
Content Warning: Racism, anti-Black sentiment

Dear SFSS Members,

On July 29, 2022, an incitement of violence occurred on an online messaging platform utilized by members of the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) Council. This incident targeted members of SFU Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry (SOCA), who operate the Black Student Support Centre (BSSC) housed within the Student Union Building (SUB).

We want to begin with identifying a few pieces of information to share with membership:

- The incident was rooted in an anti-Black comment made by a former SFSS Councillor towards Black community members, targeting SOCA's space within the SUB.
- The SOCA President raised the emergency safety concern to SFU Campus Public Safety (CPS) who then notified the SFSS Building Team.
- On the day of the incident, SFU CPS, SOCA and the SFSS Building Team worked together to ensure that any safety needs of SOCA were being met.

To be very clear, the SFSS does not take any comments like this lightly and does not condone threats of violence and/or bullying to our members. Especially from our Councillors.

The SFSS condemns anti-Black racism in all forms and stands in solidarity with SOCA and the larger Black community on campus.

[As outlined in IP-8 of the SFSS Issues Policies on Anti-Racism, the SFSS opposes “tolerating or platforming hate speech, including within the guise of ‘free speech’ and ‘academic freedom.’”](#) The Society wishes to reinforce to the student body that we stand firmly on our Issues Policies. We will continue to have internal conversations with Council to educate how our Issues Policies are in place to mitigate any harm towards marginalised and racialized SFU community members.

We want to acknowledge how unacceptable this situation was and the additional harm caused to community members because of our delay in response. The traumatic impact it has caused Black community members on campus is beyond what we could imagine as an organization. The SFSS does not stand by the former Councillor's statement, and are taking the appropriate steps to remedy this harm. Furthermore, the Councillor has since resigned from Council. Although the former Councillor has expressed remorse internally, the Society has requested an official apology from the Councillor to SOCA. However, as President, I sincerely apologize to all members of SOCA, and the Black SFU community at large for the harm these comments have caused.

We are committed to working with SOCA to create a safe environment within the BSSC, and the entire campus community. This incident has prompted the Society to strengthen our internal response plans to emergencies such as these. This includes mandatory emergency response training for all SFSS staff members, and prioritizing anti-oppression education for all Councillors via our SFSS Councillor Development Sessions.

In the interim, the following resources below are available to all affected. The Society encourages anyone affected to seek help and guidance through any of the following resources:

A) SFSS & SFU Support Options:

SFU Office of Student Support, Rights & Responsibilities

Students can find out about their responsibilities and rights as members of the SFU community, and learn about the supports available to them.

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/studentssupport.html#students>

Black student support with Tricia-Kay Williams (Black Student Support Facilitator and Counsellor at SFU Health and Counselling and Owner of Metamorphose Counselling)

Confidential My SSP app (24/7 chat or call). You can request culturally relevant services and in multiple languages.

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/health/resources/my-ssp.html>

SFSS Student Care

Up to 80%, to a maximum of \$500 for all SFU undergraduates to spend on registered health practitioners – including therapists – through your SFSS Student Care plan. See more details on your health and dental benefits here:

https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/SimonFraserUniversityundergraduatestudentsSFSS_Health_HealthCoverage&random=185

[Student Advocacy Office:](#)

Located on the 3rd floor of the SUB, the Student Advocacy Coordinator supports undergraduates at SFU in academic and non-academic matters by providing resources and options, in a confidential manner, to create a safe and respectful space for students and improving their overall university experience. Monday to Friday 10:30am to 5:30pm.

studentadv.coord@sfss.ca

B) External Support Options:

Healing in Colour (BIPOC Therapist Directory)

Find Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Colour therapists in this directory, as well as other information. More info: <https://www.healingincolour.com/>

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Helen Sofia Pahou, SFSS President 2022/23