

**simon fraser**  
**student society**

**EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER'S  
SEMESTER  
REPORT**



**Gabe Liosis**  
**President**  
**May 2021 - Aug 2021**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Summer 2021 semester was transformational, not only within the SFSS, but societally. We faced the threat of the third wave of COVID-19, as well as the fourth wave, while preparing to return to in-person learning for the Fall 2021 semester.

I served on the Board of Directors last year. However, this year has definitely presented its fair share of challenges, but also its fair share of successes and good moments, too.

I ran for President with the experience of being an executive officer of the SFSS. The skills and knowledge that I learned last year have been invaluable in my ability to serve in this position now. But there are simply some things that you cannot prepare for. This job involves a lot of learning on the spot, and being able to adapt and be malleable.

There were a lot of changes that happened in the last 4 months, both internally and within the university community. Within our organization, we embarked on a journey into a new governance structure that the SFSS hasn't adopted before. Within the University, we experienced the collective anxiety of having to return back to campus for the fall semester despite COVID-19 still posing a threat.

With all this being said, being an executive of the SFSS continues to be one of the greatest honours of my life and a passion of mine that I continue to hold. I work alongside an incredible team of executives that I work with everyday that inspire me and push me to be better. I am also supported and uplifted by an incredible, hardworking, and dedicated staff team.

I'm excited for you to read my semester report, which provides an overview of the projects that I have and continue to work on in my capacity as President of the Simon Fraser Student Society.

In solidarity,

Gabe Liosis  
President, Simon Fraser Student Society

# COMPLETED PROJECTS



## Training & Onboarding

### Council Onboarding & Training

During the first few weeks of May 2021, I was heavily involved in the planning of a robust and effective onboarding training program for incoming councillors. This is the first time, under the society's new governance structure, that Council plays such an important role in the governance of the organization. Because of this, we needed Councillors to be well equipped with the knowledge and information necessary to perform the duties that are required of a director of a society.

Even before my term started on May 1st 2021, alongside the incoming VP Internal and Organizational Development Corbett Gildersleve, I started planning what the structure of the training was going to look like.

As a final result, Councillors ended up participating in eight separate onboarding sessions, each focussing on a different topic and subject matter. This included:

- legal responsibilities of directors,
- Society governance,
- an overview of our bylaws,
- an overview of unionized work environments, and Collective agreements,
- Society finances,
- Robert's Rules of Order, and
- Equity and anti-oppression training.

I was excited to host and facilitate two of these onboarding sessions. The first of which was the [overview session of our bylaws](#). As a member of last year's board of directors, I was a champion of the bylaw changes that empowered Council to become the society's main decision-making body. Therefore, it was thrilling to be able to share the vision of how the society functions under this new system with the first counsellors to be members of this new and refurbished governing body. The second onboarding session that I facilitated surrounded how [Robert's Rules of Order](#)

are used to help facilitate decision-making and Council meetings and committee meetings.

## HR & Personnel Sub-Committee Training

The President of the Simon Fraser student Society, as per our bylaws and our Collective Agreement, serves as the Staff Liaison Officer. Council, as the legal board of directors, collectively serves as the employer of our staff. However, because Council is such a large body, Council appoints one person to serve as Staff Liaison Officer in order to be the main liaison between staff members and the elected members of council.

As Staff Liaison Officer, the President also serves as the Chair of an Executive subcommittee called the Human Resources and Personnel Sub-Committee, which is tasked with guiding the president in their role as the liaison between Council and staff.

This subcommittee plays a critical role in maintaining the operations of the organization. Because of this, our policies outline criteria of what training members of the subcommittee need to receive during the first month in office.

The Operations Organizer, Ayesha Khan, and I organized the training session for members of the subcommittee, which happened in June. This training session included topics such as:

- the role of the subcommittee;
- the structure of the organization including the relationship between student leadership and staff;
- the various permanent full-time, permanent part-time staff, and temporary staff that we employ;
- Best practices;
- strategic approaches to recruiting, retention, and hiring;
- Effective employee onboarding;
- employee growth strategies and opportunities;
- critical Equity lenses; communication and conflict resolution;
- any important governing documents related to Society operations.

## Board Organizer Onboarding & Training

Shortly before I became President, the Simon Fraser Student Society hired Ella Droko as the Board Organizer -- 1 of 3 union-excluded staff positions. As President, the Board Organizer reports directly to me, so I was very involved in her onboarding.

