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BOARD OF DIRECTORS | SIMON FRASER STUDENT SOCIETY

FALL 2015 WORK REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The following is a written report detailing the work that I, as the Faculty of Education Representative on the Board of Directors for the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), completed during the Fall 2015 semester. While not comprehensive, it summarizes my major activities over the course of the semester, and is intended to be informative for those who read it and useful for anyone who may hold my position in the future. For any questions, clarification, or further information, my contact information can be found at the end of the report.

EDUCATION STUDENT ASSOCIATION (ESA)

The Education Student Association (ESA) is currently the only established departmental student union (DSU) within the Faculty of Education so it has been a priority to support and strengthen the ESA. In the fall, the Education Student Association began to hold consistent bi-weekly open meetings in the Education Building to be more accessible to students that may be interested in attending and getting involved. Several new students joined the ESA, and it was exciting to see the DSU with a full executive team and interested members that consistently attended the meetings. The newly elected President of the ESA was on a leave of absence for the majority of the semester, so I made an effort to ensure that the DSU continued to hold meetings and have activities during the transitional period.

The fall semester saw the first time that the Education Student Association has had a table during SFSS Clubs Days. I assisted them in this process by organizing a schedule for Clubs Days tabling, helping them book a table, preparing materials for the ESA table, and doing outreach at the table. Additionally, I helped them to submit a grant proposal and to order a horizontal banner with the ESA name and logo. The banner has been useful in increasing visibility and recognition for the ESA and its events. During Clubs Days, a sign-up sheet was present at the table for interested students to sign up for the ESA mailing list. The recent creation of the ESA mailing list has been a valuable communication and promotional tool. With a mailing list sign-up sheet present every time the ESA holds an event or has an outreach opportunity, the number of students that the ESA reaches can continue to grow.

Among the projects and events of the ESA in the fall was the creation and sale of SFU Education apparel. I provided them with logistical support by collecting quotes from screen printing companies,

creating order forms and sample photos, submitting orders, collecting and depositing payments, and promoting the opportunity to students. One of the events that the ESA held was ESA Trick or Treat, where the ESA did outreach in the AQ and handed out free candy. I assisted them by designing the event poster, promoting the event, and doing outreach with them on the day of the event. Another event that the ESA held during the semester was ESA Study Break, a drop-in event in which the ESA played a marathon of the TV show Friends in the Learning Hub with free popcorn and refreshments. Similarly, I supported them with room booking, event promotion, and engaging with students at the event. The event was quite successful, with a higher attendance than previous ESA events in the past and positive feedback from the attendees.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Fall Welcome Day was a great opportunity to engage with incoming Education students, as it sees the greatest intake of new students. I was able to give a presentation during the Faculty of Education session providing information about the Simon Fraser Student Society, my role as the Faculty of Education Representative, my experience as a student in the Faculty of Education, and the Education Student Association. I recognized many of the new students from having engaged with them previously during SFU Information Evening and the Pre-Enrolment event in the summer semester, demonstrating the value in building relationships with students and facilitating a sense of community amongst them early on.

Although there was not a large enough number of incoming Education students to warrant a large scale “Frosh” event, I did feel that it was important to plan a Welcome Event to provide the new students with an opportunity to socialize amongst each other after they got settled in at SFU. Thus, the Faculty of Education undergraduate advisor and I planned and led a hike around Burnaby Mountain, for which current students in the Faculty of Education were also invited to join the new students in this activity. The new and current Education students that attended seemed interested in future social events, so it may be beneficial to plan Welcome events for incoming Education students every semester in the future.

I had the opportunity to attend a Faculty Council meeting in October as an undergraduate representative, which was the only meeting that was called during the fall semester after I was appointed to the position. Among the topics discussed was having a stronger Faculty of Education presence at the SFU Surrey campus and the relocation of staff and faculty out of the Education Building into Discovery 1 due to planned construction of the entire building. I am looking forward to attending Faculty Council meetings in the spring to gain more knowledge about what is happening within the Faculty of Education and to have an important opportunity to advocate for undergraduate students.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

A new Strategic Planning ad-hoc committee was struck in order to develop an engagement framework to inform the Board of Director’s strategic plan for the organization. The work of the Chief

Executive Officer (CEO), the Communications Coordinator, and the Campaigns, Research, and Policy Coordinator has been vital to the strategic planning process. The committee began by developing the consultation process which included determining stakeholders, with undergraduate students at SFU being our primary stakeholder, and developing a key list of questions to explore with each stakeholder group. Brand recognition, brand reception, relevance, student needs, and communications were our themes of focus when developing the key questions. Additionally, we brainstormed the engagement methods that we could use to engage with each stakeholder group.

Much of the committee's work has been regarding the development, implementation, distribution, and analysis of an undergraduate survey. The results of the survey will help to inform the development of the organization's first-ever strategic plan. The survey ran over three weeks and was promoted through a variety of methods, including outreach at all three campuses, social media, mass emails and bulletin emails, and the SFSS website. A total of 1,775 students responded, of which 1,344 students completed the survey in its entirety. A synopsis of the survey results will be published to the membership and after reviewing the survey results in depth, the Strategic Planning committee came up with a number of recommendations for the organization. Given that this marks the first time that the SFSS has distributed a survey to its membership for the purpose of informing the organization's strategic plan, the process was an overall success.

