When we picked the theme for this year’s Community Summit, in recognition of an important milestone in our nation’s progress, we saw an opportunity to think critically and engage authentically on Canada’s role in the world. Our topic selection occurred months before some of the concerning global trends we have witnessed as of late, trends which illustrate a growing divergence from the values Canada upholds. As we moved closer to the Community Summit, the need to converse with each other on how Canada is adding value in the world grew increasingly urgent. This year’s Community Summit was a call to action for our community to consider innovative opportunities to mitigate against real and potential risk, and explore how we must show courage and leadership to further contribute, both at home and globally.

Over the course of the ten day Community Summit, we brought people together for a series of thought-provoking activities, each asking in some way, ‘Who Needs Canada?’ Our events hosted anywhere from 50 to 700 participants in three cities across the lower mainland, with thousands more participating online and through our annual Vancouver Sun op-ed series.

As is always our goal, we created opportunities for Canadians from all walks of life to bring their opinions to the table and respectfully share and learn alongside each other. The Community Summit was not about closed-door expert discussions, but instead, about making space for everyday Canadians to get to know each other better, ask questions, and contribute their ideas.

Each Community Summit is unique and a labour of love. We are incredibly proud of everyone and even more proud of our ever-growing network of engaged partners and participants that find value and usefulness in the work. Charting the course for Canada’s future will not be easy, but by continuing to see and hear from each other, building deeper common understandings and attempting to connect across borders and barriers, our collective action will shape the Canada we want for the future.

Please enjoy this reflective report which provides an overview of our 2017 Community Summit, including highlights and testimonials from contributors. We hope you will continue to engage with us at our events, as well as online by way of our website, our social media channels, and our YouTube page (which features many videos from past events). Don’t forget to sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter to keep up with us. We hope to see you soon!
Acknowledgements

A Community Summit needs you, our community, to be here with us in the public square. Without you, we are engaging in a vacuum, an echo chamber. For some of you, this Community Summit may have been the very first time you joined us. Welcome! For others, you’ve been participating in our activities since the beginning, back in 2012. Whether you attended events in person or engaged with us online, thank you for helping make this annual event a meaningful and worthwhile endeavour. If you filled out a ‘Who Needs Canada?’ postcard, shared your thoughts on social media, authored an op-ed, submitted a Silo question, volunteered with us, or attended an event; thank you! You make SFU Public Square a hub for thinking, doing, engaging, and discussing. Thanks for being here!

We are most grateful for the generous support of Dr. Stephen A. Jarislowsky, a member of the SFU Public Square Founding Council. Dr. Jarislowsky’s continuing record of philanthropy and civic leadership stands as one of the best examples of global citizenship and democratic engagement. He has been active in educational, cultural, and charitable activities of many kinds, has endowed more than 23 university chairs, and contributes frequently to television, radio, magazines, and newspapers.

Thank you to our advisors, partners, and sponsors. As it is said, make new friends and keep the old. Our Community Summit is possible due to your advice, energy, and collaboration.

Here at SFU Public Square, we are inspired and encouraged to do our work by the incredible leadership exhibited by Simon Fraser University President, Andrew Petter; Chancellor, Anne Giardini, Vice-President, External Relations, Joanne Curry; and Executive Director, Centre for Dialogue, Shauna Sylvester along with Executive Director, SFU Vancouver, Dr. Laurie Anderson; Executive Director, SFU Surrey, Stephen Dooley; Executive Director, University Communications, Kristin Linklater; Executive Director, Communications & Marketing, Laurie Morris; Managing Director, Marketing & Brand Management, Sudha Krishna; and Director, SFU’s Vancity Office of Community Engagement, Am Johal. Special mention to Executive Director, Renewable Cities, Michael Small; Director, University Communications, Kurt Heinrich; Director, Digital Engagement, Denise Leech; Associate Director, Digital Community Engagement, Chris Yakimov; and Communications Associate, University Communications, Ian Bryce, who all provided invaluable insight and contributions right from the beginning of the planning process.

It is an extraordinary privilege to work in an environment that enables and appreciates deep engagement and powerful thinking. We especially want to thank SFU’s Deans and VPs for their thought-leadership in shaping the theme of this year’s Community Summit and follow-up support as we moved from idea to action. Finally, a huge thank you to the members of our extended community – the many faculty, staff, students, and alumni who are willing to provide support, direction, and leadership.

Our 2017 Community Summit simply would not have been possible without the tireless team of volunteers, interns, and work-study students who worked behind the scenes on all aspects of planning and execution. The number of tasks, big and small, that we entrusted to our support team was unending, and the team came through with results that consistently exceeded our expectations. Thank you for devoting long hours to this year’s Community Summit, and for being the first line of support. Your energy, humour, and dedication constantly inspire us to work harder.

There are so many of you, and we want to thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts.
And of course we hold the deepest gratitude for the dedication of hard work of the staff at SFU Public Square and our sister programs at the Centre for Dialogue. Betsy Agar, Linda Bannister, Kelvin Chan, Kevin Cherney, Melanie Findlay, Keane Gruending, Grace Lee, Gerilee McBride, Renée McMillen, Janet Moore, Sebastian Merz, Aretha Munro, Angela Paley, Robin Prest, Kathryn Shaps, Brenda Tang, Pavan Thind, Alexa Walker, Kady Wong, Lindsay Wu, and Scott Young.

