

simon fraser
student society

**EXECUTIVE
OFFICER'S
SEMESTER
REPORT**



Matthew Provost
**VP External &
Community Affairs**
May 2021 - Aug 2021



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Executive Summary



Oki Niiksokowaiks (Hello Friends),

Niitaniko Naatsikapamotoosin, Nomohtootoo Piikani, Kainai, Siksika Blackfoot Territory Treaty 7 Southern Alberta. Kiitsiksimatsitsi xwməθkwəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Sel̓l̓wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh), kwikwəł'əm (Kwikwetlem) and q̓icə'y (Katzie) Nations. Hello! My name is Matthew Provost. I am an uninvited guest on Coast Salish Territories and I come from Blackfoot territory. I am glad to be able to share with you some of the work I have been able to do as your Vice-President External and Community Affairs. I am thankful to once again serve on the SFSS Council on the Executive Committee. I feel very privileged to be able to continue to do this work with an open heart and open mind for our community members and centre on advocacy and supporting students. As an Indigenous student I take this opportunity with very high regard since it is important to me to be able to share this work with you and have ongoing support and trust in my work.

For my portfolio this year I wanted to work on utilizing the VP External role to build community relationships, further reconciliation efforts, and support students with off campus resources. The current role of the VP External is mandated to inform students on issues and campaigns that are external to the University. Advance external advocacy and campaigns through lobbying the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governing bodies around student concerns to see equitable change that supports our membership.

This past Summer Semester I was chair of the External & Community Affairs committee, and current Co-Chair of the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour

committee. I have also been on the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee as well as supporting various campaigns.

This past semester there has been a lot of change for the Society while moving to Council, and the soft-opening of the Student Union Building. I have found myself navigating COVID and moving to hybrid working which has been different since last year my role was all online and remote. There are a lot of changes I have found transitioning from the Student Services portfolio into the External and Community Affairs role. I have found myself taking on past projects from my predecessor Samad Raza, as well as creating new projects and taking on new initiatives outlined in my campaign.

I am looking forward to sharing with you some projects that have happened over the summer and work that has taken place. It has been a very packed summer with many different things as well as changes. Thank you for your support and please do not hesitate to reach out or say Oki/ Hello if you see me on campus!

Respectfully,

Matthew Provost

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Provost', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Completed Projects



Appointment of Associate Vice-President External & Community Affairs:

On May 25th at the Executive Committee ratified the nomination brought forth from myself to appoint Nimrit Basra as the inaugural Associate Vice President External and Community Affairs for 2021-2022.

This role is intended to be support for the VP External in various capacities, and that support will be provided by the AVP External in meetings, research, committee support etc.

- Since this we have completed the onboarding process, and outlined the role
- Released a stated on the SFSS website which you can read [here](#) discussing the appointment

Indigenous Solidarity and Community Support:

On May 27th 2021 we heard the Simon Fraser Student Society heard the news of the unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. I proposed to the Executive that we show solidarity with our Indigenous community to support through online resources during this time.

This was one of the first campaigns during the summer semester that I led and organized with support from the Executive. This has been an ongoing initiative that was throughout the summer. There have been numerous initiatives that

have come from the SFSS that have been intertwined in this work to continue our reconciliation efforts.

We knew it was essential to respond in a timely manner to what was happening and provide culturally relevant resources to Indigenous community members within the SFSS. We also organized a small vigil in front of the Student Union Building and live streamed it so students could participate remotely due to COVID-19 protocols at the time. We ran a digital campaign and continued to share resources from SFU Community members such as Indigenous Student Centre. We also called for action items for SFU to lower the flags to half mass in respect for the community members impacted.

We called on the university to ensure that urgency was taken with regards to the news, as well as commitments to be better allies with Indigenous communities.

[Read Statement Here: RE: Acknowledgement of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Residential School Survivors and all Indigenous People\(s\)](#)

Indigenous Day Digital Campaign:

For National Indigenous People(s) Day which is June 21 also known as summer solstice, we ran a digital campaign online to support and educate community members about the significance of this day.