Topics covered during the onboarding session included:

- the vision for the board organizer position;
- the recent administrative and governance restructurings about took place the previous fiscal year;
- the structure of the society;
- the reporting structure between the president, board organizer, executive committee, and Council;
- the supervision of the administrative Department;
- some history and evolution of the society over the last couple of years;
- the recent by Law changes that occurred during the previous fiscal year;
- and the work from home environment during the pandemic

## Associate-Vice President Onboarding & Training Sessions

In April 2021, the Board of Directors passed various policy amendments in order to maintain compliance with the new bylaw changes that were passed at the 2020 SFSS Annual General Meeting. As part of this policy overhaul, the Board introduced new volunteer positions called Associate Vice-Presidents. When created, these positions were based on other student societies policies that had similar positions.

Over the first few months of the summer semester, various members of the Executive Committee decided to recruit and appoint an Associate Vice-Presidents. This included the Vice-President University and Academic Affairs, the Vice-President External and Community Affairs, the Vice President Events and Student Affairs, and the President.

After each of these appointments, I participated, alongside their respective Vice-President, in an onboarding session of each new Associate Vice-Presidents, where they were introduced to the role. Topics covered during these sessions included:

- the bylaws and each executive portfolio;
- policy on associate vice presidents;
- the relationship between a vice presidents and their associate vice-president;
- brainstorming on how to build a reciprocal and supportive relationship;
- and other topics relating to each respective executive committee portfolio.

With the recent bylaw changes that mandated a more hands-on role of Executive Committee Officers in the day-to-day management of the Society, Associate Vice-Presidents play a vital role in providing extra support to executive committee members. I am really excited that this policy was introduced by the previous Board of Directors, and I think it will be incredibly beneficial to future Executive Committees.

## Staff Onboarding & Training

The summer semester was filled with various hiring initiatives. We had many staff members move on from the sfss, but we also created a wide variety of new staff positions to improve our services and advocacy to our members.

Once a new staff member is hired with the Society, they undergo a thorough training and onboarding program. As President and Staff Liaison Officer, I have the great honour of being one of the first people that each new staff member is introduced to in their first few days as a member of the sfss staff team.

Over the summer semester, I engaged in onboarding sessions for various new staff positions including:

- the student advocacy coordinator,
- the communications coordinator,
- the policy and research coordinator,
- the building coordinators,
- the out on campus programming assistant,
- administrative assistants, and
- the women Center assistant.

During these onboarding sessions, my role is to provide an overview of the structure of our organization. This includes explaining the relationship between our membership, Council, the Executive Committee, Student Unions, Constituency Groups, Affiliated Student Groups, and staff. I also provide an overview of points of contact within the organization.

These onboarding sessions with new staff can range from 30 minutes to an hour in length.

## Onboarding Councillors Elected in By-Elections

Due to the nature of Council Representative positions, and the high turnover of folks elected into these roles, many Councillors enter into their roles mid-semester, meaning that they were not present for the full Council training sessions during the first weeks of May 2021.

Therefore, every time a new student is elected to Council, myself and Corbett, as president and the VP Internal and Organizational Development, meet with newly elected Councillors to introduce them to their roles. This includes information such as:

- the duties and responsibilities of a council representative;
- the structure of the society;
- the governing documents of the society, including the bylaws, policies, and the Societies Act;
- Council meetings;
- Council committees;
- key points of contact;
- staff;
- and much more.

Over the course of the summer semester, I engaged in about five of these onboarding sessions for newly elected Council Representatives.

## Training Sessions for Committee Chairs

I helped facilitate and plan two separate sessions during the summer semester related to training folks to chair committees.

I served as a member of Council from September 2019 to April 2020, and served as Council Chair from January 2020 to April 2020. During my term as Vice-President University Relations during the 2020/21 Board of Directors, I served as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, Chair of Governance Committee, Chair of the University and Academic Affairs Committee, and Chair of the Transition Steering Committee. I have gained lots of experience serving in the capacity of a Chair over the last couple of years, and I felt well equipped to host these training sessions for folks who have never served as a Committee Chair Before.

In June 2021, I worked with the Vice-President Internal & Organizational Development Corbett Gildersleve to plan a committee chair training session for members of the Executive Committee, who are the main members of Council to serve as Committee Chairs.