Janet Webber, Scott Young, Kevin Cherney, and Alexa Walker are the primary authors of this report, with contributions from Pavan Thind and Kady Wong. Renée McMillen and Melanie Findlay designed the report.

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Overview

Five years ago, SFU Public Square was created to help spark, nurture, and restore community connections, while also establishing Simon Fraser University as a serious convener on topics of public interest. Since then, SFU Public Square has successfully hosted hundreds of events with thousands of participants from diverse backgrounds, each with a unique story, perspective, and insight. Building upon that robust foundation, we kicked off 2017 with our fifth Community Summit. This year, our theme broke new ground for SFU Public Square by looking at Canada’s role in the world on the occasion of Canada’s 150+ birthday.

The starting point of this year’s Community Summit was a deceptively simple question: “Who Needs Canada?” the origin of which was originally suggested by SFU’s Deans and VPs as an idea that would elicit thought-provoking interventions on the year of Canada’s sesquicentennial. Embedded within that question are nuances and layers that get to the heart of how Canadians perceive both themselves and their country. The decision to go down this route was in place well before Brexit and Trump; it was only as we witnessed alarming shifts occurring in other places that the need for a thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion on how Canada could navigate an increasingly fractured global environment became much more pointed. Very quickly, we realized that this Community Summit would enable us to explore how courageous Canadians should think about and engage with our role in the world today. What value can Canada offer to the world? Is Canada needed? If so, by whom?

Over ten days in February and March, the Community Summit coalesced around eight events taking place in Burnaby, Surrey, and Vancouver. Bringing together residents, thinkers, and doers from diverse walks of life, we programmed innovative opportunities for attendees to think and engage on Canada’s role in the world today. With nearly 2,000 in-person attendees and thousands more through online interactions and our annual opinion-editorial series in The Vancouver Sun, SFU Public Square helped Metro Vancouverites begin Canada’s 150+ year by thinking about our place in a global context.

As always, we experimented with formatting and programming, part of our commitment to engage new demographics and new communities. For the first time, we hosted engagement takeovers at all of the SFU campuses in advance of the Community Summit to help spread the word and get students excited and thinking about the key question, “Who Needs Canada?” We produced an event entirely in Mandarin that was specifically aimed at university students. We took 85 Surrey high school students on a day-long immersive journey through some of Metro Vancouver’s major trade hubs. We undertook unprecedented and rigorous exercises in digital analytics, engagement and evaluation, scoping out how we can better measure our impact and success. For the Community Summit, we convened non congruent thinkers to engage on topics as diverse as Canada’s sociocultural relationship with China to the future of Canadian foreign policy. Our hashtag #WhoNeedsCanada trended nationally during two of our events. We were supported by a talented team of volunteers, interns, and work-study students, who collectively contributed over 1,300 hours towards the Community Summit. By the end of activities, we had successfully sparked a months-long conversation on the question of ‘Who Needs Canada?’

What’s next for SFU Public Square? We’re already turning our attention to the 2018 Community Summit. This year, we talked about the future of our country. In 2018, we’re going to be tackling an issue that is global in scope: the future of work. We hope you will join us.
Engagement

At its heart, our engagement strategy was aimed at breaking down barriers and creating additional meaningful opportunities for discussion about Canada’s role in the world, extending beyond the panels and presentations. Our holistic strategy was implemented before, during, and after our Community Summit events, and was built upon trying to answer our central question of ‘Who Needs Canada?’ The Community Summit engagement strategy had several interrelated components.

Campus Takeovers
This year, we held takeover-style engagement events at each of SFU’s three campuses. On February 6th, the SFU Public Square engagement team was at Waterfront Skytrain station and SFU Vancouver, at SFU Burnaby on February 7th, and SFU Surrey on February 9th. In total, students, staff, and faculty filled out almost 200 ‘Who Needs Canada?’ postcards and just under 600 cards were handed out across all three campuses.

Dialogue Circles
Seeking to create space for smaller and locally-focused discussions, SFU Public Square hosted a series of dialogue circles after the ‘Who Needs Canada?’ launch event on February 27th. These dialogue circles provided an opportunity for interested members of the public to engage with leading thinkers on the topics of adaptation to climate change, international development and human rights, and international security. For each 30 minute dialogue, a subject area expert was paired with a skilled facilitator from SFU’s Centre for Dialogue.

Classroom Engagement
SFU Public Square partnered with Clare McGovern, Lecturer in the SFU Department of Political Science, to create experiential learning opportunities for her class on political engagement. The partnership was a way for students to not only get involved with the Community Summit, but to also think more broadly about Canadian foreign affairs as they apply both in the classroom and in the community. The students had the choice of volunteering at various Community Summit events or writing interview-based articles for SFU Public Square’s Voices in the Square online blog series. Their contributions provided real value to the Community Summit and helped them develop their professional toolkit.