As the SFSS we have done our best to continuously support Indigenous community members in whatever capacity we can. We wanted to recognize community members and celebrate Indigenous excellence. We outlined how we wanted to support this year while also acknowledging June as Indigenous History Month. We were able to compile resources, and curate Indigenous creators, artists, and authors that were circulated on our social media.

[Read Statement Here: RE: SFSS Indigenous Day Statement](#)

Indian Residential School Survivors and Commitments to Reconciliation:

As the summer progressed the ongoing news of unmarked graves and support for Indigenous communities was essential. I was able to propose areas of commitments that the SFSS council could take in regards to furthering our work in reconciliation.

The ongoing implications of the IRS are being witnessed present day, and the harms are still ongoing and this is currently re-traumatizing our Indigenous community members. The numerous unmarked graves of Indigenous children will continue to rise and we need to hold accountability to the government of so-called Canada. During these times we also need to ensure that we properly and adequately support Indigenous community members and survivors of the IRS schools and folks who suffer from the intergenerational trauma that stems from the imposition of colonial violence.

As a student society that is progressive and centers advocacy, we need to take proactive action to amplify the voices of Indigenous community members and support in ways that can help address the harms that have occurred. It is our collective responsibility to support and not repeat history.

The Council then passed the motion to also contribute \$6000.00 to the Indian Residential School Survivors Society to support their work.

Here are the commitments I recommended to Council:

1. Task the 2021-2022 Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour Committee as well as include Indigenous community members in drafting internal SFSS Calls to Action in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
 - a. The BIPOC Committee has already worked with the TRC document and has done extensive work with reconciliation efforts within the year

2. SFSS Council donates \$6000.00 to the Indian Residential School Survivors Society
3. SFSS continues to advocate and push back on acts of genocide and colonialism that has impacted Indigenous People(s)
4. Support and amplify Calls to Action from Indigenous communities in all capacities, including letters of supports, sharing resources, donations, and taking individual action to educate ourselves on these ongoing issues
5. Condemn the so-called canadian government for:
 - a. denying acts of genocide against Indigenous People(s)
 - b. fighting cases that are brought against the government by IRS survivors
6. Stand in solidarity with Indigenous People(s) and continue to advocate for justice and recognition

Motion I presented to Council on June 25th, 2021:

Indian Residential School Survivors and Commitments to Reconciliation:

Whereas on May 27th, 2021 Tk'emlups te Secwepemc leadership released an official statement regarding the findings of 215 unmarked graves on the grounds of Kamloops Indian Residential School.,

Whereas on June 24, 2021 Cowessess First Nation Chief Cadmus Delorme announced in a press conference that 751 unmarked graves were found on the grounds at the former Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan,

Whereas it is roughly estimated that there are currently over 1300 unmarked graves across so-called canada, and it is estimated that the number will continue to grow in the coming months and years,

Whereas the recent news of these unmarked graves of Indigenous children who attended Indian Residential Schools are currently impacting our Indigenous communities across Turtle Island mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually,

Whereas the Simon Fraser Student Society is committed to pushing back against colonial practices that still impact Indigenous students in post-secondary institutions and is committed to supporting Indigenous students to learn in a safe and supportive environment within SFU,

Be it resolved that the 2021-2022 SFSS Council continue to stand in solidarity with Indigenous students and communities during these times of grief,

Be it further resolved that the SFSS Council task the 2021-2022 the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour Committee as well as include Indigenous community members in drafting internal SFSS Calls to Action in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to further mandate and support reconciliation efforts to address the systemic issues that are embedded in all colonial institutions,

Be it resolved that Council continue to support and amplify Calls to Action from Indigenous communities in all capacities, including letters of supports, sharing resources, donations, and taking individual action to educate ourselves on these ongoing issues,

Be it further resolved that the SFSS Council donates \$6000.00 to the Indian Residential School Survivors Society from the appropriate line item to be determined from VP Finance and Services to further support those who have been negatively impacted by the Indian residential school system that was imposed by the so-called canadian government,

Be it further resolved that the SFSS continues to advocate and push back on acts of genocide and colonialism that has impacted Indigenous People(s) since contact, this includes but not limited to: the condemnation of the so-called canadian government denying acts of genocide against Indigenous People(s) of Turtle Island; calling on the so-called canadian governments to stop fighting cases that are brought against the government by Indian Residential School survivors; amplifying Indigenous students and organizers calls in our lobbying and advocacy efforts and other such actions.

