This report is intended to meet the requirements as contained in the SFSS Bylaws for a final report on any election or referendum held by the SFSS.

Elections and Referenda Report

SFSS Executive Election – 2021

Commissioners:

Catherine Qi

Begum Yuksel

Jason Thiara

Kelsey Lucente

Chief Commissioner:

Farhan Shahriar

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TIMELINE

Electoral Period	Start Date	End Date
Notice of Election Period	January 11, 2021	January 17, 2021
Nomination Period	January 18, 2021	January 31, 2021
Campaign Period	February 1, 2021	February 14, 2021
Voting Period	February 16, 2021	February 18, 2021
Post-Election Period	February 12, 2021	March 12, 2021

CANDIDATES

PRESIDENT

Candidate Name	Votes in Favour ('Yes' votes if uncontested)	Votes Against ('No' votes if uncontested)	Elected
Gabe Liosis	598	355	X

VICE-PRESIDENT INTERNAL AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Candidate Name	Votes in Favour ('Yes' votes if uncontested)	Votes Against ('No' votes if uncontested)	Elected
Ronit Chawla	302	n/a	
Corbett Gildersleve	599	n/a	X

VICE-PRESIDENT FINANCE AND SERVICES

Candidate Name	Votes in Favour ('Yes' votes if uncontested)	Votes Against ('No' votes if uncontested)	Elected
Cole Gorst	396	n/a	
Almas Phangura	482	n/a	X

VICE-PRESIDENT UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Candidate Name	Votes in Favour ('Yes' votes if uncontested)	Votes Against ('No' votes if uncontested)	Elected
Serena Bains	633	256	X

VICE-PRESIDENT EXTERNAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Candidate Name	Votes in Favour ('Yes' votes if uncontested)	Votes Against ('No' votes if uncontested)	Elected
Matthew Provost	577	n/a	X
Karan Sharda	306	n/a	

VICE-PRESIDENT EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Candidate Name	Votes in Favour ('Yes' votes if uncontested)	Votes Against ('No' votes if uncontested)	Elected
Marie Haddad	555	n/a	X
Avneet Kaur	290	n/a	

VICE-PRESIDENT EVENTS AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Candidate Name	Votes in Favour ('Yes' votes if uncontested)	Votes Against ('No' votes if uncontested)	Elected
Pooria Arab	97	n/a	
Gerard Corr	168	n/a	
Jess Dela Cruz	524	n/a	X
Jyotnoor Kanwar	101	n/a	

REFERENDUM QUESTIONS

1. SFSS INVESTMENT RESTRICTIONS BY-LAW

Question	Do you agree to add the following by-law? 1. All direct investments made by the Society shall be fossil fuel free, which includes oil, gas and coal producers, pipeline companies, natural gas distribution utilities, and liquefied natural gas operations. 2. All Indirect investment is limited to equities whose company only derives at most 5% of their gross revenue from fossil fuel investments **Yes/No**
Votes in Favour	732
Votes Against	195
Threshold for Passing	Two-thirds majority
Results *Pass/Fail*	**FAIL - failed to meet quorum**

2. SFSS BY-LAW CHANGES

Question	Do you agree to make the following changes to the SFSS By-Laws? o Change all references to "Society Act" with "Societies Act" o Change By-Law 4(10)(b) to read "Be an ex-officio voting member of all Committees of Council." o Add a clause to By-Law 4(11) that reads "Shall train and advise the incoming Vice-President Internal and Organizational Development." o Amend By-Law 6(16)(d) to read "Act as a liaison between their Student Union, Constituency Group, or Affiliated Student Group, and Council," o Add a subsection under By-Law 6(24) that reads "If a Councillor represents an Affiliated Student Group, their Alternates must be a member of their respective Affiliated Student Group." o In By-Law 10, replace "If the members of a proposed Student Union" with "If members of a faculty or department unrecognized by Council" o Create a subsection under By-Law 15(23) that reads "if the voting period is set to fall during the University's reading break, the voting period shall be postponed to the next week of regularly scheduled classes" o Add a section under By-Law 16 that reads "By-elections shall not be scheduled during the University's reading break" o Add "In accordance with By-Law 16," at the beginning of By-Law 16(8)(b) o Amend By-Law 17(5)(b) to read "in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Union, Constituency Group, or Affiliated Student Group the Councillor represents." o Replace the word "by-laws" in By-Law 19(1)(b) with "constitution". **Yes/No**
Votes in Favour	737
Votes Against	131
Threshold for Passing	Two-thirds majority
Results *Pass/Fail*	**FAIL - failed to meet quorum**

