MAKING A SPLASH FOR STUDENTS

GRADY OTT
OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

Just feet away from the Terry Fox field, the Lorne Davies Complex atop Simon Fraser University’s (SFU) Burnaby Campus houses a plethora of sports facilities for students and the SFU community. Facilities include beautiful basketball courts, an indoor climbing wall, and an aquatic center featuring an 25 metre swimming pool and a deep diving pool.

Ensuring that the aquatic facilities are well maintained, the Facilities Services department works on multiple fronts to ensure students have exceptional services and facilities. While the FS Plumbing Team ensure water quality and level, Custodial Services ensure the decks are maintained and that the tank is cleaned regularly.

SFU’s dive tank is a semi-suspended 4 meter deep facility. Scrubbing the tank by hand would take a considerable amount of time so to speed things up, Facilities Services’ Grady Ott, Operations Supervisor, has enlisted the help of a couple of robotic dolphins.

“To help us clean, we’ve put in place two Dolphin Wave 100 semi-autonomous cleaning robots,” says Grady. “The way these pool Dolphin’s work is similar to that of a Roomba but they’re made for the water.” Each Dolphin Wave 100 machine features an advanced gyroscopic system which provides accurate scanning for systematic coverage. Equipped with tractor-style treads, the robots crawl along and clean the tank floor, walls, and water line with high-capacity filtration systems that capture any dirt, debris, or grime. While effective, there’s still nothing quite like the human touch. So periodically, Grady will suit up in his diving gear and jump in to ensure quality control. “I’ll do a half-an-hour dive and make sure that the machine is functioning as it should especially in the corners where some dirt can get caught.”

Cara Bethel, Aquatics Manager at SFU Recreation & Athletics, says every semester the SFU Aquatic Centre shuts down the pool for maintenance and upkeep. During this short period, the departments work together to ensure the facility is maintained and ready for students, staff, faculty, Varsity swimmers, and community members. “From the plumber balancing the appropriate chemicals, to the cleaners scrubbing handrails and pressure washing decks, to external contractors being brought in to repair various areas of the pool, it is a team effort and everyone’s hard work is greatly appreciated.”