Read the full briefing note [here](#).

#CancelCanadaDay Campaign

In continuing our work with upholding our commitment to reconciliation efforts and standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities we supported #CancelCanadaDay. There was a motion proposed for the SFSS to support #CancelCanadaDay as well as to consider and reflect our participation with this specific "holiday" that actively perpetuates harm and celebrates the ongoing colonialism and genocide against Indigenous People(s).

I supported this campaign to help research and bring context for the motion, as well as voice the importance of taking a stance to support and amplify Indigenous voices. The SFSS Executive voiced support for this since this is also reflected in our Issues Policies.

To note, there will be ongoing work to this campaign but for context the work that I contributed was specifically to the briefing note as well as motion at hand that was brought forward to council. This motion also directly correlated with the Indian Residential School Survivors Society since this was also brought forth. As mentioned earlier the society took the stance to urge members to educate themselves on the actual history of this colonial state and how this is still impacting Indigenous communities present day. It is essential that we do our best to advocate and work towards upholding Indigenous led initiatives to properly support reconciliation efforts.

Read the full briefing note [here](#).

In-Person Event Guidelines:

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well transitioning back for the Fall semester, we have been working internally to establish In-Person Event guidelines for Departmental Student Unions (DSU's), Clubs, and Constituency groups.

This has been an ongoing working group between various executives and staff to create recommendations on how we will be following Provincial Health Guidelines for events that will be happening. The SFSS has received requests as well as information on how it will be moving forward for allowing in person events since in the previous board term they were suspended due to the pandemic and safety of all community members. We wanted to ensure that we were prioritizing student safety as well as we provided support for DSU's, clubs and groups to have events for the Fall Semester.

My role in this was to provide feedback and suggestions to how we could improve as well as implement guidelines for safe return of events. We were able to create guidelines that DSU's Clubs, and Constituency groups would follow to ensure we are prioritizing safety of their members. I supported this initiative so that we would be able to transition back to in person programming.

- We created a checklist for events that would be happening in person and formalized processes
- We were able to allocate supplies such as sanitizer, and masks if needed
- Implementation of contact tracing if in person events occur

Read the full document [here](#).

UAC Student Association Caucus (UAC-SAC) Appointment:

For the 2021-2022 I have been appointed through an election to be a representative for the Simon Fraser Student Society as the Representative of this Caucus. My predecessor was the Chair for this last year. UAC-SAC is mandated to advocate on issues related to the U-Pass BC Program on behalf of all students in the Metro-Vancouver area.

Here are some key point directly from the terms of reference:

- *Joint re-negotiation of U-Pass BC agreements*
- *Providing feedback on issues and concerns related to the U-Pass BC program and the UAC*
- *Coordinating research on public transit and the U-Pass BC program*
- *Providing coordinated communications to student association governing bodies, students, and the media in regards to the U-Pass BC program*
- *Coordinated stakeholder relations (i.e. government, Translink, etc.) in regards to the U-Pass BC program*

For the duration of the year I will be the representative on behalf of the society to advocate on U-Pass related issues that are brought forth by our membership and continue this work with updates as well as briefs on my meetings when they

are called. I will also collaboratively work on other projects with other societies in regards to campaigns.

Student Union Building Soft Opening:

On August 23rd, we had the Soft Opening for the Student Union Building which is led by Jess Dela Cruz. I was in support of this at various capacities, this was a huge accomplishment for our Council to be the ones to have the opportunity to open the building and be the first Executive's to welcome community members in the building.

There were a lot of logistics to consider with the soft opening such as COVID-19 protocol, and ensuring we were being inclusive to folks invited. We had a week of scheduled small opening events every day.