In August 2021, I personally planned and facilitated a separate committee training session for all members of Council, regardless of whether you were a Committee Chair, Vice Chair, or we're just curious on what the role entailed. You can watch a recording of the session [here](#).

Each of these sessions included various topics, including:

- the role of the chair before, during, and after meetings;
- how to effectively use Robert's Rules of Order In A Team setting;
- the staff support available to you as a committee chair;
- and how to effectively prepare for meetings.



These sessions were quite successful, and I enjoyed facilitating them.

## Student Union Building

### Student Union Building Opening Plan Working Group

During the 2020-2021 board of directors, I was appointed the chair of a newly-established working group tasked with creating an opening plan for the Student Union Building.

The jurisdiction of the working group included developing and recommending various actions for Council to take in regards to the opening of the Student Union Building. This was a very broad and complex mandate for the working group. Because of this, it involved contributions from various different parts of our organization, including members of the Executive Committee and staff.

The working group met many times during the summer semester: twice in May, once in June, and twice in July. Initial meetings surrounded creating a plan for the months leading up to the opening of the Student Union Building in the Fall. As this was a very large project, we needed to be very intentional about how we were going to move forward so that we didn't get swept up by the overwhelming nature of the task we were about to undertake.

We broke up our timeline into three stages: the planning stage, the consultation stage, and the approval stage. The longest of these three stages was the planning stage. During the planning stage, the working group was further divided into countless subcategories, each with their own mandate and focus -- each led by a different person. The subcategories included:

- building and projects;
- operations and staff;
- Services;
- room bookings;
- events;
- Covid-19 safety; and
- Communications.

Out of the subcategories, I was the lead for the Operations and Staff subcategory and the COVID-19 Safety subcategory.

You can view the full Student Union building opening plan [here](#).

## Soft Opening Week

The Student Union Building officially opened to the public on August 23rd, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and safety concerns, the Executive Committee opted not to do a grand opening until at least January 2021, depending on the situation left COVID-19 at the time. However, we did hold a variety of soft opening events, organized and led by the VP Events and Student Affairs Jess Dela Cruz.

As part of this week of soft opening, we invited a variety of community members and stakeholders for speeches and building tours. This included Indigenous Elders and community members, past and present board members and Councillors, SFU staff and administration, and SFU alumni. I had the wonderful privilege of opening each of these sessions -- reflecting on the amount of time, work, and energy that was put into making the Student Union Building a reality.

## Fire Evacuation Training

SFSS and Executives participated in a fire evacuation training session in the event that there is a fire alarm or fire drill in the Student Union building.

## In-Person Event Guidelines

Before the start of the Fall 2021 semester, I worked closely with the VP Events and Student Affairs, as well as our Member Services Coordinators, in developing and implementing in-person event guidelines, as clubs and student unions were required to hold all their events virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the large majority of the pandemic, the society's stance was to maintain the safety and well-being of our membership -- which required that all events be held virtually. Over the summer however Public Health orders began rapidly changing to allow for more social Gatherings and events. As a result of that, we became more confident and allowed our members to organize limited and controlled amounts of events.

I cannot wait for the day where we can once again have events and gatherings without having to worry about extra restrictions and limitations. However, recognizing that COVID-19 is still very much in existence, our stance is to always be extra cautious in ensuring the safety and well-being of our members.

## Guidelines for Hybrid In-Person/Virtual Meetings

Over the pandemic, all SFSS meetings have been held virtually. With a return to mainly in-person activities for the fall semester, we needed a plan for holding safe in-person meetings once this happened.

Recognizing that everyone is moving at their own pace, we have heavily invested in equipment and resources to hold hybrid meetings where attendees can attend in person or virtually, concurrently.

I was the main lead in developing a set of guidelines for how hybrid meetings could be held in a way that is accessible, safe, and effective for all attendees. These guidelines were approved by the executive committee.

## University Relations

### Monthly Meetings with SFU President Joy Johnson

As SFSS president, I have regularly scheduled monthly meetings with the President of SFU to bring forward major concerns that I am hearing from undergraduate students. This is a critical channel where I can speak directly with Joy Johnson to try and bring forward real change.

During the summer semester, this was a critical channel where I could bring forward concerns regarding the return to campus and COVID-19 safety measures to keep students safe. We also discussed topics such as ensuring the safety of Palestinian students, the cluster hire of 15 black faculty members, as well as SFU's commitment to reconciliation and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.