Slido
At the launch event for the 2017 Community Summit, SFU Public Square tried something entirely new. Slido, a digital engagement tool, was used to crowdsource the top questions submitted by the in-house audience and others watching via livestream or following the Twitter conversation at home. Slido was used for two events at the Vancouver Playhouse: ‘Who Needs Canada?: Canada’s Role in the World’ on February 27th, and ‘The Middle East and the Refugee Crisis: An Evening with Robert Fisk’ on March 7th.

Slido was an important part of audience engagement. Due to the scale of the events, it was logistically difficult to have attendees ask questions aloud and limited the amount of audience participation possible. Slido was a good solution to both problems, as nearly half of all
attendees for each Slido-enabled event participated in the Slido question & answer period in some way, either through the formulation of questions or by voting on their favourites. It ensured that questions put to our speakers were timely, concise, and relevant to the interests of the wider audience.

Between the two events, a total of 164 questions were submitted and 1035 votes cast. Visit http://get.sfu.ca/GdhP1e to view the top questions as voted by the audience at SFU Public Square’s ‘Who Needs Canada?’ event, and visit http://get.sfu.ca/dBdqwM for ‘The Middle East and the Refugee Crisis’ event.

Postcards: ‘Who Needs Canada?’
Our first and primary engagement tactic involved crowdsourcing the answer to our question ‘Who Needs Canada?’ To accomplish this, we developed a postcard with the phrase ‘_____ Needs Canada,’ a blank slate for the community to tell us who (or what) needs Canada. Before the Community Summit, we created a digital version to disseminate online. We then asked you to snap a photo and share it with us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, using the hashtag #WhoNeedsCanada? During the Community Summit, as people arrived at the different events, they were invited to fill out a physical ‘Who Needs Canada?’ postcard. The postcards were then centrally displayed at each venue to encourage further participation and spark conversation. By using a simple and catchy question as an entry point to a larger discussion around foreign policy and international relations, people who may not have normally spoken up on this topic were able to share their own ideas, perspectives, and opinions. In total, the SFU Public Square team collected 667 postcards.
Media and Online Engagement

A series of events alone do not make a Community Summit. It is important to not just bring people together, but to also create additional avenues of engagement for a broader audience to discuss topics of public concern. To accomplish this, SFU Public Square partnered with The Vancouver Sun, British Columbia’s newspaper of record, to produce a series of Summit-specific op-eds. This year, we ran a total of ten op-eds between February 25 and March 9, in both the print and online editions of each paper. Due to the broad and inclusive theme of the Community Summit, we were able to solicit op-eds from some of Canada’s most innovative thinkers, each of whom brought a specific depth of expertise and knowledge to their piece.

Authors (and co-authors) included, Andrew Petter, Simon Fraser University President; John McArthur, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; Eyob Naizghi, Executive Director, MOSAIC; Benjamin Bergen, Executive Director, Council of Canadian Innovators; Jillian Stirk, Former Canadian Ambassador and Dialogue Associate, SFU Centre for Dialogue; Bessma Momani, Professor, University of Waterloo; Deborah Harford, Executive Director, Adaptation to Climate Change Team, Simon Fraser University; Nola-Kate Seymour, Chair, Vancouver City Planning Commission; Mike Harcourt, Former Premier of BC, Former Chair, International Centre for Sustainable Cities; Tesicca Truong and Veronika Bylicki, Co-Founders, CityHive; Grand Chief Ed John, Member, First Nations Summit Political Executive, and Brett House, Deputy Chief Economist, Scotiabank.

We asked each of our expert authors “Who Needs Canada?” and invited them to answer within the scope of their own work. Altogether, the op-eds provided a range of perspectives on the many complex issues confronting Canada today, from free trade in the Trump administration to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, as the focus. Paris spoke with Stephen Quinn on CBC Radio twice on February 27th with Roland Paris, former foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, as the focus. Paris spoke with Stephen Quinn on CBC Early Edition in the morning, and Michelle Elliott on BC Almanac in the afternoon.

Outside of print media, the 2017 Community Summit was featured on CBC Radio twice on February 27th with Roland Paris, former foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, as the focus. Paris spoke with Stephen Quinn on CBC Early Edition in the morning, and Michelle Elliott on BC Almanac in the afternoon.

Social Engagement

During the lead-up and execution of the Community Summit, the hashtag #WhoNeedsCanada made over 7 million impressions and reached upwards of 1.4 million people, according to data provided by Tweetbinder. #WhoNeedsCanada trended in Canada throughout various points of the Community Summit, most notably during the ‘Who Needs Canada? Canada’s Role in the World’ launch event on February 27th, and during ‘The Middle East and the Refugee Crisis: An Evening with Robert Fisk’ on March 7th.

Over the course of the February 27th launch event, approximately half of the Twitter activity using the #WhoNeedsCanada hashtag was by attendees who were tweeting specifically about the event, and the other half was generated by Twitter users unrelated to the event who participated in the online conversation, offering their own thoughts on Canada’s role in the world. The #WhoNeedsCanada hashtag proved to be a great way to garner additional interest from Canadians unaware of our Community Summit.

