



2020-21

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE INITIATIVE

SFU

CANADA'S ENGAGED UNIVERSITY

Find out more at sfu.ca

SFU acknowledges the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səliłwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh), q̓íćəy̓ (Katzie), kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem), Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen peoples on whose traditional territories our three campuses reside.

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VICE- PRESIDENT ACADEMIC'S MESSAGE



Student experience has always been a focus at SFU, but this year, we have had to reshape what the student experience is all about.

While most years have allowed us to provide hands-on and community-based experiences for our students, the impact of COVID-19 has forced us to re-evaluate the meaning of the student experience. This year has been one of resilience and preparation—for staff, faculty, and especially for students. While we look to provide more support and assistance to our students who are not on campus, our teams have also been hard at work with those who are here, and in preparing to welcome students back to campus in the coming year. We have pushed ahead with renovation projects, increased the number of online webinars and engagement projects, and we have made it our goal to adapt to the newly created frameworks for student experience.

With the Student Experience Initiative, this challenge has allowed our staff to pinpoint one shared goal that remains at the top of our list—to ensure students feel the sense of community and engagement that they would normally find at SFU. While we recognize this may not be the same, we have made it our mission to get as close as we can, given our current circumstances.

Over this past year, we have focused on the *Healthier Campus Community* theme, promoting well-being in learning environments for researchers and teaching assistants, as well as *Destination SFU*, with a wide range of campus improvements that await students when they return to campus.

This year has tasked us all with re-imagining what student experience is all about. While it has not been easy, I am proud of each staff member who has worked outside of their comfort zone to support our students and I cannot wait to see the road ahead when we can invite students back to an even better and brighter campus.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Catherine Dauvergne".

Dr. Catherine Dauvergne

Vice-President Academic and Provost

The past year has been challenging. 2020 started off with political unrest and devastating forest fires, followed by a global pandemic that shut down the world as we know it. Many of the injustices that Indigenous, Black and people of colour have experienced for centuries, including systemic racism, violence, flawed justice systems and an unstable economy, were cast in a new light. It has been a lot to feel, to experience and to process.

As a result, student experience has been challenged in unprecedented ways. These experiences have revealed what SFU is doing well and what work remains to be done. When the Student Experience Initiative was launched in 2016 by former President Andrew Petter, the team wanted to make a meaningful difference for students and provide a positive, healthy and exciting environment in which to learn and thrive.

Entering its fifth year in 2020, the Student Experience Initiative team was busy implementing approved projects, wrapping up completed work and paving the way for new efforts. Some projects were postponed or cancelled due to the pandemic in order to devote our efforts to better responding to the most immediate needs of students. The initiative's goal to enhance student experience is aligned with President Joy Johnson's priorities and strategic vision.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Dr. Jonathan Driver, vice president academic and provost pro tem and Rummana Khan Hemani, vice-provost and associate vice president, students and international, the Student Experience Initiative's seven working groups undertook a total of 43 projects across all three SFU campuses. The projects focused on a number of areas to make the student experience better. Some of these areas included building community and a sense of belonging at SFU; building healthier experiences in and out of the classroom, including various mental health initiatives; creating more welcoming and inclusive study spaces; improving communication with students; re-imagining graduate student experiences and more specifically supervisory relationships; providing better supports for Indigenous students and students with accessibility requirements; creating seamless advising experiences; building safer spaces for meditation, yoga, prayer and self-reflection; and more inclusive admissions processes within some faculties.

The Student Experience Initiative also had the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Catherine Dauvergne, vice-president, academic and provost as the new co-chair in 2020. Under the direction of Laya Behbahani, director of the Student Experience Initiative and with the support of Samer Rihani, project coordinator, for the Office of Vice Provost, Students and International, and research assistants Luis Sanchez and Chris Lim, the initiative engaged with stakeholders across the three campuses to work through the challenges facing students. The group strives for thoughtful, innovative, cutting-edge and engaged projects that support the student life, learning and success. The activities and strategies support a vision of tomorrow, grounded in the realities of today. This year holds exciting opportunities to build on the lessons learned in 2020 and to continue enriching the student experience at SFU.

The next section outlines the seven key action areas under the Student Experience Initiative, the working group members and the projects that have been undertaken by each working group.

BUILDING COMMUNITY & A SENSE OF BELONGING

MEMBERSHIP

Annette Santos	co-chair, director Student Engagement and Retention
Lara Campbell	co-chair, chair, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Cynthia Wright	coordinator, Student Learning Commons-Surrey
Julie Glazier	case manager, Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office
Marcia Guno	director, Indigenous Student Centre
Mark McLaughlin	chief commercial services officer, Ancillary Services
Micaela Roughton	associate director, Community & Belonging, Student Engagement and Retention
Mitchell Stoddard	director, Centre for Accessible Learning
Precious Ile	student development educator, Student Engagement and Retention
Victor Thomas	director, Interfaith Centre



LOOKING BACK AT 2020

The Building Community and a Sense of Belonging (BCSB) working group spent most of 2020 adjusting programming to run remotely in virtual environments. Existing projects were revamped for virtual formats, including a community art project to replace murals; a fireside chat program in place of fire pits; online movie parties instead of movie nights; and online game/trivia opportunities within HIVE (Home for Interactive Virtual Engagement) groups to replace the Surrey Games Lounge.

