to support this initiative. This \$1500.00 would help support the sliding scale option for the boxes. Sliding scale option is more so "pay what you can". The boxes will be cheap around \$5.00 and we are offering to help split the costs if students cannot afford this option. Another part to this is that the Seeds of change boxes are a free option and once this collaboration is confirmed students have the decision or option between the Seeds of Change of boxes or Farm to Campus Option. This project was ongoing throughout the Fall semester and supported many students in the Surrey area. It was great to see more services being allocated across campuses and I was happy to support this project to address food insecurity.

The Peak Article



Annual General Meeting:

We held our Annual General Meeting this year on zoom with over 600+ attendees. It was very exciting to see the amount of engagement while being remote. The AGM this year had some very important proposals, which included condemning the tuition hikes. It's interesting to see the turnout since in recent years our past AGM's did not meet quorum. We passed various by-law changes with majority votes and this was really important for the society this year. We worked with various departments from SFU to ensure there was accessibility and attendees could participate with voting as well as asking questions in discussion. My role for this particular project was to develop and coordinate the AGM report and I was a main support for the digital media campaign working with our communications coordinator to get content and information out to our membership.

AGM Report

simon fraser student society 2019-2020 Annual General Report

HCS Development Session:

This year I wanted to help support the board by prioritising mental wellness, I collaborated with Health and Counselling Services to talk with the board about burn out in leadership positions. I thought this would be helpful because current board members working remotely takes a toll and I also thought it would be great to share safe space in these instances. We were able to have a two hour session with a facilitator to talk about how we can support our selves while supporting others and build trust within our board. I remember this session and it was really enjoyable to have that space with folks.

UPass Appeals Committee:

For this year I sat on the UPass appeals committee, it was once a semester and here we went through appeals. I advocated on behalf of students to have their UPass appealed especially during this time due to how COVID-19 has impacted them. I ensured I took an empathetic approach and I did my best to support students on this committee since it was essential we took into consideration the precarious situations of students who could not afford UPass or not use it due to COVID-19 and how this has impacted them.

COVID-19 Enhanced Travel Plan:

The outgoing VP Finance Corbett Gildersleve and myself worked and consulted with Student Care to get additional coverage for students who have been impacted by COVID-19. The current Student Care plan was changed to accommodate particularly international students who had to travel or pay out of pocket for additional expenses . This coverage was also retroactive to the Fall semester so students could get reimbursed for travel costs such as airfare, travel, hotels etc. It was important to make these adjustments to our plan since we know international students have been impacted greatly throughout the pandemic.

As of Sept. 1, 2020, Studentcare and the SFSS worked together to increase the travel coverage maximum of \$5,000,000 and ensure it applied to COVID-19-related medical expenses for travelers (under the age of 50), even during a Level Three <u>Travel Advisory</u> ("avoid non-essential travel") issued by the Government of Canada. This was the first of its kind in student health plans in Canada.

Board Organizer Hiring Committee:

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. In the new year we were able to wrap up the interview process and work with the new position to ensure continued onboarding of the new governance model for the next council year.

HCS Updated Resources:

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.

Link to updated resources: <u>Indigenous Student Resources</u> Personal resource for students: <u>Resource made by Matt</u>

Collective Agreement Bargaining with CUPE 3338

Our collective agreement with our unionized staff has expired and has been since 2019. It was a goal to re-negotiate our collective agreement, and ensure we re-established an agreement that supported and improved our relationship with our employees. I was motivated to be a part of the bargaining committee. We reviewed our current agreement and have done sessions to better understand the importance of the CA.

Co-Curricular Record for At-Large Members on SFSS Committee:

At the end of the year I worked with our staff to ensure our at-large members on SFSS committee members got recognition through co-curricular record. This was to recognize the time and commitment our at-large members have done by having this on their Co-curricular transcript. This document is recognized by the university and can help support students in the future for professional and personal development. This includes the extra-curricular activities that students are involved in outside of academics.

I worked with their staff to coordinate and create a timeline in order to properly promote and delegate committee chairs to ensure their at-large members apply by the deadline. I developed the survey with staff and sent it to respective committees. Wellness Working Group:

I wanted to prioritize student wellness within our society. Especially during the pandemic we understand how hard it has been for students, the Wellness Working Group was established to find ways to better students' wellbeing. We have designated seats for SFU Health and Counselling Services as well as students who want to be a part of advocating and supporting wellbeing initiatives. We have addressed a few areas of where to focus and have been meeting bi-weekly, we have set realistic goals and have been researching and compiling resources to better support our membership.

Issues Policies:

To end the year off I completed my goal of drafting the Issue Policy for Indigenous Inclusion and Reconciliation. This policy was done with community members and the First Nation Students Association board members, I worked also with board members to re-read over what was written. This document I believe encompasses the way Indigenous policy should be written, I wanted to convey as much as I could ensure that for future Indigenous students they could have the support they need with the SFSS. This project was very sentimental to me because I wanted to create space for Indigenous students to be recognized and affirmed as well have this work done in a good way.

To truly commit to reconciliation these are the ways in which we have to dismantle systematic problems that are long lasting and impact for long term. The ability to have policy recognized especially within organizational structures is key to addressing how we decolonize and work towards equity for BIPOC folks.

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Other Works

Some of the other projects that I have been working on and apart of will be ongoing into my next portfolio as VP External and Community Affairs but for reference I have been working on and sitting on:

- Surrey Director Search Committee
- Vice Provost Indigenous Committee
- Consultations for Athletics Team Name Change
- COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign
- External Resources Compilation

These projects and committees will be ongoing and I am looking forward to be apart of this important work!

Recommendations

Ask for support when needed:

This includes staff, other board members, community support. There is nothing wrong with asking for help and you're not expected to know everything especially with these positions a lot of the time you are learning on the job. When you ask for support you are ensuring that you are doing the best you can for your job and this is essential for this position because most of the time you are collaborating and working with others. Understanding that teamwork makes the dream work is an absolute must!

Make time for yourself!

Especially while working make sure you take breaks from the computer, your phone, remember to eat. Even if it's just a few minutes, take needed breaks. While working remotely and online especially sometimes it's difficult to take breaks or allocate time for what you need. But I strongly believe that you can not take care of others until you can take care of yourself!

Find passion projects:

Projects that mean something to you, these can be incorporated into the work you do and set strong goals for what you want to accomplish. There are specific things that you need to do within your portfolio but you can branch outside of this and find things and collaborations that are also important to you.

Do your work reports, semester reports, exit reports early. Please don't be like me LOL.

Have fun, this is a great job, talk to students, ask how they are, say thank you to the staff, be appreciative of the opportunity that students wanted you to represent them. It means alot to be elected and if you ever have hard days or frustrations or feelings of being overwhelmed just know that those people wanted you to hear and don't second guess your ability.

Final Thoughts

Kiitsiksimatsitsi (thank you) membership for giving me the amazing opportunity to represent you this year, I truly did this position with the intention of creating change and doing this work with an open heart and open mind. I have had an amazing experience and sometimes I look back on how crazy this year has been. I think about the students a lot and I also want to commend all of you for doing what you could despite the circumstances. I hope that myself and the other board members fulfilled some of your expectations.

I hope that the student society is somewhere that is safe and welcoming for you, I hope that you know we all worked really hard this year, and we did it with the best intentions. I feel so privileged and humbled and I cannot express in words how much of a positive experience this has been for me.

I am looking forward to continuing this work as your current VP External and Community Affairs. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you ever have any questions, I am always open and willing to listen.

- Matt