After five years of convening serious and important conversations on issues of public interest, we will continue to leverage our existing success and expand our multi-platform communication strategy to expand outside of British Columbia, whilst also engaging deeply with new and untapped audiences here at home in Metro Vancouver.
Partnerships

As is true every year, our partnerships played a vital role in the realization of the Community Summit. Each year, we start out with only an idea. With our supporters’ input, together, we produce a unique experience for thousands of attendees. The generative process of moving from a concept to a Community Summit is the direct result of our relationships. Over 35 in all, our partners provided foundational support in myriad ways.

Community Partnerships
Our ongoing thanks especially goes out to The Jarislowsky Foundation, and we are most appreciative of the continued support from the City of Vancouver. For the first time this year, we entered into new and exciting partnerships with the Vancouver Art Gallery and Air China. We enjoyed working with the Surrey Board of Trade, Surrey School District, Export Development Canada, US Consulate General Vancouver, HQ Vancouver, the Ministry of International Trade, Fraser Surrey Docks, Powertech Labs, and PeaceGeeks. Each one of our community partners was critical in supporting the Community Summit, whether through generous financial contributions, thought-leadership, guidance, promotion, or participation in the events.

Media Partnerships
Having great relationships with media outlets is a powerful way to help amplify our content and get the word out about our activity. Continuing an annual tradition, The Vancouver Sun ran ten op-eds as part of our 2017 Community Summit series as well as published a long-form piece on Mark Rowswell a.k.a. Dashan and cultural diplomacy. CBC Vancouver provided incredible hosts Bal Brach and Laura Lynch for our events as well as promoted the Community Summit, and the Georgia Straight published a number of articles in support of this year’s programming.

SFU Partnerships
We want to extend specific thanks to each and every one of our SFU partners starting with SFU’s Alumni Association, SFU City Program, SFU Office of Community Engagement, SFU Department of Political Science, SFU Centre for Public Opinion and Political Representation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies, SFU Surrey and SFU Vancouver, SFU’s Vancity Office of Community Engagement, and SFU’s Chinese Undergraduate Association. We also enjoyed the benefit of consultation and collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Communication, Arts, and Technology, the Graduate Liberal Studies Program, SFU Innovates, RADIUS SFU, Renewable Cities / Carbon Talks, Research Commons at SFU Library, the SFU Centre for Dialogue, SFU Digital Engagement, SFU International, SFU Library, SFU School for International Studies, SFU School of Public Policy, SFU University Communications, SFU Cultural Programs, and the Adaptation to Climate Change Team. We are all SFU.
Volunteers

Simply put, we cannot host our Community Summits without the extraordinary contributions of volunteers, interns, and work-study students. This year, 61 volunteers each played unique roles in helping us answer the question ‘Who Needs Canada?’ through our Community Summit. Their excitement about the Summit resonated everywhere they went, be it in the office, on campus, or at events.

SFU Public Square depends on both in-office and event volunteers for the planning and execution stages of the Community Summit. Office volunteers played a significant role in ensuring the Community Summit was comprehensive and representative, that the events were well-attended, and that the operations were logistically sound. Our team of 12 came from a variety of backgrounds, with many being current SFU students, some being SFU alumni, and others simply members of the community. They worked one or more volunteer shifts in the SFU Public Square office each week leading up to the Community Summit and provided support on a number of fronts including research, social media, event promotion, outreach, and engagement.

SFU Public Square event volunteers were critical in ensuring a seamless Community Summit. The team of 49 gained hands-on experience by helping with everything from live-tweeting, to registration, to backstage management, and gained valuable skills in networking, professionalism, time management, event management, teamwork, and most importantly, leadership. SFU Public Square recognizes the invaluable contribution of our volunteers and will continue our commitment to providing diverse work experience for SFU students at future Community Summits.

Thank you to:
Soheil Abdin, Alec Allan, Omar Arshad, Zhanara Almazbe, Helen Bezverhaia, Ren Buhay, April Cao, Carrie Cao, Alexis Chan, Carol Chen, Cheryl Cheng, Emma Cheung, Patricia Chochol, Lea Cohodas, Fiona Dong, Parvin Doroudian, Sarah Heim, Ning Hou, Alice Huang, Justin Huang, Cherry Jiang, Veronika Krackkova, Joanna Lam, Lily Lee, Anna Lee, Ivy Liang, Gabrielle Lotka, Marie Louka, Helen Luo, Maggie Ma, Kimberly Ma, Sean Magee, Mobin Mehrparvar, Clarie Meisq, Vivian Neal, Sophie Ni, Alexis Panton, Nicole Payer, Wendy Qian, Claire Qiu, Shiraz Ramji, Deeply Rui, Shanelle Sham, Amber Shao, Aishwarya Singh, Archana Siralan, Shahira Tepar, Nicolas Tellez-Espana, Sam Thukral, Nadeesha Udawatte, Johnny Wang, Stephanie Williams, Kareen Wong, Talia Wong, Karen Dar Woon, Kay Yan, Shilny Yang, Joey Zhang, Leo Zhang and Annie Zhou.

SFU Public Square is a fast-paced, dynamic work setting, and in this past semester I had the opportunity to liaise with community members, help with administrative tasks, and develop event planning skills. Coming from a Health Sciences background, I truly value the aspect of community engagement, and the skills I’ve developed will definitely carry me through any career path.