Concurrently, new programming was developed and implemented to support engagement and the transition needs of new and continuing students. This work included student leader training, the HIVE program, virtual Summer and Fall Welcome Days, and supporting collaborative programming and resource development with partners in faculties and Student Services.

All planned in-person events and programs were cancelled due to COVID-19. The BCSB team shifted their attention to support virtual programming to create opportunities for connection, especially at the peer-to-peer level. Cancelled programs included the Tribute Night Market, fire pits, games lounge, mosaic murals, the Food Sustainability Project and Caring Community Pilot.

The BCSB working group also continued to research and vet new virtual opportunities for students to connect with their peers and foster engagement to combat social isolation. All BCSB virtual programs for 2020/2021 will continue with low or no costs, aside from the professional staffing resources already in place.

Under the leadership of the BCSB, SFU hosted virtual Summer and Fall Welcome Days. More than 3,500 people took part in the virtual Fall Welcome Day, which generated more than 4,200 online views on Youtube and Hopin.

In collaboration with all eight faculties, this working group developed and launched the HIVE Program within SFU 101. The initiative saw more than 1,200 incoming undergraduates grouped by faculty, time zone, campus and common courses and provided with opportunities to connect. In all more than 1,900 students took part in HIVE activities—the highest SFU 101 participation rates since its inception.

The BCSB working group also developed and delivered collaborative training for more than 300 student leaders (mentors and welcome leaders) which included new resources and supports around facilitating and supporting students within virtual environments.

Throughout September, nine Month of Welcome virtual events were held, including *First Friday Carnival*, *Movie Nights*, *Coffee Connect* and *Speed Friending*.



As a result of their efforts, the BCSB group received an honourable mention for 'Creativity, Contribution and Innovation in the Field' at the 2020 IAP2 Canada Core Values Awards on September 30, 2020. IAP2 is the International Association for Public Participation Canada, and the award was in recognition of the student-centered consultation process. More info can be found here: www.iap2canada.ca/2020cva.

ROADMAP

- For 2021, the focus of the BCSB working group will wrap up the project and consult on lessons learned. They will also make policy recommendations for future student-centered spaces and building community at SFU.
- The group will also work with the Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations and other campus partners to find sponsorship for the fire pits in Convocation Mall, the Surrey Games Lounge and the mosaic mural projects. In addition, the team will review other successful BCSB initiatives and will look for opportunities for sustainable resources and funding.
- Resources within Student Engagement and Retention will be realigned to support HIVE within SFU101, supporting new student transition and virtual engagement for the years ahead.



BUILDING COMMUNITY & A SENSE OF BELONGING

VIRTUAL SUMMER WELCOME DAY

240+

ATTENDEES

SFU 101

4,500+

PARTICIPANTS

VIRTUAL FALL WELCOME DAY

3,500+

ATTENDEES

2,900+

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

4,200+

VIEWS ON YOUTUBE
AND HOPIN

MONTH OF WELCOME

78

FIRST FRIDAY
CARNIVAL PARTICIPANTS

19

MOVIE NIGHTS
PARTICIPANTS

55

SPEED-FRIENDING
PARTICIPANTS

3

COFFEE CONNECT
PARTICIPANTS

32%

OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
TOOK PART IN MONTH OF
WELCOME ACTIVITIES

STUDENT LEADERS

300+

TRAINED

HIVE PROGRAM

1,200+

INCOMING UNDERGRADUATES

21,800+

POSTS ON HIVE DISCUSSION BOARDS

1,900+

STUDENTS TOOK PART
IN HIVE ACTIVITIES

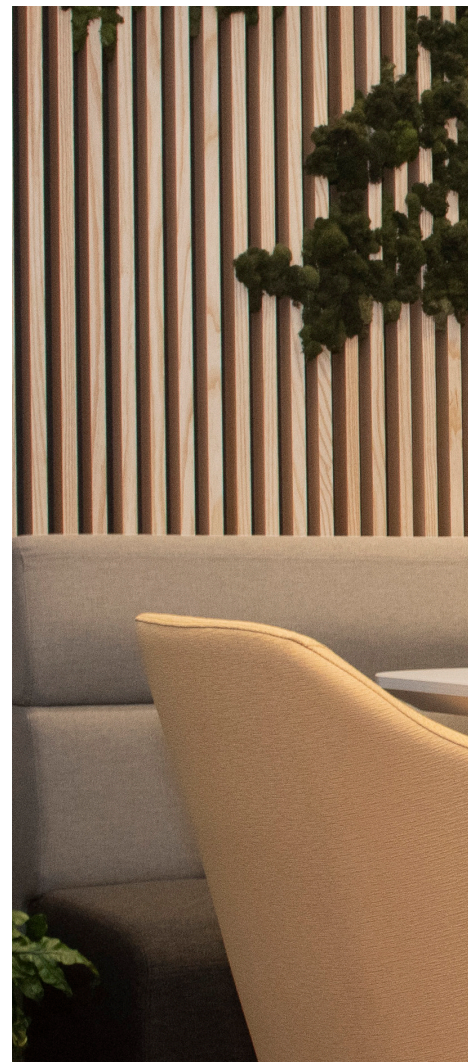
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HIVE GROUPS