### Black Faculty Cluster Hire

I had a role to play in this initiative in two different capacities. Firstly, as a member of the SFU Senate, I brought forward and pushed this motion on behalf of former sfss president and senator Osob Mohamed, whose term on sun it expired in June 2021. Secondly, as SFSS President, I wanted SFSS to bolster this campaign as much as possible. Our Executive Committee voted to endorse the motion.

The goal of this motion was to combat the extreme under-representation of Black folks within faculty positions, by hiring 15 Black faculty members in a cluster hire. This motion was initially proposed in February 2021, but the SFU Administration failed to make it a priority, which is why it didn't make it to the Senate floor until September 2021.

Although we were disappointed with the significant delay and this being brought forward, it inevitably ended up passing with overwhelming support from senators. Now, we must continue to push SFU to prioritize this higher and make sure that it is done in a timely and effective way.

SFSS Executive Committee Statement:

<https://sfss.ca/sfss-executive-committee-endorses-senate-motion-to-hire-15-black-faculty-and-support-black-communities-on-campus/>

## Committees

### Council

As President, I serve as the Chair of Council. In this role, I am tasked with creating and distributing meeting agendas to council members, facilitating meetings, and providing general support to members of council. Over the summer semester, Council meetings were held 100% virtually due to the pandemic.

The summer semester was a critical time for the SFSS council, as these were the first few months that Council was taking on the role of the main decision-making body of the Society. However, at the end of the day, I was very excited and happy that members of Council were extremely excited and engaged in our meetings.

The whole purpose of this new governance structure was to expand the democratic process by including more voices within the Society's top decision-making body. Although this means that our meetings are often 4-5 hours in length, I believe that by including more voices at the table, especially from Constituency Groups such as SOCA, FNSA, and DNDA, that we end up making better decisions that better represent the will of students.

### Executive Committee

As President, I also serve as the Chair of the Executive Committee. In this role, I am responsible for creating and distributing meeting agendas to Executive Committee members, facilitating meetings, and providing general support to members of the Executive Committee.

Under our new system of governance this year, the Executive Committee plays a critical role in the day-to-day management of the society. As per our bylaws, the Executive Committee has the powers of Council and may exercise those powers in between meetings of Council, with key limitations.

A few key areas that the Executive Committee focused on during the summer semester included supporting and participating in the various hiring committees required to fill key staff vacancies, developing the Student Union Building opening plan, developing guidelines for in-person meetings and events for fall 2021, and many other HR and operations focused tasks.

The Executive Committee, although it's only a committee of 7, often has meetings that last around 3 hours or more, and we meet on a biweekly basis.

## HR & Personnel Sub-Committee

The President of the Simon Fraser Student Society, as per our bylaws and our Collective Agreement, serves as the Staff Liaison Officer. Council, as the legal Board of Directors, collectively serves as the employer of our staff. However, because Council is such a large body, it appoints one person to serve as Staff Liaison Officer to be the main liaison between staff members and the elected members of Council.

As Staff Liaison Officer, the President is the Chair of an Executive subcommittee called the HR & Personnel Sub-Committee, which is tasked with guiding the president in their role as the liaison between Council and staff.

The subcommittee typically meets on an ad-hoc basis, although with the amount of hiring and operations focussed work we've been engaging in as a society, the subcommittee is beginning to meet on a biweekly basis until things slow down.

## Policy, Research, and Community Affairs Coordinator (PRCAC) Hiring Committee

I served as one of two employer Representatives on the hiring committee for the new position of Policy, Research, and Community Affairs Coordinator (PRCAC), alongside the Vice-President Internal & Organizational Development Corbett Gildersleve.

The hiring process for this hiring committee was actually quite smooth, as we inevitably hired an applicant who already worked for the society as a research assistant within the policy research and campaigns office.

## Staff Liaison Officer

### Collective Agreement Negotiations

As the SFSS is a unionized work environment, we have a Collective Agreement with the Union that represents our staff. The previous Collective Agreement expired in 2019, and we initiated a new round of Collective Agreement negotiations in February 2021.

