

SFPIRG Policy and Procedures Manual

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Introduction

Mission Statement

Revised version passed April 11th, 2003

The Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) is a non-profit, non-partisan education and action centre dedicated to environmental and social justice. While our commitment to non-partisanship means that we are not aligned with any particular party, person, or cause, we do support the activities of politically engaged individuals and groups working toward positive environmental and/or social change. Our membership is primarily made up of students of Simon Fraser University (SFU); however, membership is open to staff, faculty, and others in the community who are interested in organizing around issues of public interest. SFPIRG is a member-funded and directed organization and operates according to principles of consensus decision making. We support groups and individuals by providing resources, training, and other opportunities for skills development. Our aim is to bring together community activists, researchers, and educators from diverse progressive political perspectives in order to work toward a just and sustainable world.

Specifically, we aim to:

- Promote and conduct research on issues of public interest,
- Foster alternative voices and social perspectives,
- Aid in the education of members and the public at large about social and environmental issues,
- Support and undertake appropriate citizen action, and
- Co-operate with other existing PIRGs and encourage the development of new ones as the occasion arises.

History

Public Interest Research Groups were initiated by Ralph Nader, an American activist first active on consumer issues. They began organizing on American and Canadian university campuses in the 1970s. The PIRG at SFU was created by students in 1981 through a cross-campus referendum and was originally called BC PIRG. Currently, there are PIRGs at university campuses in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Alberta and British Columbia. BC has three PIRGs: SFPIRG, VIPIRG at the University of Victoria, and PGPIRG at the University of Northern BC in Prince George.

Over the years, SFPIRG has grown into an established organization that provides students with a place to apply their knowledge in their personal lives and in the community at large. Important changes at SFPIRG include moving into a more spacious office and switching from a decision making process based on Roberts Rules of Order to one based on consensus. In addition, we have implemented a collective model for staff and have involved a greater number of undergraduate students.

Consensus Decision Making

Passed April 11th, 2003

In keeping with our commitment to fostering the active participation of a diverse spectrum of people, SFPIRG employs a consensus process for decision making. This process stresses the co-operative development of a decision through the active search for common ground. **Everyone's support is needed to finalize the decision, so softer or culturally undervalued voices are encouraged and attended to.** Both feelings and logical arguments are considered important in this process. When a proposal is not favourable to the whole group, time is often taken to find creative (and often better) solutions. This mode of decision making usually garners greater commitment to follow through on the decision, because everyone was involved in making it.

However, we recognize that employing consensus does not erase inequalities and power imbalances among members that are a function of larger structural disparities. As such, we are committed to improving our use of the consensus process in order to provide equal opportunities to all participants to speak and be heard. In order to realize this goal, we will provide all new members with training on how to employ the consensus process during meetings in an effective and equitable manner. All members including staff, board members, and action group participants are expected to familiarize themselves with the consensus process and to employ consensus decision making at their meetings.

Membership and Fees

Passed April 11th, 2003

All students of Simon Fraser University are automatically ordinary members of SFPIRG. The Simon Fraser Student Society collects membership fees from students and distributes them to SFPIRG. Current membership fees are \$1.50/semester for part-time students and \$3.00/semester for full-time students. Non-SFU students can also become associate members of SFPIRG by paying a \$2-9 sliding scale membership fee each fiscal year (Sept. 1 – Aug.31) and completing a membership form. All members are entitled to use the services of the SFPIRG, inspect SFPIRG documents (except for minutes of private, closed meetings), and attend and participate at general meetings. All members are entitled to be directors, provided that no more than two positions on the board are occupied by associate members at any one time. SFU students who do not wish to be members of SFPIRG can receive a membership fee refund. Please see the Fee Refund policy for more information.

Breach of Policy and Complaints

Passed April 11th, 2003

Any concerns about breaches of policy and/or complaints about the activities of SFPIRG and its members should be directed toward one of two SFPIRG ombudspersons. In serious cases, particularly those involving harassment or discrimination, the ombudspersons may decide to make recommendations to the board about possible consequences in response to actions of members that contravene the mandate and policies of SFPIRG. These consequences may include expulsion from the organization. **Expulsion of a member must follow the process outlined in SFPIRG's Constitution and Bylaws, Article 7 of Bylaw 2 - Membership in the Society:**

- a) Any member who acts in contravention of the constitution, bylaws, regulations, procedures, or principles of the Society may be expelled by consensus or unanimous decision of the board.
- b) The board shall give the member whose standing is being considered ten (10) days written notice of the meeting at which this will be discussed and the reasons why her/his expulsion is being considered.