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

MEMBERSHIP

Kristin Linklater	co-chair, executive director, Communications and Marketing
Leanne Dalton	co-chair, senior director, student success and strategic support, Student Services
Denise Leech	senior director, university communications, Communications and Marketing
Ailsa Brown	project director, brand expression, Communications and Marketing
Katrina Trinidad	director, student experience communications, Student Services





LOOKING BACK AT 2020

The purpose of the project is to redesign communications in support of an improved student experience through the platforms and tools they use, with messaging they relate to, and in a coordinated manner across the university.

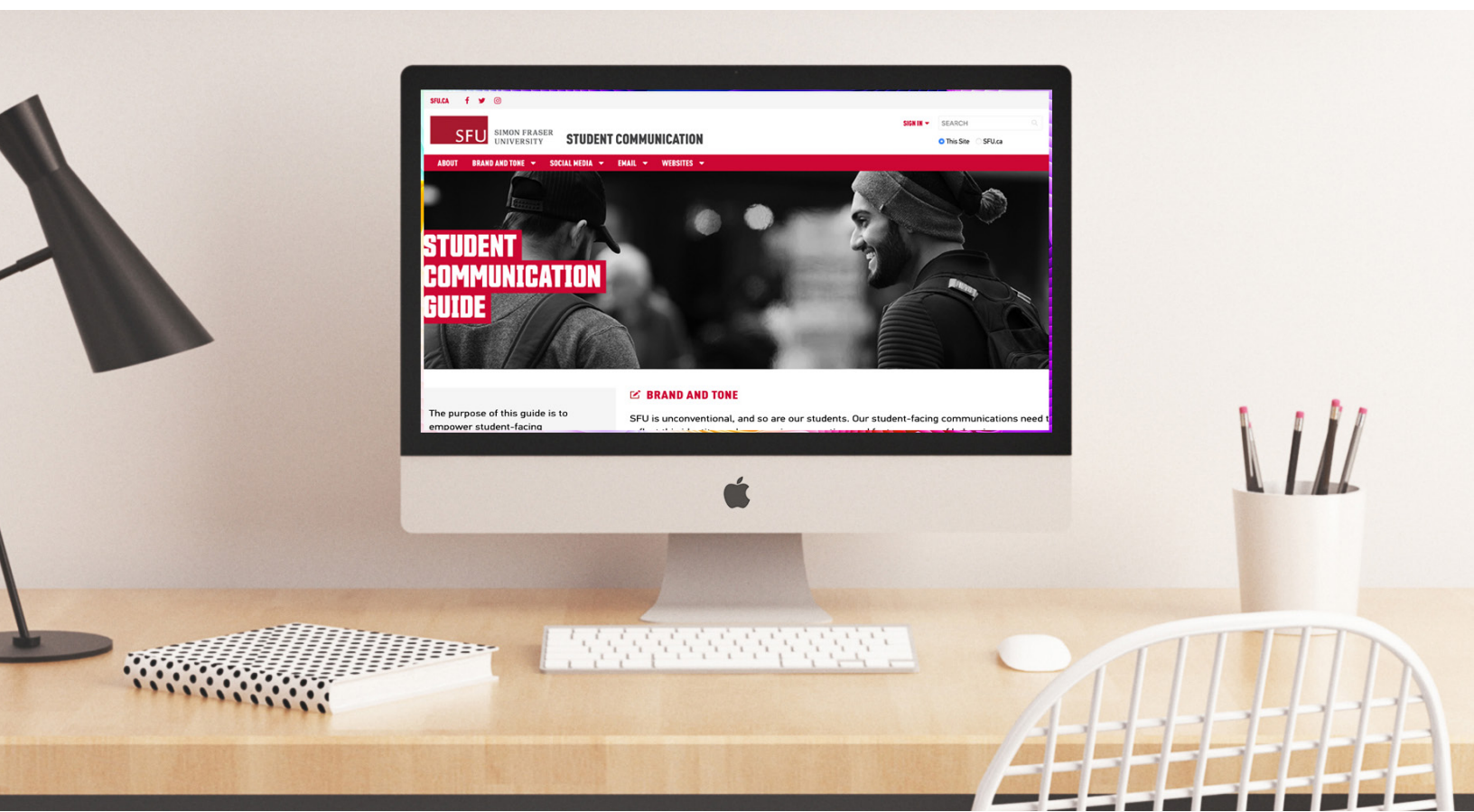
Rolling out a digital communications strategy and student communications guide during COVID-19 has created opportunities with some pivoting along the way. Looking back at our progress and achievements in 2020, we are now much more aligned in our communications approach to students and more coordinated internally. We laid the ground work to better understand the student experience in communications (the strategy) and we saw positive results.





HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020:

- The content strategy helped communication teams across the university align our COVID-19 content and communications approach to students.
- Departments both with and without dedicated communicators worked more closely together to align on communication initiatives and messaging, which resulted in more coordinated and intentional content reaching students.
- There has been an increase in demand for on-going strategic communications support. Departments both with and without dedicated communicators have received continued communications strategy guidance and tactical support to help them better communicate with their student audiences. This support extends from recruitment through to transitioning students, and supporting the current student body.
- The Student Communications Guide website was built and will be ready to launch to the internal community. This guide aims to support departments in how they approach their communication executions, and can also be used as training material for on-boarding new staff that need to communicate with students. This will be a positive change in creating capacity for staff.



ROADMAP

- Going forward, the team will launch the Student Communications Guide website to internal staff. Student Services communications, in collaboration with Communications and Marketing, will prepare a knowledge sharing plan that considers a series of on-going workshops and activities for internal staff to be trained on how to use the guide.
- In addition, the digital content strategy will continue to rollout to internal staff. The digital content strategy is already frequently used to inform messaging strategies, content decisions and channels. It was launched in 2020 and will continue to be shared with staff with the goal to increase coordinated communication and alignment in messaging to students.
- For the SFU 2021/22 viewbook, the team has pivoted from delivering an in-person, on-campus campaign execution and will instead be creating a new SFU viewbook that incorporates all the learnings in student communications. The project team is focused on ensuring students understand the student experience (whether they are entering or continuing students) in the time of COVID-19 and beyond, and the viewbook/campaign will help achieve this.

DESTINATION SFU/HOME AWAY FROM HOME

MEMBERSHIP

Laurie Anderson	co-chair, executive director, Vancouver campus
Steve Dooley	co-chair, executive director, Surrey campus
Todd Gattinger	co-chair, director, maintenance and operations, Burnaby campus
Claudia Wang	director of administration, Vancouver campus
Stephanie Sauro	manager, finance and administration, Surrey campus
Ailsa Brown	project director, brand expression, Communications and Marketing
Mat Cocuzzi	associate director, facilities services, Vancouver campus
Augustin Tretinik	project manager, facilities services, Vancouver campus
Mike Devolin	associate director, Facilities Services, Surrey campus
Marcos Olindan	project manager, facilities services, Burnaby campus
Alisa Zukanovic	project coordinator
Erin Biddlecombe	senior director, Office of the Vice Provost, Students and International
Eugenie Ko	director, administration, Office of the Vice Provost, Students and International
Victor Thomas	director and head chaplain, Multifaith Centre (formerly Interfaith)
Gian Gimang	project manager, Campus Planning and Development, Facilities Services



LOOKING BACK AT 2020

The goal of the Destination SFU/Home Away From Home team is to provide SFU students with lounge and social spaces that help facilitate their learning outside the classroom. In 2020, the main objectives were to collaborate with the campuses to design the spaces; repair walls and paint lounge spaces; and deliver and install furniture to lounge spaces.

The main focus of these projects is to ensure that students who are currently visiting campus can benefit from an improved look and feel of various study and lounge spaces. Similarly, students returning to campus in the Fall 2021 term will be met with a vibrant and lively campus setting, matched with new changes to paint, lighting, art work and furniture in various rooms at the Vancouver and Surrey campuses. The rooms that have been renovated range from study spaces to relaxation and lounge rooms that allow students to enjoy the campus, even for non-academic purposes.

As we approached the end of 2020, the focus of projects became to complete the delivery and installation of outstanding furniture at the Surrey campus as well as the lounge renovations and installation of moss murals at the Vancouver campus.

New furniture has arrived at Surrey campus and painting projects have been completed. The Vancouver campus project aims to improve seven student spaces. It finished the year with a surplus, allowing improvement to three additional spaces.

In the latter half of 2020, an additional project was introduced, focusing on building ablution stations and revitalizing the multi-faith space in the Sustainable Energy Engineering (SEE) building at the Surrey campus. The goal of the project is to provide students and other members of the campus community with amenities and space for their faith-based practices.

ROADMAP

- Beginning in 2021, the team will look at different ways to consult with students for feedback on space design, furniture selection, inventory and logistics to ensure that the project met its outlined goals and to inform future projects. The construction of the ablution stations and the multi-faith space will begin in 2021.