Prior to being elected president, the members of the bargaining committee for the employer included Osob Mohamed, former SFSS President; Corbett Gildersleve, then VP Finance; and Matt Provost, then VP Student Services. Collective Agreement negotiations did not complete before the end of the last elected board term, and therefore, I took over as a

member of the bargaining committee of the employer in Osob's place. Corbett and Matt remained on the bargaining committee as they were both re-elected to the Executive Committee.

Collective Agreement bargaining is a big time commitment. Often, it includes putting in long hours and long days. For multiple weeks over the summer semester, we would have all day bargaining sessions, starting at 9 a.m. and ending around 4 p.m. .

Collective Agreement negotiations continue into the fall 2021 semester.

## Establishing New Staff Positions & Modifying Job Descriptions

With the opening of the Student Union Building, there was a need to expand our staff team to adjust to the increase in services and operational capacity of the society. The Operations Organizer, Ayesha Khan, and I worked on developing various new staff positions, which included the Building Coordinator position and the Building Assistant position.

We also modified multiple job descriptions including the MSC-Events position to include more building focussed tasks, and the Out on Campus (OOC) Coordinator job description position to better reflect the support that the out on campus coordinator should be providing the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

## Media Interviews

### CTV News (COVID-19 University Protocols)

<https://bc.ctvnews.ca/sfu-biology-department-breaks-ranks-with-school-on-covid-19-protocols-1.5546933>

### CBC News - (SUB Opening & COVID-19, Return to Campus)

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-91-the-early-edition/clip/15862021-new-sfu-student-union-building>

### Global News (COVID-19, Return to Campus)

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8138052/bc-post-secondary-vaccines-covid-19/>

### CKNW Talk Radio (COVID-19, Return to Campus)

<http://globalnews.ca/pages/audio-vault-cknw/> (Navigate to the time stamp 35:00, August 25)

## Global News (COVID-19, Return to Campus)

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8168085/covid-19-ubc-move-in-day/>

## Press Release - Calls to Action for SFU Administration

<https://sfss.ca/simon-fraser-university-student-concerns-with-return-to-campus-plans/>

<https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/sfu-students-call-on-administration-to-implement-better-safety-measures>

## Black Faculty Hire (CBC, News 1130, Burnaby Beacon, one more?)

<https://sfss.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Press-Release-Black-Faculty-Hiring-1.pdf>

<https://www.citynews1130.com/2021/09/14/sfu-commitment-hiring-black-faculty/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/sfu-increasing-black-representation-on-faculty-1.6174786>

<https://burnabybeacon.com/article/sfu-black-faculty/>

## CBC (Climate Justice Mural)

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-91-the-early-edition/clip/15869196-sfu-students-pushing-administration-implement-strong-climate-action>

# ON-GOING PROJECTS



## Committees, Chairships, and Meetings - Internal

### Council (Chair)

A core project but I am working on in my capacity as Council Chair includes determining how to hold hybrid meetings in an accessible and effective manner. Due to the return to campus, we are in a weird spot where some folks prefer attending meetings virtually and some prefer attending in person. Therefore, I am working on a project to determine the best way to hold hybrid Council meetings in a way that's accessible for everyone.

### Council Development Sessions

I will continue to attend bi-weekly Council Development Sessions alongside all other members of Council.

### Bi-Weekly Check-Ins with the Vice Chair of Council

Before every bi-weekly council meeting, I have a brief 30 minute check in with the Vice Chair of Council to provide an overview of the Council agenda and any areas of support I feel that I may need during the meeting. I found these meetings to be incredibly helpful. When the Chair and Vice Chair are on the same page going into a meeting, it can result in a productive and thoughtful meeting.

I highly recommend that future Presidents and future Council Vice chairs do these by weekly check-ins before Council meetings, as I have found them very helpful.

### Executive Committee (Chair)

I will continue to attend and chair bi-weekly executive committee meetings.



## Executive Committee Development Sessions

The Executive Committee meets bi-weekly, on weeks where we do not have an official executive committee meeting, to have an informal working session to work on projects and give each other updates on work that are engaging in within our portfolios.

These development sessions are fairly new, but have proven to be incredibly efficient in providing a forum for executive committee members to work together and to be on the same page when it comes to large projects that are ongoing.

I look forward to continuing discussions in the fall semester!

## HR & Personnel Sub-Committee (Chair)

I will continue to attend and Chair bi-weekly HRP subcommittee meetings.