In regards to what I was involved in, I was there everyday to welcome folks in and give a small talk into the history of the Student Union Building as a former Constituency group member. Also to acknowledge the amount of work that has been done in regards to the SUB Space Campaign. Prior to being on the SFSS executive committee I was on the First Nation Student Association board as a representative, and active member of the Rotunda community. Last year on the board of 2020-21 we made it a priority to support student groups on campus that supported marginalized groups since before this there was a reluctance to give groups space at the time. These groups included Simon Fraser Public Interest Resource Group, Student of African and Caribbean Ancestry, and CJSF Radio Station. This accomplishment will shape the ways in which the SFSS supports communities and groups that support students in the future. I also want to acknowledge that on the first day of the opening we invited Indigenous community members first to open our building in a good way, we had elders present in the morning as well as Indigenous singers from community, the FNSEA, and Indigenous Student Centre present. We wanted to correct the ways in which the SFSS lacked on including Indigenous community members and set precedence for welcoming our Indigenous communities.

Elder Shane Pointe gave an opening and gave a blessing to the ballroom space. This was a huge honour to be able to have this done, as well as prioritize and respect Indigenous protocol on the territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), sə́lilwə́taʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), kʷikwə́łəm (Kwikwetlem), and Katzie Nations.

For the duration of the week I helped with the set up and take down of the events as well as supported with tours and pictures for each group that came. In regards to the planning I was able to invite key stakeholders and community members for that week which included:

- Burnaby Mayor Mike Hurley
- MLA for Burnaby-Lougheed Katrina Chen
- Elder Margaret from sə́lilwə́taʔt (Tsleil-Waututh)
- Elder Shane Pointe from xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam)

Nominating Committee Appointments for Summer:

For the second year I was appointed on the Nominating Committee, as well as appointed as Vice-Chair. The mandate of this committee is to be non-partisan in the recommendations from student committee applications for our SFSS committees. From here we organized and made our recommendations and worked with committee chairs. We reviewed applications and sent relevant information to chairs. We continue to have committee appointments to fill vacant seats as this sometimes occurs throughout the year.

We were able to fill seats for the summer semester for at-large positions, we found that online applications as well as online engagement is difficult so we will be doing another online push for applications as well as reminders at council meetings and hopefully in person.

Recommendations:

- Communicate with all committee chairs and consolidate all questions that have been submitted for respective committee
- Make shared drive folder for all committees and applicants
- Check in with committee chairs to fill vacancies

Surrey Director Search Committee:

For the duration of the Summer I was on the Surrey Director Search Committee, prior to being the incumbent VP External I was appointed on this committee. There was a lot of work that occurred over the summer and I was able to provide feedback and direction to who we would be looking at as a candidate to fill this position. The committee was composed of various SFU community members from various roles around the university.

There were several meetings to discuss the job description, roles and responsibilities, as well as candidate ideals in relation to the Surrey Campus Community. I am thankful to be considered to have input on these positions and be able to help support. My capacity was limited later on in the summer semester but I did my best to navigate on which meetings to attend as well as candidate town halls. This committee met very frequently and sometimes I could not make meetings but was up to date on the documents and relevant information that was sent my way. I also think it's important to note that students should always be included in these processes due to hirings and these positions are intended to support students in respect to these campuses. It's important to hear student input since at the end of the day these positions are here for us and our academic experience so we can all succeed. Especially with students who have experiences at any campus their voices need to be included since they understand their own needs in regards to services and resources in these spaces.

Recommendations:

- Advocate for more student positions in search committee spaces

- Ensure that more BIPOC folks have space as well within students, faculty, and staff

Federal Elections Campaign:

This Summer there was a snap election called in regards to the Federal Elections, as per my role as VP External and Community Affairs it is my responsibility to ensure that myself as well as the External and community Affairs committee is up to date with these events since it is directly related to student engagement.

We prepared in advance and were keeping up to date with any news of the elections being called. We did not have an exact day but we needed to ensure that we had various information in place as well as a head start on planning information for students.