IDEAS TOO GOOD TO IGNORE

MEMBERSHIP

Catherine Dauvergne	vice-president, academic and provost
Rummana Khan Hemani	vice-provost and associate vice president, students and international, the Student Experience Initiative
Laya Behbahani	change management lead, Student Experience Initiative, VP, Academic

SFU ADVISOR LINK

MEMBERSHIP

Leanne Dalton	senior director, Student Success and Strategic Support, Student Services
Keith Fong	director, Application Services, IT Services
Bing Lee	product owner, constituent relationship management, IT Services
Donald Mok	project manager, Digital Transformation Office, IT Services
Sean McKenna	director, Business Analysis and Assessment, Student Services
Navdeep Grewal	business analyst, Business Analysis and Assessment, Student Services
Francisco Gallegos	business analyst, Business Analysis and Assessment, Student Services
Zalak Solanki	Salesforce app admin, IT Services
Keerthi Jijo	business analyst, IT Services
Natalia Delgado Reyes	project coordinator, IT Services
Danny Louie	technical team lead, Administrative Technical Solutions, IT Services
Susan Praseuth	business analyst, IT Services
Laya Behbahani	change management lead, Student Experience Initiative, VP, Academic

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

Advisor Link (AL) is an advising solution purpose-built for higher education that significantly enhances the undergraduate student undergraduate advising experience. It helps advisors be more efficient and proactive so students can increase their chances of academic success and have a better student experience. This helps create a sense of belonging and connection, which is a key driver of student retention. It creates transparency and consistency in the



student experience and for the undergraduate advising community. AL transforms undergraduate advising by automating manual tasks to free up capacity for advisors. It provides analytics and insights to empower data-informed undergraduate advising and decision making and helps to align a student's community of support and affirm their connectedness to SFU.

In 2020, the project group was engaged in consultations with undergraduate advising community stakeholders from each faculty, the International Services for Students, Financial Aid and Awards as well as Student Engagement and Retention. A prototype was developed and a minimum viable product is undergoing final development.

ROADMAP

- The project is scheduled to go live in S2021 with improvements scheduled each month to enhance the system. Training and communication frameworks are being developed to ensure that all undergraduate advising staff and students have been trained and communicated to appropriately. The undergraduate student undergraduate advising experience at SFU is expected to enhance significantly as a result of the Advisor Link Project at SFU.

INDIGENOUS STUDENT CENTRE CASE MANAGER

MEMBERSHIP

Jessica La Rochelle	director (acting), Indigenous Student Centre
Lisa Ogilvie	associate director (acting), Indigenous Student Centre

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

The goal of the Indigenous Student Case Manager is to improve Indigenous student mental health and well-being by providing direct support and by helping students access and navigate the resources available at SFU and in the community. In 2018/2019, this project secured an additional counsellor with SEI funding during a time when the community was experiencing an increased need for support. This role provided both direct counselling and group support. This included drop-in group activities, where students check-in with each other and the counsellor in a low-barrier setting, while taking part in activities that promote social connection and conversation about shared concerns and experiences.

The impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities have resulted in a need for holistic support for Indigenous learners, which includes counselling support. As SFU increases programming for Indigenous learners, the need for case management by Indigenous mental health professionals has become clear. This project seeks to provide the necessary support to Indigenous students at SFU.

ROADMAP

- This project was postponed, but we are looking forward to proceeding in the coming year.

CENTRE FOR ACCESSIBLE LEARNING (CAL) – ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT

MEMBERSHIP

Mitchell Stoddard	director, Centre for Accessible Learning
Precious Ile	student development educator, Student Engagement and Retention
Paola Ardiles	faculty teaching fellow and lecturer, Social Innovation and Community Partnerships, Faculty of Health Sciences

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

Accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities are often not centered or acknowledged in broader university conversations and decisions. The Accessibility Project aims to consider the impacts of university processes and systems and identify gaps that impact students with disabilities at SFU.

The project aligns the strategic priorities of enhancing student learning experiences and EDI at SFU. This project planning and implementation will centre accessibility, equity, inclusion, universal design for learning (UDL) principles and the SEI principles.

The project aims to build meaningful relationships with students with disabilities, identify means of amplifying their perspectives, increase understanding of barriers to access, and further their sense of belonging and inclusion at SFU. The project will benefit the broader SFU community by identifying means to effectively engage students with disabilities in university conversations and priorities and by raising awareness of disability inclusion and accessibility in general.

In the pre-project planning phase (fall 2020), the project team conducted an environmental scan of disability awareness and education programming, approaches and university supports in colleges and universities in Canada and the United States. The environmental scan informed the brainstorm of a community consultation framework for engaging students with disabilities to gather student input on their experiences at SFU.