OPEN TEXTBOOK WORKING GROUP

The #textbookbrokeBC campaign had a strong presence during the first week of the fall semester. The working group tabled outside of the SFU Bookstore and handed out bookmarks that encouraged students to take photos of their bookstore receipt and to post them on social media with the hashtag #textbookbrokeBC. Information about the open educational resources (OER) available on BCcampus, printed samples of open textbooks, t-shirts printed with textbook-related slogans, and Advocacy Committee materials were also displayed at the table. A key component of the campaign involved having students write the dollar amount of how much they had spent on textbooks onto a whiteboard and taking a photo of the students holding the whiteboard. The photos were then uploaded to a photo album on the SFSS Facebook page.

Members of the working group had the opportunity to attend various conferences and workshops to learn more about open education and open educational resources (OER), with the goal to bring back relevant knowledge and ideas to inform and improve the campaign. A conference that I attended was Open Education Conference 2015, which was hosted locally in Vancouver. Throughout the day, there were several sessions taking place during each time block so the working group members chose the sessions that seemed most relevant to open textbooks and undergraduate students. During the semester, the working group also made plans for the next steps of its campaign, including strategies about how to

approach and speak to faculty and professors about adopting open textbooks and ways to improve the campaign in the spring semester.

EMERGENCY FOOD BANK PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

A working group was created to research, evaluate, and make improvements to the Emergency Food Bank Voucher Program, both internally and externally. Internally, the focus was consulting students and developing a survey to gather student feedback, improving the screening process, looking into internal expansion opportunities, and improving operations and procedures. Externally, the focus was creating a sponsorship package, managing our current partnerships, and potentially expanding to build new partnerships and seek new sponsors. I was tasked with drafting a report detailing past student comments about the program and developing questions for a survey to gather responses from students about the program and further ways to improve it for the spring semester. Students register for the program through an SFU WebSurvey, which included a comment box for any additional comments and suggestions to improve the program. I compiled and summarized the student comments and suggestions received through the WebSurvey during the Fall 2015 semester, and identified the major themes that arose.

BUILD SFU

The SFSS Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on September 22 and three special resolutions were voted on by the students: the approval of a debenture for the construction of a new Student Union Building, the approval of a debenture for the construction of a new Stadium, and the creation of a new SFSS bylaw to ensure that a duly approved student society fee that has been implemented for the purpose of repaying a loan cannot be revoked, reduced or cancelled if it would cause the Society to be unable to repay the loan. The special resolutions were approved with 86% in favour, 81% in favour, and 97% in favour respectively, allowing the Build SFU project to advance. Build SFU continued to remain a priority for the Board throughout the semester and the next steps involved important decisions in regards to securing financing with Scotiabank and the reviewing and signing of various legal agreements, to ensure that the project stayed on schedule.

ENGAGEMENT

A commitment to membership engagement continued for the Board of Directors in the fall semester. The beginning of fall was an optimal time for engagement, as it is generally the period of the most activity during the year. Given the influx of new students, “Welcome Back” events, icebreakers for clubs and student unions, and the coinciding of SFU’s 50th Anniversary, there were many opportunities for the Board to do outreach and engage with students. Some of the events that I attended for the purposes of membership engagement included: Residence Move-in Day, SFU Week of Welcome, SFSS Pancake

Breakfast, SFU 50th Anniversary Campus Kickoff, SFSS Clubs Days, SFSS Club & Student Union Meet and Greet for executives of clubs and student unions, SFU Vancouver Open House, SFU President Petter's dinner with the SFSS and the GSS, and numerous club and student union events. In my opinion, the best way to promote the SFSS, its purpose, its activities, and its services is through consistent engagement. In addition, membership engagement is crucial for its contribution to informing the organization's strategic plan.

MISCELLANEOUS

There were many other tasks and responsibilities that I took on throughout the semester. Although I was not able to attend the Events and Promotions Committee meetings due to a class conflict, I did provide assistance with SFSS events when I was able to. During the night of the Fall Kickoff concert, I volunteered to be in charge of the Will Call tickets and the guest list at the Will Call booth. As well, I assisted with the front of house at numerous SFSS pub nights, which involved selling door tickets and helping with coat check. Of course, there were many administrative duties, such as writing and replying to emails, reviewing minutes, and reading documents and reports. I also took on minor tasks such as creating a document to display the office hours of the Board of Directors, updating SFSS calendars, and organizing Board headshot and group photo sessions, which was necessary at times for efficiency and organization.

The lasting impact of this year's Board of Directors can be seen in its commitment to governance reform, an adoption of a Policy Governance framework that seeks to formally separate operations and governance. Phase I involved the Board of Directors' adoption and implementation of Board policies. Phase II involved a set of recommendations from the Governance committee regarding SFSS sub-ends policies, core organizational values, a revised committee structure, a current Society activities catalogue, and an appeal process, for consultation and adoption by the Board in the spring semester. It is an exciting shift towards the SFSS becoming a clear student-directed and professionally supported organization.

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