Maggie Ma, Office and Event Volunteer
Who Needs Canada?
Canada’s Role in the World

For the first time ever, the Community Summit included a launch event that squarely dealt with the overall theme, allowing us to provide an accessible overview of foreign policy and how it relates to the volatility of our time. From President Trump to Brexit, we are witnessing dramatic global change. What impact will these shifts have on Canada? What role should Canada play on the world stage? What value, if any, can Canada offer to the world? These questions were at the heart of SFU Public Square’s 2017 launch event for the Community Summit.

Upon arriving at the venue for the evening, our participants were greeted by our Engagement Team and were encouraged to fill out our ‘Who Needs Canada?’ postcards. Overall, 39% of event attendees completed a postcard.

Inside the venue, the event began with a stirring welcome from Shane Pointe of the Musqueam First Nation, before the moderator, CBC News correspondent Laura Lynch, took to the stage to introduce our speakers.

Our impressive lineup included Shuvaloy Majumdar, Munk Senior Fellow with the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, former Policy Director to successive Canadian ministers; Roland Paris, University Research Chair in International Security and Governance at the University of Ottawa, former Senior Advisor on Global Affairs and Defence to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; Senator Yuen Pau Woo, independent Canadian Senator representing BC, former President of HQ Vancouver and President and CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada; and Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Canadian Inuit activist, advisor to Canada’s Ecofiscal Commission, former International Chair for the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Representing a diverse range of social and political viewpoints, our speakers spent the next half hour digging into the question of Canada’s global relevance: what value can we offer to the world and how can we have the greatest impact internationally? Shuvaloy Majumdar identified global opportunities for Canadian leadership as a modern, pluralist democracy. Roland Paris also identified opportunities available to Canada, but stressed that it will take hard work to ensure that Canada reaffirms and strengthens its core values in response to international pressure. Senator Woo emphasized that a deep understanding of trade-offs is required to accomplish different goals related to Canada’s foreign policy, and Sheila Watt-Cloutier encouraged Canada to protect the arctic from the inequality of global warming, not only with respect to the environment and preservation of the ice, but also with respect to the Indigenous peoples that reside there.
The Dialogue Circle was a fantastic opportunity to engage with the public on issues of significant importance to Canadian foreign policy. There is a great need and desire to have more such events which allow for focused and informed conversations on foreign and security policies. Critical debates and evidenced-based knowledge should be encouraged and SFU Public Square ought to be applauded for its role in fostering dialogue and bringing in experts to engage on foreign policy with the public.

Nicole Jackson, Associate Professor, SFU School for International Studies

We invited our audience to join the conversation by submitting their questions for the speakers via Slido, which allowed for participants to ‘upvote’ the best questions. The top questions were compiled by our communications team and taken on stage to be put forth to the panel by Laura Lynch. Overall, 47% of attendees engaged with Slido by submitting or voting on questions for the speakers.

We went even further to broaden audience engagement by hosting post-event dialogue circles at the venue. Immediately after the panel discussion concluded, participants were invited to take part in small group discussions lead by local thought leaders that tackled three critical issues facing Canada. Deborah Harford, Executive Director for the Adaptation to Climate Change Team and Betsy Agar, Research Manager for Renewable Cities hosted a circle on Adaptation to Climate Change; Nicole Jackson, Associate Professor in the School for International Studies at SFU and Kathryn Sheps, Operations Manager and Dialogue Convenor for Renewable Cities hosted a group that talked about International Security; and Renée Black, Founder and Executive Director of PeaceGeeks, and Sebastian Merz, Project Manager, Civic Engage, SFU Centre for Dialogue hosted a discussion on Human Rights and International Development.

These dialogue circles allowed attendees to engage with experts on some of the most pressing foreign policy issues of today. Although only 30 individuals attended the dialogue circles, participants engaged in deep conversations about these complex matters late into the evening.

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Top Questions from Audience Engagement

1. “What is the most important, underdiscussed foreign policy issue that Canadians ought to care about?”

2. “How critical is electoral reform to maintain Canadians’ faith in democracy, and prevent our slide into enraged populism?”

3. “Canada (Vancouver especially) is a very multicultural place yet cultural segregation is still very apparent. How do we promote cultural unity & open-mindedness?”

More questions available from Slido at http://get.sfu.ca/GdhPlE

The Dialogue Circle was a fantastic opportunity to engage with the public on issues of significant importance to Canadian foreign policy. There is a great need and desire to have more such events which allow for focused and informed conversations on foreign and security policies. Critical debates and evidenced-based knowledge should be encouraged and SFU Public Square ought to be applauded for its role in fostering dialogue and bringing in experts to engage on foreign policy with the public.

Nicole Jackson, Associate Professor, SFU School for International Studies
What is it like to be famous in China? How can comedy bring Canada and China closer together? Mark Rowswell – aka Dashan (大山) – explored these questions as part of his first ever stand-up comedy performance in Metro Vancouver, in front of an enthusiastic crowd of over 300 SFU students and community members.

Held at SFU Burnaby’s impressive Leslie & Gordon Diamond Family Auditorium, the show began with a welcome from Joanne Curry, SFU’s VP of External Relations, and the event’s moderators, Tracy Han and Ray Geng from the SFU Chinese Undergraduate Association. Dashan then took to the stage to deliver a hilarious hybrid of storytelling and stand-up.