Privacy

SFPIRG Privacy Policy

Approved Jan 23rd, 2007

1. SFPIRG shall comply with the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA), (hereinafter referred to as the Act). This includes the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, committees, Action Groups and anyone else involved in SFPIRG.
2. Personal information as defined by the Act is “**information about an identifiable individual and includes employee personal information but does not include (a) business contact information, or (b) work product information**”.
3. Personal information shall not be disclosed to outside persons or organizations, except as required by law, without the consent of the individual. Personal information shall not be sold to other persons or organizations.
4. Personal information shall not be included on the agenda or supporting documentation of any meetings of SFPIRG without the consent of the individual. Such consent shall include an understanding that such documents are publicly available to SFPIRG’s membership.
5. The following, or similar language shall be included in or posted clearly by all sign up sheets, petitions, and any other forms or documents designed to collect personal information for the Society and its branches: “This form has been created in compliance with the Personal Information Protection Act. The personal information you provide will be collected and used solely for _____ [fill in purpose here]. By providing it, you give the SFPIRG consent to use this information in this way only. This information will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any individuals unless the disclosure is necessary for the aforementioned purpose or is required by law. If you do not consent to this, please refrain from providing us with your information.”
6. The Board Organizer and the Administrative Coordinator jointly serve as Privacy Officers for the SFPIRG and shall be responsible for:
 - a. familiarizing themselves with the Act and the legal requirements that it places on the Society
 - b. coordinating the education of the SFPIRG's staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, committees and Action Groups concerning their obligations and responsibilities under the Act and this policy
 - c. ensuring that all forms, petitions, and other documents that are used to collect personal information clearly note the purposes for which such information shall be collected
 - d. receiving and responding to all personal information protection requests and complaints
 - e. ensuring that the SFPIRG maintains appropriate controls over all personal information that is under the control of the organization

- f. ensuring that the SFPIRG destroys personal information that may no longer be used or disclosed
- 7. All completed forms used to collect personal information shall be kept in a locked filing cabinet or box. Any electronic files containing information gathered from these forms shall be password-protected.
- 8. All personal information, if no longer being used, will be destroyed (ie shredded) one year after collection.

Diversity and Access

The SFPIRG Space

Passed June 6th, 2007

While the activities of SFPIRG extend throughout the university community and beyond, the SFPIRG space forms a base from which to work. As a result, it is important that the space is organized and managed in such a way that it enables the work of the SFPIRG mandate to be carried out. In addition, members using the space are to use them in a respectful and responsible manner (please refer to Diversity & Non-Discrimination and Personal Harassment section for more information). In order to encourage such use, SFPIRG is committed to fully orienting new members to the space as well as to the operations and policies of the organization. SFPIRG's aim is to ensure that the SFPIRG space is as accessible as possible.

Diversity and Non-discrimination

Passed June 6th, 2007

SFPIRG is committed to providing a safe and welcoming space for all people. We aim to do more than simply remove barriers to participation. Rather, we strive to provide a space where people of all backgrounds are included and where diverse perspectives and experiences are recognized as an equal part of the overall process and not as “other” or “outside.” While it is impossible to anticipate and accommodate all points of view in advance, we are dedicated to the belief that there is no one right way to live, and we therefore intend to foster an environment based on respect, curiosity and openness in our diversity.

In particular, we recognize that discrimination commonly occurs on the basis of the following factors: age, marital status, citizenship, class, ethnicity/ethnic origin, gender, sex, physical disability, learning disability, religion/spirituality, place of origin, racialization process, status or lack of status via the Indian Act, language, sexual orientation, sexuality, homelessness, low income status, family formation, education, degree of activism, physical or mental health development, community, appearance and HIV/AIDS status.

Discrimination may have the effect of withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, and advantage that are available to other members of SFPIRG and society as a whole. There are two main types of discrimination- direct and systemic.

We affirm that all PIRG participants have the right to equal treatment regardless of their status with respect to the above factors. In addition, we aim to continue educating ourselves about all forms of discrimination, so that we can better understand and work toward eliminating them.