## Staff Meetings (Chair)

As President and Staff Liaison Officer, I am responsible for chairing our monthly staff meeting.

The Executive Committee recently passed a resolution that committed the entire executive committee to attend staff meetings alongside the President and Staff Liaison Officer.

I, alongside the rest of the Executive Committee members, will continue to attend these monthly staff meetings.

## Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) (Co-Chair)

As President and Staff Liaison Officer, I served as a Co-Chair of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) alongside a unionized staff member.

I will continue to Co-Chair and attend these monthly JHSC meetings.

## Out on Campus (OOC) Coordinator Hiring Committee

The Out on Campus Coordinator Hiring Committee began in the summer semester. We engaged in a first round of interviews, but decided that none of the candidates met the criteria that we were looking for in a successful candidate, and therefore we

have reopened the job posting for a second round of interviews. Therefore, this hiring committee continues into the Fall 2021 semester as an ongoing project.

## Temporary Financial Coordinator Hiring Committee

The Temporary Financial Coordinator hiring committee began in the summer semester, and continues into the Fall 2021 semester as an ongoing project.

## Weekly Check-Ins with Union-Excluded Staff

On a weekly basis, I have check-ins individually with the Board Organizer and the Operations Organizer. Here, we each provide each other updates on projects and initiatives we are working on and what support is needed within those projects and initiatives. These weekly check-ins are critical in staying connected and up-to-date on the day-to-day operations of a society, and contribute to a sense of collaboration between the Executive and Union-Excluded staff.

## Committees, Chairships, and Meetings - University

### Joint Operations Group (JOG) (Co-Chair)

JOG serves as a critical for us to bring forward concerns from the undergraduate student body directly to the University Administration. JOG meets on a monthly basis for approximately 1.5 hours long each meeting. This past semester, we brought forward a number of important issues forward, such as student concerns with the return to campus, the University's delaying of the black faculty cluster hire motion to the Senate, and more.

I serve as a Co-Chair of JOG, and will continue to attend these meetings on a monthly basis alongside the Vice-President Equity & Sustainability and the Vice-President University and Academic Affairs.

### Student Affordability Plan working Group (Co-Chair)

The Student Affordability Plan Working Group is a subcommittee of JOG, with the main purpose of providing a forum for the students societies and the University to collaborate on projects to decrease the cost of university life for students, on anything non tuition related.

As the Vice-President University Relations on the Board of Directors last year, I was a member of this working group, and it has a lot of potential to effect real change in regards to student affordability.

The working group met only once during the summer semester, and was put on pause due to the need to focus mainly on the fall return to campus planning, for both the university and the student societies.

I am looking forward to continuing the good work of this working group in the fall 2021 semester.

## Projects, Campaigns, and Advocacy

### Return to Campus Advocacy

Even though we have officially returned to in-person learning, there is a lot of work that the university needs to do in order to truly make this return to campus accessible for all. The SFSS will continue to push the calls to action encompassed under the access for all campaign that Council endorsed.

<https://sfss.ca/accessible-course-practices-campaign-updates/>

<https://the-peak.ca/2021/06/access-for-all-advocates-for-sfu-to-provide-a-safer-environment-proposal-in-their-return-to-campus-plan/>

### Gondola Advocacy

We are in a really pivotal moment when it comes to advocating for the Burnaby Mountain gondola project. If Burnaby city council does not vote to endorse the Burnaby Mountain gondola by the end of 2021, it may be a very long time before we can secure funding to build the Burnaby Mountain gondola.

I intend to organize a campaign around pushing Burnaby City Council to endorse the project, so that this long away to Transit projects can move forward for the betterment of the university community.

### Strategic Planning

Our current 3 year strategic plan has expired. During the summer 2021 semester, Council voted to move forward with the creation of a five-year strategic plan. I will continue to work with the board organizer to move forward the strategic planning process during the fall 2021 semester, with the goal of approving a new strategic Plan before the end of the fiscal year.

### Accessibility Improvement Project

The VP internal and organizational development and I brought forward a proposal to council to initiate an accessibility improvements project for the forum Chambers and the SFSS

Underground. This project was tasked to the newly established Space Oversight Committee, and I look forward to initiating this project during the fall 2021 semester.