Over the course of his Mandarin-language performance, Dashan described how he mastered the Chinese language, how to navigate Chinese media and politics, and what it’s like being a cultural celebrity in one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Dashan used his own personal experience to illustrate how comedy can be used to bridge cultural gaps between Canada and China. After Dashan wrapped up his performance, students were invited to take part in a Q&A session.

The event was ground-breaking for SFU Public Square on a number of fronts; not only was this the first time we hosted an event held almost entirely in a language other than English, it was also the first time we partnered with a student-run organization to design an event specifically for SFU students. The partnership allowed us to connect with new and diverse student audiences from SFU and abroad, and to develop a deeper relationship with the local Chinese community.

Over 60% of the audience were SFU students, with others in attendance from Douglas College, Langara College, and UBC. Over 80% of the audience were between the ages of 18-29, making this our “youngest” 2017 Summit event.

Tracy Han, CUA Vice-President of Events

Highlights

Engaging Youth and Reaching New Audiences.

Over 60% of the audience were SFU students, with others in attendance from Douglas College, Langara College, and UBC.

Over 80% of the audience were between the ages of 18-29, making this our “youngest” 2017 Summit event.

This was the first SFU Public Square event for 96% of survey respondents.

SFU Public Square engaged the Chinese community at SFU and helped to increase awareness of Chinese culture and traditions among the entire university community. The partnership also offered valuable volunteering and networking opportunities for SFU Chinese undergraduate students. It has been a very rewarding opportunity and we would love to partner with SFU Public Square again in the future.

Tracy Han, CUA Vice-President of Events
SFU Public Square, in partnership with the Vancouver Art Gallery and with support from Air China, co-presented an eclectic and never before seen showcase featuring six leading artists who are defining, building, and shaping the connection between Canada and China. The event was focused on how arts and culture can act as tools in fostering international diplomacy, both formally and informally.

Through a series of evocative discussions and performances, we explored how the arts can raise awareness of cultural issues, promote social cohesion, and strengthen intercultural relations across oceans and borders, helping us to discover common ground and build empathy.

As the celebration got underway, attendees were greeted with a traditional welcome by Shane Pointe of the Musqueam First Nation. Providing a glimpse into the dynamic and energetic performances to come, the evening’s moderator, Dr. Jan Walls, treated guests to kua ban shu, known in English as bamboo clapper tale, a traditional Mandarin form of rhythmic storytelling with instrumental accompaniment.

Dr. Walls’ performance provided the perfect start to an evening showcase of exceptional talent. Hank Bull and Zheng Shengtian, Co-Founders of Centre A, the Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, have deep and rich histories of building connections between Asian artists, collectors, institutions, and the public. They told stories about the history of Asian art in Vancouver, shared images, and spoke to the critical role that cultural exchange plays in fostering goodwill between China and Canada.

Wen Wei Wang, Artistic Director of Wen Wei Dance, brought the stage to life through his improvised Chinese dance performance that wowed the audience. The performance, a collaboration with the classical Chinese group Silk Road Music, visually synthesized representations of the shared experience of maintaining a Chinese heritage while living in Canada. Visual artist Howie Tsui explored how cultural diversity and identity informed his artistic direction and reinforced the importance of art as a source of connection between people of different cultures. The theme of creating connections was echoed by Chan Hon Goh, Director of the Goh Ballet Academy & Youth Company Canada and Prima Ballerina with the National Ballet of Canada, who argued that the arts can promote local inclusivity while transcending international borders. Her talk was followed by a stunning performance of a traditional red ribbon dance by her students from the Goh Ballet Academy. Finally, the night wrapped up with an energetic performance by comedian Mark Rowswell, a.k.a. Dashan (大山), who took to the stage and shared hilarious insights into his role as a cultural ambassador between Canada and China, and demonstrated how comedy can be used to foster understanding and diplomacy.

The event brought together citizens from a variety of backgrounds who used the unique relationship between Chinese and Canadian art as a conduit to build, maintain, and strengthen community connections. The event also functioned as a way for our audience to consider how Canadian international relations extend far beyond the corridors of the parliament buildings and permeate directly into our modern cultural zeitgeist.
The Anger of Nations
Trump, Trudeau, Merkel, and Farage in an Age of Voter Rage

In partnership with the Centre for Public Opinion and Political Representation, SFU’s Department of Political Science, SFU’s Alumni Association, and SFU’s Vancity Office of Community Engagement, we hosted a dynamic evening which featured renowned pollster Nik Nanos, Executive Chair of Nanos Research and Research Associate Professor at State University of New York, sharing his latest research on Canadian attitudes following the recent explosive events in U.S. politics.

What does Trump’s presidency mean for Canada? What does it mean for the world? How will Canadians be affected by potentially drastic changes in immigration, trade, and healthcare policies by our neighbours to the south? Is it possible for Canada to remain committed to multiculturalism and inclusion given the shift in political climate? We tackled these questions and many others alongside an engaged crowd of over 250 people.