Campaign logistics:

For the SFSS to participate in the federal elections processes we actually had to apply as a third party through Elections Canada to roll information around the elections. This was a lengthy process and actually delayed our ability to get out information to membership.

We were unable to share any information until our application was approved, and since it was a snap election we had to wait until it was called to actually submit our application to be processed. So some key things to keep in mind ensure that this application is filled out as soon as possible as well as Elections Canada is really specific in what they need for the form:

- No electronic signatures
- You also need VP Finance and Services to fill this out
- We also need to ensure we have a separate account that is specifically for Federal Elections
- We can only spend at most \$500.00 specifically for the use Federal Elections

Due to the elections being called there were many barriers that we found, one was the application process but then to find out that there were no polling stations on campus made it difficult so we prepped information on registration for students as well as we planned to have tabling for the week before elections were happening. Most of the digital content was in place except for our print campaign. We actually only had a month to promote and we did our best under the circumstances we were in.

From what was completed in the summer semester:

- Application for Third Party for the SFSS
- Pre-planning digital content
- Working with External and Community Affairs and prepping how we will complete the campaign throughout the month of September until election day

On-going Projects



Bargaining

January 29th appointments of the bargaining committee happened in my previous semester as VP Student Services, this was from the previous Board of Directors prior to the merger with Council. As the Executives our Bargaining committee was composed of Osob Mohamed (President 2020-2021), Corbett Gildersleve (VP Finance 2020-2021), myself (VP Student Services 2020-2021), and Ayesha Khan (Operations Organizer).

As the employer representatives as well as sitting on the Human Resources and Personnel Committee, to my understanding it was our responsibility to represent the society in the bargaining process of the collective agreement with Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 3338. My role on the committee was to support the proposals that were presented from the SFSS. Prior to even the bargaining process we reviewed our current Collective Agreement which actually expired back in August of 2019. There were numerous proposals that needed to be adjusted to our policies and by-laws from the previous Annual General Meeting that was held in the Fall of 2020. After reviewing and familiarizing myself with the proposals on our end, Ayesha set the initial days for bargaining.

This has been my first time representing as the employer as well as learning the process of bargaining. I would like to say that I believe this is an essential part of building relationships with our unionized staff, especially as the employer. The collective agreement ultimately supports and protects our unionized staff and I would highly recommend being familiar with this document since it outlines in

detail responsibilities, and the due diligence we have to support our staff in various capacities.

We continued the bargaining process throughout the summer semester and it was condensed down to a week as well as one off days later on in the term. At this point these were the most available days, and we were able to get to some of the last of our proposals. From this point we were still in the bargaining process throughout the summer and it is hopefully expected to finalize this within the fall semester. From this point we were able to have a presentation for Council for updates on bargaining as well as a review of our collective agreement with CUPE 3338.

After bargaining is finalized we will be writing a report on our experience as a committee and follow up what to expect when the next SFSS Council has to take up the work of bargaining the Collective Agreement in the future.

We have been able to:

- Set Bargaining Dates
- Give updates to Council
- Continue the bargaining process

Federal Elections Campaign

As stated earlier in this report the federal elections have been called and the campaign will actually be finalized in the fall semester before September 20th since that will be election day. From this point we have solidified a plan to finalize this campaign and I have been having support from the External and Community Affairs Committee.

The snap elections have made it difficult to ensure we notify all members and reminders to vote, but from this point we will run a digital and print campaign. From here I have been developing content for this campaign and compiling

resources from the Elections Canada website to ensure students are informed on the processes as well as having options for mail in ballots, and registering to vote, and knowing where the nearest polling station is since our campus will not have these.