# PAIN POINTS



# RECOMMENDATIONS



## Relationship Building

- I recommend reaching out to as many people as possible in the early days of your presidency. Schedule informal Coffee chats. Set your intentions for the year. I recommend doing this as soon as possible before things get too busy. Sometimes informal coffee chats are the most satisfying and gratifying times you'll experience as an SFSS Executive.

## Mental Health

The summer 2021 semester presented many challenges for me in terms of maintaining my mental health. Balancing the position of president while maintaining strong mental health was a challenge. It's still a work-in-progress for me, but I've come to learn a few things about how to take care of yourself while being in a position like this:

- Google Calendar is your friend! It is amazing what good time management can do to help maintain your mental health. If you have a strong structure built for your day, you're less likely to feel anxious and on uneven footing.
- Remember to schedule the small things in your day, such as meals, exercise, and rest. If you don't prioritize these, it's very easy to get swept up in the busyness of the day, and start to abdicate certain things such as eating, sleeping, or exercising.
- Remember to take breaks, and don't feel guilty about it. When you're in positions like these, you're bound to overwork yourself and burn out. The goal is to be proactive about taking breaks, so that you don't end up burning out.

But when you do need to step away, prioritize yourself. I ended up having to take a two-week leave of absence in July because my mental health ended up being in a very precarious position, and it was affecting my ability to do this job to the best of my ability. I came back re-energized and ready to tackle what needed to be done.

- I recommend taking as few classes as possible when you're an SFSS executive. I took two classes in the summer, and it was very difficult to balance my homework with my SFSS workload. For the Fall 2021 semester, I decided to take no classes.
- Set a time when you log off technology at night, or else it is very likely that you'll be tempted to do work until late hours of the night or early hours of the morning.
- I recommend that if you're an SFSS executive, that you consider signing up for counselling. Even if you're someone that has never thought counselling as an option, I think it's a good idea to be proactive about your mental health before it gets bad. This year was the first time I had ever attended counselling, but it really helped improve my mental health so that I could continue doing this job in a good way.

## Logistical

- I recommend that from the start of your term you are very intentional about what projects you want to work on. Set goals for yourself. Be conservative about the amount of projects you want to work on, and expect the unexpected. Choose one or two large projects that you want to work on, and focus heavily on those, instead of taking on countless small projects and not being able to focus on each of them to the best of your ability.
- One thing that really helped me when I became President was the transition meetings I had with the former President. I recommend future Presidents to do the best that you can to help the incoming President with her new position. Being President of a Student Society very well could be the hardest job that one has in their lifetime, and being able to lean on the experience of someone who has been in the position already is invaluable.

## Time Management

- Once again, Google Calendar is your friend! Use it!
- I recommend scheduling buffers between all your meetings, where possible. For example, I always try to schedule at least 30 minutes between each meeting to personally debrief, write down notes, record action items, or simply catch my breath. Now that we're in person, it also provides me enough time to walk between locations where I may be having meetings.

- Start your work reports early! It helps no one if you leave your work report blank for the entire month, and then scramble to complete your work report 1 hour before midnight on the day it is due. I've started filling out my work report at the end of each day, so then I'm not scrambling to finish it the day it is due.
- Work on your semester report consistently throughout the semester. For the Fall 2021 semester, I've decided to schedule 1 hour every Friday afternoon to add information to my semester report, so it's not so overwhelming at the end of each semester.
- There is no such thing as starting a project too early! If you know you want to work on a project, start thinking about the logistics of how you want to execute that project. Let people know ahead of time that you want to work on it. Especially if you need staff support, let staff know as far in advance as possible that you'll need their help, so that things aren't left to the last minute.

## Council and Committee Meetings

- When it comes to Charing Council meetings, I have made it a habit to leave the 1 hour before each council meeting so that I can prepare for the meeting. This leaves me enough time to prepare what I want to say in the meetings, gather the agenda and documents for the meeting, and open the zoom room in time to leave flexibility in the event of technical difficulties.
- I recommend having a check in meeting with the vice chair of council before each council meeting. During these check-ins, discuss with each other what support you need in running the meeting
- You don't have to Chair the entire meeting! In fact, I recommend allowing your vice-chair to chair at least a small portion of each meeting, not only to allow yourself to rest, but to give them practice in using Robert's Rules of Order in an official meeting setting.
- Have a copy of Robert's Rules, the SFSS bylaws, and Council policies with you at all times during Council meetings. You'll never know when you need to refer to them during a meeting.