Nanos’ presentation provided necessary framing to explain the conditions that allowed for the surprising results of the U.S. Presidential election and the Brexit referendum. Nanos characterized ‘the anger of nations’ as a new populist movement that clearly identifies an enemy (‘the establishment’) as a means to inflame voters upset with the status quo. Nanos made the case that anti-establishment rhetoric is more likely to resonate with less-educated citizens, and that education, not class, is the new marker of political affiliation. Could Canada be susceptible to a similar style of politics?

Needless to say, Nanos provided a provocative starting point for the second half of the evening which featured a panel discussion moderated by CBC News correspondent Laura Lynch. Nanos was joined on stage by Mark Pickup, an SFU Professor in the Department of Political Science; Jeff Peterson, a businessman and well-known Republican commentator on U.S. politics; and Michael Meneer, an experienced journalist who brought an American Democratic viewpoint to the discussion. Together, the panel members engaged in a critical dialogue about the state of US politics and the subsequent implications for Canada. They discussed Canada’s role in stemming a broad, international populist tide, and leading by example in its commitment to multiculturalism and diversity.

The event finished with Lynch taking audience questions which included queries on topics as diverse as the future of race relations in North American politics, microtargeting and the effect of big data on voters and nonvoters alike, and political polarization, with Nanos arguing that political parties are now polarized distortions of what they were in the past.

We must explore the so-called roots of anger; how individual anger spreads through social circles, inflames national minorities (and majorities), overtakes language and political discourse, and even permeates our zeitgeist... We are starting the journey of understanding tonight.

Catherine Murray, Associate Dean, SFU Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Doors Open in Surrey: International Trade in Action

Canada’s role in international trade affects our lives on a daily basis, but many of us know very little about the movement of goods, products, and people around our cities and the world, let alone the impact this has on our nation’s economy. SFU Public Square, in partnership with SFU Surrey and Surrey Schools, attempted to fill this knowledge gap by inviting 85 high school students from Guildford Park Secondary and Princess Margaret Secondary schools on a tour of two of their city’s most innovative and essential trading hubs for a first-hand look at trade in action.

Students arrived bright and early to join Stephen Dooley, the Executive Director of SFU Surrey, for a morning dialogue session on the many ways that international trade affects our everyday lives. Joining Dooley was the Superintendent of the Surrey School District, Jordan Tinney, along with Anita Huberman, CEO of Surrey Board of Trade. Both emphasized the unique position Surrey occupies as an international gateway for the movement of goods and products.

Speaking to the province’s involvement with trade, Nina Cagic, Director of Technology and Innovation at the Ministry of International Trade, spoke to her experience dealing with trade and investment in the fields of life sciences, clean technology, and international education sectors. Next, we heard from Tammy Huston, Investment Manager at Export Development Canada. Responsible for connecting and supporting Canadian exporters and investors and their international buyers, Huston provided critical insight on the many different factors that contribute to a Canadian company’s success overseas. The students then had a chance to ask these leaders their most pressing questions during a Q&A period.

After wrapping up the morning dialogue at SFU Surrey, students boarded buses and headed out for their first tour stop of the day at Powertech Labs, one of the largest testing and research laboratories in North America. This 11-acre facility offers 15 different testing labs for a one-stop-shop approach to managing utility generation, transmission, and distribution power systems. While at Powertech, students gained first-hand knowledge about how energy is produced, regulated, and traded in British Columbia and with our southern neighbours. On the tour, students visited five different labs: high voltage technologies; high power technologies; mechanical technology and testing; electric vehicles; and hydrogen vehicles.

Fraser Surrey Docks, the largest modern, multi-purpose marine terminal on the West Coast of North America, was the next stop on the tour. On a guided bus tour through the yard, students saw everything from lumber, to steel plates, to wire, and boatloads of extra salt brought in to deal with Vancouver’s unusually snowy winter. The executive of Fraser Surrey Docks then provided an in-depth presentation on the history and operations of the terminal. Students learned about the role this busy port plays in the international trade ecosystem, the risks and challenges changing governments of our trading partners may have on the terminal, and the Canadian economy, as well as future job opportunities.

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“The most interesting thing I learned was about import and export (shipping)... I had fun, it was an informative trip.

Student
The ongoing crisis in the Middle East has not only undermined security in the region, it has generated a host of complex problems with far-reaching implications. The rise of ISIS and the beginning of a resurgent Russian interest in the area have helped to fuel the worst refugee crisis since the end of World War II. With an estimated 21.3 million refugees around the world, Canadians are being forced to think about our responsibilities as global citizens: are we doing enough? Or have we already done too much? With Canada’s acceptance of tens of thousands of refugees in the last year, these are questions that we can no longer ignore.

Robert Fisk provided a captivating opening keynote presentation that contextualized the plight of refugees. He reminded the audience that Syrian refugees chose us, not ISIS, and that the privileged many have a responsibility to welcome the disadvantaged few. Fisk’s address was followed by a shorter, but no less compelling, keynote by Pazira, who, sharing her own experience as a refugee, reminded us that Canada is not immune to the racism and xenophobia that plague nations across the globe. In her presentation, Boura offered a European perspective, describing the complexities of managing huge numbers of refugees along with the frightening profits made by human traffickers.