3. SFSS By-Law Order Change

Question	Do you agree with changing the current order of the SFSS By-Laws to the following:
	o By-Law 1: Interpretations
	o By-Law 2: Membership
	o By-Law 3: Powers, Duties and Obligations of Members
	o By-Law 4: Powers, Duties and Obligations of Members' Meetings
	o By-Law 5: Council
	o By-Law 6: Powers, Duties and Obligations of Council
	o By-Law 7: Powers, Duties and Obligations of the Executive Committee
	o By-Law 8: Student Unions
	o By-Law 9: Student Union Levies
	o By-Law 10: Constituency Groups
	o By-Law 11: Auditors
	o By-Law 12: Amendments
	o By-Law 13: Elections
	o By-Law 14: By-Elections
	o By-Law 15: Resignation, Impeachment, or Abandonment
	o By-Law 16: Referenda
	o By-Law 17: Accountability in External Provincial and National Student Organizations
	o By-Law 18: The Seal of the Society
	o By-Law 19: Dissolution
	o By-Law 20: Records
	o By-Law 21: Prohibitions on Discrimination
	o By-Law 22: Primacy of By-Laws
	Yes/No
Votes in Favour	738
Votes Against	118
Threshold for Passing	Two-thirds majority
Results *Pass/Fail*	**FAIL - failed to meet quorum**

4. SFSS BY-LAW ADDITIONS

Question	Do you agree to add the following bylaws? **Add to Bylaw 1 – Interpretations** o "Administrator" means a person who is employed by the Society on a permanent or temporary contract and who is union-excluded. o "Hourly wage equivalent" means an annual salary divided by 70 biweekly hours divided by 26pay periods. o "Legacy employment contracts" means employment contracts entered into by the SFSS before May 1, 2021. o "General Fund" means the Society fund that receives the Student Society Membership Fee **Create a By-Law titled "SFSS Administrator Cost Restrictions"** 1. An administrator's "hourly wage equivalent" cannot be more than 2.5 times the hourly wage of a "student staff" as defined and established in the most recent Collective Agreement for the SFSS's unionized employees. 2. The combined salaries of all administrators, excluding the cost of benefits, shall be no greater than 10% of the total revenue from the General Fund or $300,000, whichever is larger. 3. Legacy employment contracts for administrators are excluded from the wage caps established in subitems (1) and (2). **Yes/No**
Votes in Favour	773
Votes Against	100
Threshold for Passing	Two-thirds majority
Results *Pass/Fail*	**FAIL - failed to meet quorum**

COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINT 1 – CAMPAIGNING DURING VOTING PERIOD

Electoral Regulation	CP-3.2, CP-3.4
Description	The seven candidates of the "SFU Progressives", as well as Avneet Virk, were found to be campaigning through social media once the voting period had begun (February 16-18, 2021). The posts were advertising the SFU Progressives slate and reminding their followers to vote.
Material Evidence	● Screenshots of timestamped Instagram posts by Jess Dela Cruz, Matthew Provost, ● Screenshots of timestamped Facebook posts by Avneet Virk ●
Finding	X Founded ☐Not founded
Infraction Stage	X Stage 1 ☐Stage 2 ☐Stage 3
Penalty	X Censure (written statement to candidate in question) ☐Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) ☐Disqualification
Rationale	After receiving a complaint regarding campaigning during the voting period, the IEC sent a reminder to all the candidates, stating that we are currently in the voting period and social media posts aimed at convincing others to vote for a candidate is considered campaigning ,which is prohibited during the voting period. The email stated that any formal complaints submitted that posts made during voting period should be removed immediately and not removing the posts would be considered a stage 1 infraction. After sending this email to all candidates, we received formal complaints that posts made by @Jess4vpesa (Jess Dela Cruz), @Matt4vpx (Matthew Provost), @gabeliosis4pres (Gabe Liosis), @sfu.progresssives, and Avneet Virk had not been removed, nearly eight hours after the reminder email was sent. These candidates were sent notices of stage 1 infractions.