ROADMAP

In the short term (Phase 1 – spring 2021):

- establishing a consultation and engagement framework that includes processes, methodologies, methods (e.g., student advisory, surveys or focus groups) and building relationships with students with disabilities. Methodologies will be co-designed in consultation with students with disabilities through an intersectional lens that honours students' diverse lived experiences.
- recruited a co-op student as a research assistant to understand their experiences and how the institution approaches their needs.
- pilot curricular projects in partnership with faculty, such as a partnership with Paola Ardiles, Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). The experiential pilot project will engage students within the classroom, using equity-centered design and a creative problem-solving approach to generate student-driven ideas that address disability awareness and education at SFU. This in-classroom pilot aligns with SEI Phase 2 objectives for enhancing student learning experiences within the classroom.



Over the long term (beyond Phase 1):

- Learnings from Phase 1 will inform the implementation of subsequent project phases (e.g. additional pilot projects to embed process in courses), contingent on funding to continue to build trust and meaningful relationships that enhance the experience of students with disabilities.
- Develop recommendations on ways the university could meaningfully engage and ensure the perspectives of students with disabilities are reflected in broader university processes and decisions.

MEASURING COMPUTING SCIENCE STUDENT EXPERIENCE TO IMPROVE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN COMPUTING SCIENCE

MEMBERSHIP

Ouldooz Baghan Karimi	lecturer, School of Computing Science
Anchal Jain	research assistant, School of Computing Science

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

Recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in computing science is an important step toward diversity and inclusion. To support this goal, SFU Computing Science measures and plans to improve female enrollment. Current data suggests 17 per cent female enrollment at SFU for an undergraduate degree in computing science. This number is lower than other top Canadian universities, which have female enrollment at around 30 per cent.

As a focus group in the School of Computing Science, the Computer Science Diversity Committee designs different programs, ranging from outreach to support groups and student activities, to help diversity and inclusion in the computing science student community. The diversity committee believes feedback from the students is an

important and necessary step to understand the problems and to address them properly. This project will gather and analyze data and streamline the process for fine-grained measurement of student experience. This will help the School of Computing Science better steer their diversity programs to build a more inclusive environment to hopefully increase enrollment of women.

Therefore, the focus of this project is on designing a survey that can capture the desired information properly, and design and implement data processing to provide the requested data for decision making in a readily available diversity dashboard. The committee believes the outputs of this project, especially the surveys and one-on-one follow up interviews, if required, will benefit students in the School of Computing Science with improvements in diversity of their experiences, inclusion of their voices, and better preparation for their experiences in life after graduation and their contributions in building sustainable inclusive environments.

ROADMAP

- This project was approved and began implementation in 2020. The project team seeks to complete the project by 2021/2022.

GRADUATE STUDENT —KNOW YOUR RIGHTS GUIDE

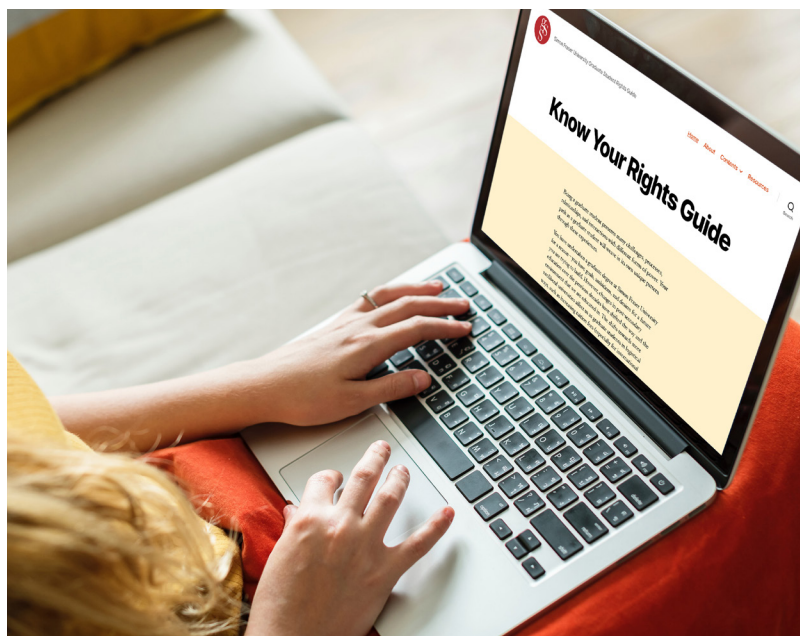
MEMBERSHIP

Harjap Grewal	advocacy and policy advisor, Graduate Student Society
Chantelle Spicer	research assistant, Graduate Student Society and MA student, Department of Anthropology
Pierre Cenerelli	executive director, Graduate Student Society
Rahil Adeli	director of academic relations

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

Know Your Rights Guide is an initiative led by the Graduate Student Society for graduate students, which will provide clearly expressed and practiced rights at Simon Fraser University. This working group engages with offices and groups at SFU that are involved in implementing, and advocating for, graduate student rights. In the future, this work will also include feedback from the GSS Board of Directors to ensure clear language and a clear vision for this resource.