Again, greater audience engagement was facilitated by the use of Slido, an online platform that allows attendees to pose questions and vote on their favourites. In the end, 72 questions were submitted by the audience, receiving a total of 438 likes. The top questions were compiled and brought on to the stage for Brach to put to the presenters.

Top Questions from Audience Engagement

1. “My name is Mohammed and I am a Syrian refugee in Canada. Why do so many of your viewers think that we’re fleeing ISIS? Whereas in reality we’re fleeing Assad!”

2. “Does Canadian government support for Israel contribute to the crisis in the Middle East?”

3. “The Middle East is only one part of what seems to be an increasingly uncertain and dangerous world. Looking at the whole, what keeps you up at night?”

More questions available from Slido at http://get.sfu.ca/dBdqwM
During the Community Summit, we hosted a special edition of City Conversations, our free, bi-weekly, lunch-time dialogue, during which we discuss important local civic issues with presenters and participants. For this conversation, we discussed how cities around the world are tackling critical and complex issues that have a global scope, such as climate change and refugee settlement. Metro Vancouver’s municipalities are increasingly recognized for their efforts and their important role that extends well beyond the region’s boundaries.

The Director of City Conversations, Michael Alexander, provided a warm welcome before opening up the floor to our three presenters, who each brought opening remarks. First up was Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, Member of Parliament for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, who outlined the surprising power and credibility that officials from Canadian municipal governments yield around the world. Goldsmith-Jones was followed by Raymond Louie, then current acting mayor for the City of Vancouver, who presented on the scope of influence that cities can have, using Vancouver’s global climate leadership as an example. Our third panelist, Penny Gurstein with UBC’s School of Community and Regional Planning and the Centre for Human Settlements, explored how calculated and thoughtful municipal development can create world-class cities that have the ability to attract (and retain) global talent.

Following presentations from our speakers, as we always do, we then turned the floor over to our 65 engaged participants so they could share their ideas and concerns. Attendees participated in a lively conversation which attempted to untangle a complex web of topics including Vancouver’s municipal responsibility to support innovation, the need for diversification of Vancouver’s economic development strategy, and the ability for municipal initiatives to ‘trickle up’ to larger bodies of government.

This special edition of City Conversations was a perfect complement to the engagement mandate of our Community Summit, as it offered yet another opportunity for attendees to discuss pressing issues face-to-face with experts from a variety of backgrounds.

Researching the Globe brought together SFU students, staff, faculty, alumni, and the wider community to share and discuss research that has a timely and relevant global impact. The evening was presented in partnership with SFU Vancouver, SFU Innovates, the SFU Alumni Association, SFU Library, and SFU Research Commons and featured poster presentations and speakers from across many SFU departments and campuses.

Hosted by Joy Johnson, SFU Vice President of Research, the event began with an interactive public gallery of nine different poster and digital displays. Refreshments were served to help facilitate conversation and connection; this provided an open and engaging space for the exchange of knowledge and ideas. The posters tackled issues ranging from environmental sustainability, to alcohol abuse and HIV, and student alienation on university campuses.

Following the public gallery, seven researchers shared their rapid-fire impact stories to show how their research is having global impact. From community-based policy development with the Tsawwassen First Nation, to the circular fashion economy, and a local case study in ecosystem management, our speakers exemplified the many ways in which SFU researchers are connecting with communities around the world.

Leading up to the event, free workshops were offered to help each researcher develop their presentation skills. These included a poster workshop, showing how a poster can be used to capture audience attention and communicate key aspects of research efforts. The presenters also had the opportunity to attend a storytelling workshop focused on how to identify the elements that make up a good story, frame out a presentation to maximize impact, and tips and tricks to connect with an audience and demonstrate research impact.

Together, over 80 members of the public and SFU community joined in a celebration of the many ways in which SFU research is having real world impact.
Evaluation

An ambitious and thought-provoking ten days of programming, the 2017 Community Summit demanded equally innovative and interdisciplinary methods of evaluation. Ultimately, evaluation not only provided insight into our successes and areas for improvement, but it also created foundational benchmarks upon which to build next year’s evaluation.

A key component of the evaluation strategy included pre and post-event surveys. These surveys were sent to everyone who had registered to attend an event. Generally, the pre-event surveys saw increased levels of participation, including an impressive 55% response rate for ‘The Middle East and the Refugee Crisis’ pre-event survey.

Over the course of ten days, SFU Public Square engaged with nearly 2,000 attendees during our Community Summit events. Looking across the Community Summit, SFU Public Square made significant progress on key objectives related to student engagement, connecting with new audiences, and building SFU Public Square’s brand as a respected convenor of dialogue.

Through the Community Summit, we learned that there is an appetite for thought-provoking and critical dialogue about Canada, both on our domestic issues as well as our role on the international stage. In fact, three quarters of our guests had never attended an SFU Public Square event before the 2017 Community Summit. For many, they were compelled to have their voices heard given the salience of the ‘Who Needs Canada?’ question in our volatile times. This was a conversation that was urgently needed and — according to a majority of Community Summit participants — successfully delivered by SFU Public Square and our partners and supporters.
The SFU Public Square team would like to express their thanks and gratitude to all of our partners. Special thanks to the SFU departments and programs who contributed to this year’s event.

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