COMPLAINT 2 – NON-COMPLIANCE OF STAGE 1 INFRACTION

Electoral Regulation	VP-3.5, VP-3.6
Description	The candidates of the "SFU Progressives" that were given formal stage 1 infraction notices did not comply with our orders to remove the posts made during the voting period. Formal complaints were received that posts made by members of the SFU Progressives were still posted, a day after stage 1 infraction notices were delivered.
Material Evidence	● Screenshots of timestamped Instagram posts by @gabeliosis4pres (Gabe Liosis), @Jess4vpesa (Jess Dela Cruz), @sfu.progresssives ● ●
Finding	X Founded ☐Not founded
Infraction Stage	☐Stage 1 X Stage 2 ☐Stage 3
Penalty	☐Censure (written statement to candidate in question) X Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) ☐Disqualification
Rationale	The candidates in question had received a notice of their infraction and did not follow our ruling. The IEC had conversations over email with several of these candidates who were confused over the ruling but still did not remove their posts, meaning that they all had read the first notice and did not comply after reading it. As the Instagram page for the entire SFU Progressives slate contained posts advertising for all seven of the candidates, they were included in this infraction.

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

This year the IEC received multiple emails about how a slated group has continued to Campaign outside the stated Campaign Period. Upon further investigation the IEC has found that to be true. As there was no clearly written Law in the Policy Book for the ability to Campaign through digital means after the campaign period is over, the IEC found it difficult to also take measurable actions. The current IEC hopes that the next IEC members implement a strict campaigning policy for the repercussion of sharing or posting on social media platforms which includes stories and blog posts, after the Campaigning Period has ended. We also hope that the Elections and Referenda Policies can be adopted to reflect the current online environment, as it was difficult to communicate between the IEC, SFSS staff, and the candidates, as well as our ability to conduct outreach to classes, clubs, and student unions. Also, the IEC encountered problems due to the ambiguity of some of the definitions of words in the By-Law and Policy that created "loopholes" for different interpretations. It led to candidates using the words for their own goods and complaints. Revisions are needed to eliminate loopholes and future problems in regard to the policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1 – COMMUNICATION

Issue	The Commissioner Chief's email and the other email for the Commissioners were not in sync and the email contents were inconsistent. The Commissioners could not reply to the emails efficiently as it was needed to double check with the Chief to see if the email was already responded to.
Recommendation	We recommend that the IEC Chief Commissioner and Commissioners use one single email. This will ensure consistency between the IEC when responding to email inquiries and handling nomination packages. This will also make it easier for candidates and SFSS members as they will only need to be emailing one single email account.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUM POLICY & BY-LAWS

Issue	Certain amounts of words used in the Elections and Referendum Policy and the By-Laws can be interpreted in numerous ways and caused misunderstandings and "loopholes". Some of the definitions created for the vocabularies were ambiguous and needed updates to correspond with our current online election environment (i.e. campaign material, social media).
Recommendation	We recommend to do a careful review and revision of the current Policy and By-Laws to avert future problems that may occur due to the ambiguity of words.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – IEC REGULATIONS

Issue	The option for a separate IEC Regulation document was inoperative. We were given the choice to draft a separate regulation four weeks before the nomination period but it was impossible for us to do so as we just got hired and did not get the chance to learn about IEC yet. Additionally, some of the problems that we encountered during the election period were not foreseeable and it is pointless to have a regulation drafted beforehand.
Recommendation	We also propose that during the Orientation the IEC are made familiar with previous complaints and aware of the deadline for the IEC Regulations change. Alternatively, we recommend amending the deadline for the IEC Regulations to a later date.