What will be expected:

- Tabling within the SUB week before the election
- Scheduling ECA committee for tabling dates
- Postering preparation
- Digital media campaign working with our communications department

External Resources for Students

For my portfolio and projects that I would like to take on this year is a continuing project of building student resources that are external to the SFSS. This has been broken down into different sectors of resources which include:

- Mental Wellness
- Student Affordability such as housing
- Food Security

I have been working on this project to compile a resource list for students in the lower mainland. This project is inclusive of ensuring that students are aware of resources in their area, and ensuring that they are affordable and accessible. Also this encompasses building external relationships which is a component of my portfolio and role. I found it important to ensure that students know about what they can access because I understand that the SFSS has resources but I also know how it is important to access things that are outside just ensure they are culturally relevant and supportive. Some things I have considered are looking into student housing subsidies, food banks that are closer for students, mental wellness resources that are low barrier or even free.

My goals for this project is to create this resource list and have an area on our website that is accessible and updated so that students are aware of what is

around them. Right now I am still in early stages due to other work that has been pressing in my role but I hope to have this completed by spring before my term is up.

External and Community Affairs Committee Development Sessions

For this year's External and Community Affairs Committee, I have been prepping internal development sessions to work with committee members on being ready for lobby days as well as campaigns for the year.

I have been coordinating with Ella, our Board Organizer as well as other support staff to create these as well as resources for the committee. Right now we have in progress:

- Public Speaking
- Campaigns 101
- Lobbying 101
- Writing Lobby Briefs
- Reviewing Reports and Research

The purpose of these internal development sessions are to ensure that ECA committee members understand the work we will be doing as well as building on skills that I hope will support them even outside of the committee and SFSS. I want to build support within the committee to ensure that members feel supported and prepared for when we go to lobby days in the Spring Semester. I also want to note that we have working sessions within our committee meetings that are mandated specifically for these development sessions so that we are able to work together. I also hope that this is something that continues moving forward for the ECA committee since folks even with myself are learning these skills while in the role.

Vice-Provost Indigenous Search Committee

During the summer semester I have put my name forward to sit on the Search Committee for the inaugural VPI. This search committee started this summer semester and will be ongoing in the fall. I have put my name forward to sit on this search committee since this will be a key role in supporting and working on Indigenous centered work within the institution.

We have been developing the role within the job description as well as expectations we have for this position. We have been able to address responsibilities and support that SFU will provide for this role. This committee has been composed of various Indigenous community members as well as the ability to have Indigenous student participation.

We are still in the interim stages of this committee, and this will be ongoing for the duration of the fall semester.

First Peoples Gathering House Committee

After much advocacy from Indigenous students and community we have seen more transparency in regards to including student voices on the First Peoples Gathering House. I have been following up with this committee and attending open houses, as well as meetings in the processes of the FPGH. Consultation has been a key priority due to this space being intended for Indigenous students as well Indigenous community and the process of this space being established needed to centre and amplify the voices of our community members.

Key Items:

- Establishment of the Users Committee for FPGH and Indigenous student seats on this to have direct input and deliberation on the project

TSSU joint Statement regarding Residential Schools

This has been an ongoing project to establish this joint letter with various community members on campus. The Teaching Support Staff Union, Graduate Student Society, and the Simon Fraser Student Society have been working to create a statement in solidarity with Indigenous communities and holding accountability to various stakeholders that state they are working towards “reconciliation”.

This is ongoing due to ensuring that we are sensitive to the topics discussed as well as working with various groups to contribute.

Student Wellness Working Group

To continue the work of supporting students in mental wellness initiatives I am continuing to chair the wellness working group. In regards to the summer it was a bit inactive but will continue in the next semester as well. I have been following up with the previous minutes we had prior to me being the VP External. I will continue to reach out and find folks who are willing to participate in the work to support students in their wellbeing.

Pain Points



Burnout

This is challenging to address in regards to burnout. This semester was relatively fine, I have found myself experiencing burnout a few times already. The workload of an executive is quite a bit to commit to. I will also say there are multiple moving pieces that you are responsible for that some folks really do not understand until you are in the role itself. In regards to burn out I have found that in regards to my role a key take away from this is the emotional that comes with the role i.e. in regards to advocacy work. The advocacy work takes a lot of labour and throughout the summer some of my work has been focused on the Indian Residential Schools, community building, as well as support for students impacted by these occurrences. I will also note that even the ability to have emotionally draining conversations at meetings, events, programming as well as members of Council, our members as other folks I have found this is also just as draining. This is a part of my role and I have a hard time taking a step back simply due to ensuring this work is being completed. I have found although there are challenges I know that it is essential in regards to supporting community members and raising awareness on such issues that impact our students.