The initial project launched in 2020. The project group produced a web and print version of the guide. The print edition distribution has been delayed due to COVID



ROADMAP

The scope has expanded to include two further priorities:

- Develop a workshop to accompany the guide that can be offered to graduate students in specific programs or during future orientation sessions;
- Prepare a document of policy recommendations for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in response to some concerns and gaps that were identified in the preparation of the guide.

The timeline of the project was adjusted to the end of August (from March 31, 2021) largely due to COVID-related adjustment in capacity and some delays from staff support to complete the guide.

HEALTHIER CAMPUS COMMUNITY

MEMBERSHIP

Martin Mroz	chair, director, Health and Counselling
Alisa Stanton /Yuna Chen	acting associate director health promotion, Health and Counselling
Wayne Heaslip	counsellor, Health and Counselling
Lisa Ogilvie	special projects, Health and Counselling

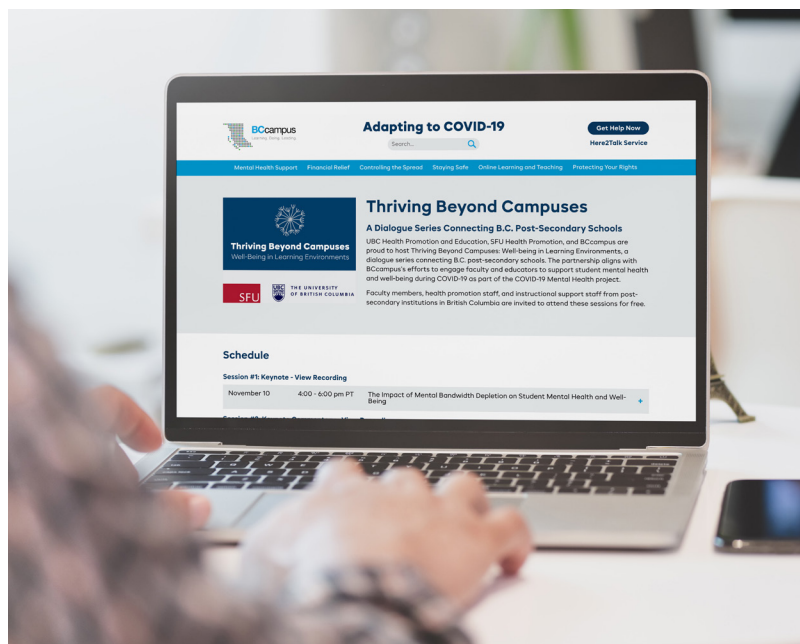


LOOKING BACK AT 2020

The Healthier Campus Community working group had two main flagship projects covering improvements for student accessing mental health supports, and the settings that they learn in, MySSP (My Student Support Program) and Well-being in Learning Environments 2.0.

MySSP is a 24/7 mental health service that provides services in a variety of languages and modalities to increase access for students who need support. This tool aims to augment existing in-house supports, and raise awareness of mental health concerns through educational resources. From 2018 to 2020, the SEI was the main funder for MySSP and helped launch the project. For SFU students outside Canada or North America, MySSP provided coverage and assistance at any time, with various languages supported by a wide network of healthcare providers.

The Well-being in Learning Environments 2.0 aims to provide instructional staff with updated resources for creating conditions for well-being in the classroom; to expand and further engage the network of faculty members who are committed to foster well-being in their teaching practice, and to evaluate the impacts on students and faculty. Led by the Health Promotion team and Centre for Educational Excellence, this work increases community capacity for responding to mental health and well-being. This project also includes developing well-being resources for graduate students and supervisors, in partnership with the Supervision for the 21st Century Working Group.



ROADMAP

The Well-being in Learning Environments 2.0 initiative has focused on expansion and engagement for the upcoming year with a three-part Thriving Beyond Campuses: Well-being in Learning Environments dialogue series planned with UBC and BCCampus over the course of the 2020-21 academic year, as well as:

- Semesterly newsletters to a network of more than 260 instructors and staff for supporting conditions, such as personal development, inclusivity, flexibility, and civic engagement within the learning environment.
- Eight projects to improve well-being in learning environments and measure their impact on students. This faculty-led investigation of innovative teaching practices is part of the integrated seminar and grants program, in collaboration with the Institute for the Study of Teaching and Learning in the Disciplines.
- Implement faculty specific events and other channels for increasing faculty engagement.

There will also be a focus on graduate student resources tailored specifically to them and their supervisors. Draft resources are complete and stakeholder engagement is in its final phases (in collaboration with the Supervision for the 21st Century Working Group).

SUPERVISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

MEMBERSHIP

Jeff Derksen	chair, dean and associate provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Roxanne Panchasi	associate dean, academic, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Sheilagh MacDonald	dean's secretary
Susan Brook	advisory member, graduate student clinical counsellor
Melissa McGregor	research assistant

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

Graduate supervision is the heart of graduate education and can be the source of a very productive professional relationship between the student and faculty member that extends beyond degree completion. However, it can also be a relationship filled with anxiety and troubled by murky communication. The consultations for S21C indicate we need to provide clarity around supervisory relationships and expand the notion of supervision beyond traditional models.

In 2020, the S21C working group welcomed Dr. Roxanne Panchasi, associate dean, academic. The working group drafted the new supervisory handbook that is written with the intention to provide a positive framework for the supervisory relationship at SFU. As well, S21C hosted a number of mental health workshops by Dr. Susan Brook, a clinical counsellor, to support graduate students through various stages of their student life at SFU. Some of those workshops included 'Postdoctoral Experience'; 'Challenging Perfectionism'; 'Mental Health & Well-being Support for SFU Graduate Students Workshop', 'The Imposter Syndrome' and 'Thesis Completion Group Support'. In 2020, this working group contributed to the work of the Healthier Campus Community working group around creating 'A Guide for Action on Well-Being through the SFU Supervisory Process'.

In January 2021, the working group introduced its speaker series and hosted a conversation with Dr. Jordan Abel, a Nisga'a writer and scholar from Vancouver and assistant professor in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta. Dr. Abel was joined by Dr. Deanna Reder (Cree-Métis), an associate professor in the Departments of Indigenous Studies and the Department of English at Simon Fraser University. Dr. Abel was invited to share his experiences as a graduate student and researcher.



ROADMAP

- In the coming year, workshops for graduate students and faculty members will follow the publication of the handbook and will reinforce the set of respectful and professional practices we wish to highlight. Simultaneously, the S21C working group is planning on hosting a speaking series to discuss topics on fostering a positive supervisory relationship, 'From Grad to Prof' and 'Remote Supervision'. Additionally, the working group seeks to continue hosting the mental health workshops delivered by Dr. Susan Brook.

NAVIGATING SFU POLICY REVIEW

MEMBERSHIP

Steve Birnie	chair, associate registrar, Information, Records, and Registration Services
Abhi Parmar	student
Alisa Stanton	associate director, Health Promotion
Wendy Norman	associate director, Student Engagement and Retention
Bernard Ryu	manager, Back on Track Program
Diana Koyanagi	service desk manager, IT Services
Jennifer Chou	student
Kris Nordgren	assistant registrar, Senate and Academic Services
Tina Edmundson	secretary, manager, Student Enrollment
Christie Chao	project research assistant, student
Yuna Chen	associate director, Health Promotion



LOOKING BACK AT 2020

Policies and procedures at SFU have developed organically and sporadically over time to deal with issues as they arise. As a result, from the macro-level, the policy landscape is littered with outdated, and often contradictory language.

A “student-centred” approach is still a relatively new concept in policy, where language is often staff and faculty-centric, and many fail to mention students at all. Students have regularly raised concerns about certain policies as indicated by the results of the annual Undergraduate Student Survey; further investigation, including gathering more input from students, will be needed to make meaningful change.

The purpose of the Navigating SFU Policy Review was to positively impact SFU student experience by supporting seven student-centred policies, processes and procedures across all three campuses.

As for many, the pandemic was a disruptor for the Navigating SFU project, though in a largely positive way. The hiring was indefinitely postponed, as remote hiring/supervision seemed to be too great a challenge when all committee members were adjusting to the new environment, and working overtime to get the university running smoothly. The existing research assistant was able to continue her work and completed all the research and reports over the spring/summer terms.

The working group has since been integrated with the policy subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS). With the background research in place, the working group was able to quickly support the policy initiatives necessary to support students in the shift to remote learning during the pandemic. This included extending the course withdrawal deadline and adapting the academic standing and continuance policy.

Exam hardship has long been a key concern raised by the Simon Fraser Student Society representatives on the Navigating SFU working group. To address this the VPA Office provided financial support for new exam scheduling software and SCUS fast-tracked changes to exam scheduling policies. This allowed for new procedures to be implemented in Fall 2020, rather than Fall 2021. With these improvements, zero students reported a demonstrable hardship with the Fall 2020 final exam schedule. There was a 50 to 60 per cent reduction in back-to-back exams and a similar reduction in two exams held within 24 hours.

ROADMAP

- In October 2020, as a result of the impact of the pandemic, remaining project funds were reallocated to other projects. This was done at the committee’s recommendation, as they believed they are positioned to complete the project with existing resources.

THE FUTURE OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE



The Student Experience Initiative has provided many insights into what we do well at SFU and where there remains room for growth. The future of the SFU student experience is one that presents many opportunities.

While the Student Experience Initiative may be coming to a close in 2022, student experience will remain a priority at SFU. We will continue to take important steps to enhance the experiences for all students at SFU, inside and outside the classroom. Bringing the student experience to the core of everything we do will become an ethos of SFU.

The future is bright.



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