PRE-ELECTION

RECOMMENDATION 4 – IEC MANUAL & ORIENTATION

Issue	The IEC felt overwhelmed with Election Structure and Information during the first few weeks.
Recommendation	We recommend that SFSS reorganize the documents and have the previous Chief mentor and be present during the IEC Orientation as well as mentor the IEC during the first few weeks. We also recommend that the IEC be provided multiple Orientations during the first few weeks of the hire.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – SYNCHRONOUS CANDIDATE ORIENTATION

Issue	Candidates were not fully aware of the regulations and policies. They were also not clear about how to send in Complaint to the IEC.
Recommendation	We recommend that the candidate orientation is done synchronously over Zoom or Google Meet, if in-person meetings are not possible. This will ensure that the candidates are aware of the regulations and are clear on what is allowed. It will also prevent complaints and infractions in later periods, as candidates will be able to ask questions in real-time to clear up any confusion regarding the policies and regulations.

NOMINATION PERIOD

RECOMMENDATION 6 – MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Issue	As we shifted to online learning, the methods to engage more members and promote the elections that were used before for in-person elections (i.e. club visits, student union visits, class visits) were highly ineffective. We tried to reach out to numerous clubs, student unions and classes. But due to the change in class/ club structure, the response rate was considerably low.
Recommendation	An updated and clear methods of engagement for the IEC to follow will be present in the IEC Manual. This will ensure consistency and effectiveness in the outreach. The IEC suggests utilizing other engagement methods, such as an Instagram takeover on the SFSS Instagram in order to reach a broader audience.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – MARKETING PLATFORM

Issue	The Social Media platform (Instagram Account) for promoting the election was not effective as the account only had less than 100 followers. We attempted to get more followers but were not successful.
Recommendation	We highly recommend the SFSS give the IEC access to the SFSS main Instagram and Facebook handle to ensure maximum outreach and efficient awareness campaigns.

CAMPAIGN & VOTING PERIOD

RECOMMENDATION 8 – CAMPAIGN APPROVAL PROCESS

Issue	The candidates' campaigns were approved by first-come-first-serve method. It created misunderstandings and presented the IEC as favoring candidates.
Recommendation	The campaigns should be approved at the same time to avoid complaints about the process. All the confirmation of candidate emails should be sent out during the same period.

RECOMMENDATION 9 – ONLINE DEBATE

Issue	Debate's turnover was low and more marketing and incentive should be presented by the SFSS as our marketing channel (IEC Instagram) was not effective. During the debate, some candidates were acting out of conduct despite us informing them about the housekeeping rules.
Recommendation	Regulations about the debate should be created as online debates are significantly harder to oversee. Additionally, IEC should be given greater control over marketing the debate in order to conduct outreach with groups that we are already engaging with, which can increase the turn-out of the debate.

RECOMMENDATION 11 – SOCIAL MEDIA

Issue	As we moved to online elections, social media was a huge problem as to controlling campaign materials and to monitor if they are following the regulations.
Recommendation	Limitations need to be placed on the platforms that can be used for campaigning. The IEC proposes that the Board amends the definitions of "Campaign Literature" to include social media and implement stronger procedures for how the IEC monitors social media. This will eliminate any technicalities in the Elections and Referenda Policies and will not require candidates to police each other's social media, as the IEC will be able to monitor social media in a more effective manner.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The current online environment has definitely made the work of the IEC a little more challenging. I came into the position of the IEC having no previous experience with the Simon Fraser Student Society. Me and the rest of the IEC found it a little challenging figuring out all the rules and terms that will be used during the course of the election cycle. The IEC also found it difficult to organize and communicate effectively to the students because of the chain of communications that were present to us. I would recommend the society take a closer look at the resources and policies that are present for the IEC, and make it easier to learn, especially for those individuals who have no prior experience with the IEC.

Farhan Shahriar

IEC Chief Commissioner