Planning for the semester

It has been quite difficult to plan as well as ensure that we follow through on some aspects of our annual plan simply due to the multiple tasks that the Executive has to do. We have had an influx of hires, as well as bargaining, and the transition of Council. I think a key thing is just not being able to sit down and walk through how to get from point a to point b or even the end goal. As well as I

have found some issues with transitional positions from the last VP External and items of continuity. I also have noticed that in regards to our roles there are various time sensitive things that come up that need our attention so sometimes it is difficult to only focus on one single project or campaign. To combat this I have taken a few full days to just sit and plan what needs to be done and steps in between specifically for the VP External portfolio as well as the External and Community Affairs Committee. I have created two separate working spaces in Notion for myself and the committee to streamline our work, campaigns, and key items that will be upcoming. I hope to see improvement in this area after there is a solid framework to finish off most of our main items.

Transition back to in-person

Transitioning back into person has definitely been different, I would not say it is a pain because I actually like having the opportunity to do this role in person. I would like to add that the stress of COVID has actually increased my own anxiety in various ways. I have found that the amount of front facing work we do sometimes is hard because of COVID as well. Also being able to work remotely has had its benefits but also challenges in the same respect. Learning how to navigate a hybrid environment is something we are all adjusting to and I know that I am not the only one who feels like this. With the transition back to campus there have been many discussions around safety, COVID protocol, as well as safety measures that are put in place but there is still stress caused just due to the uncertainty.

Recommendations



Write things down

One thing I have found helpful is to actually have a physical notebook beside while I am working to set daily tasks as well as future to do's and check this throughout the day. I have found that even with the online environment and notifications and digital tools I have found some simplicity in the ability to check this off and keep a written record of work that I have been doing or need to complete. I have tried different productivity tools online but I have found that when I have something written and in front of me I am more likely to get it done, not get off task, and less overwhelmed by the workload.

Goal Setting

As this will be my second year on the executive I have made a way in which I approached my portfolio in regards to projects and campaigns. One thing I would recommend is setting some goals one for the entire year like huge projects you would like to complete. I suggest having 1-3 things you hope to accomplish. After that break it down into things you have to do for your portfolio i.e. for myself I know have to do Lobby days and chair External and Community Affairs committee. Set some goals here that are doable by semester 1-2 things that seem manageable because in this role things come up unexpectedly. Lastly I would suggest keeping track by breaking them down how to get to this point for example:

I wanted to run a campaign for Orange Shirt Day:

- My goal for this was to create and lead OSD campaign

How I outlined this:

- Where do I start, what will I need, who will I work with:

To answer this question:

- I want to write a statement, I want to have printed material, and tangible items such as stickers, buttons, t-shirts etc..

I planned this in advance by adding it in my calendar and setting reminders for when things need to be done. At this point I included the folks I wanted to work with and from there I outlined what I needed to do in order to have a successful campaign.

Take Breaks

This is easier said than done, especially if you do not have the ability to take leave of absences or days off. I would recommend that you take advantage that this job is flexible, there is no harm in blocking off a morning if you need to, or even just taking up some work in the evening or weekend to fill in gaps. When you need a break it's better to let folks know before. Set boundaries with your co-workers and compromises are okay but make sure that you prioritize how you are feeling in order to do this role effectively. Let others know that if you need the morning or whatever day off so that you can either take it for yourself or to just get work done alone with no distractions. This could be helpful because sometimes we get caught up supporting others or taking on work that we do not have the capacity to handle. This is why we are a Council so that others can help our when needed and do not feel bad if you need this space.

Other Relevant Documents



[VP External & Community Affairs Submitted Motions & Discussion Items](#)

- This document outlines all the current motions, discussion items, presentations for Council as well as Committees that I am apart for the year.