We recognize that eliminating discrimination is a learning process, and we therefore do not expect all members to be fully knowledgeable about all types of discrimination before becoming involved with SFPIRG. Therefore SFPIRG actively encourages

members, board, and staff to educate themselves on diversity and access issues through training and skills building. **SFPIRG's commitment to diversity in its membership should be complemented by diversity outreach at all levels of its organization—particularly in combating organizational barriers that may be barring people from equal participation in SFPIRG's decision-making bodies (such as board, staff, and committees).** In order to ensure that this internal work is done, the Diversity and Access portfolio of the Board of Directors should be prioritized and supported through training.

SFPIRG supports all its members in working cooperatively toward eliminating discriminatory and oppressive behaviour within themselves, the organization, the university, and the wider community so that diversity in all forms will flourish. However, serious and/or ongoing discriminatory behaviour will be considered harassment and dealt with accordingly.

Access

Passed June 6th, 2007

SFPIRG is committed to enhancing access to our office space and events (including co-organized events) and to removing barriers to participation wherever possible. SFPIRG recognizes that it may not be possible for all members to access our office space and events with equal ease. In addition, we work to enable all members' participation by providing comprehensive orientation and training on the goals, operations, and policies of the SFPIRG.

Office Hours and After-Hours Access

Passed June 6th, 2007, Updated May 29th, 2014

The SFPIRG office and lounge are open Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., except on statutory holidays and university breaks. All staff members will have keys to open the office and lounge. In addition, board members can access the office and lounge after hours by using the door code. After-hours access via the door code for non-board members will be organized by the staff collective. The Administrative Coordinator will maintain a list of individuals authorized to have the door code to SFPIRG, will update the door code each semester, and will notify authorized individuals when the new code is available. Any issues arising with regards to non-board member office access will be referred to the board of directors.

Individuals must sign the SFPIRG Office Code Access agreement form before being given the door code. By signing the form, individuals agree not to disclose the door code to anyone, to check in with the Administrative Coordinator if they forget the code, and to sign in using the Office Check-In Form each time they access the back office using the door code. The agreement form will be kept by the Administrative Coordinator.

The access procedure is as follows:

1. Enter the code into the front lounge door. Leave the door open if opening the lounge for the day.
2. Enter the code into the lock box panel next to the back office door and press down on the latch. Remove the panel and use the key to unlock the door. Immediately replace the panel after unlocking the door.
3. Sign in on the Office Check-In Form.
4. Ensure all doors are locked when finished.

Physical Accessibility

Passed June 6th, 2007

SFPIRG is committed to offering a physically accessible space to all students. This applies to students who use wheelchairs as well as students with mobility, hearing, vision or other disabilities. In order to ensure that SFPIRG remains accessible to students and volunteers who use wheelchairs or other assistive devices, SFPIRG shall ensure that the office is physically accessible. In addition, SFPIRG shall ensure that, wherever possible, all out-of-office and off-campus meetings and events also meet accessibility guidelines.

Child Friendly Space

Passed June 6th, 2007

In order to enable the involvement of people with children and to ensure that they (as well as their children) feel welcome, SFPIRG is committed to making the office a child friendly environment. While SFPIRG does not provide childcare directly, we strive to realize our commitment to parents and children by providing a child friendly space in the SFPIRG office where toys, books, crayons and other appropriate materials are available for children to play with. In addition, we will provide childcare subsidies for all major SFPIRG events.

Accessibility Needs Subsidy

Passed June 6th, 2007

To enable the participation of people with disabilities or other accessibility considerations, SFPIRG will make available accessibility needs funds to cover interpreters, adaptive equipment, transportation, or other costs necessary for people with accessibility needs to attend SFPIRG events or do SFPIRG work. Those in need should complete a Childcare and Event Accommodation Form and have it signed by a staff member in advance of the event for which they require the subsidy. If the estimated cost is over \$75, the request should be addressed to the board. To receive the subsidy, members should submit their completed Childcare and Event Accommodation Form along with a receipt for childcare services.

Childcare Subsidy

Passed June 6th, 2007

To enable the full participation of students or volunteers with children, SFPIRG has available a childcare subsidy. This subsidy is made available for people who want to attend SFPIRG events or meetings (including those organized by Action Groups). People in financial need requiring assistance should fill in a Event Accommodation Form and have it signed by a staff member in advance of the event for which they require childcare. If the estimated cost is over \$75, the request should be addressed to the board. The subsidy will cover childcare costs for the period of the event as well as travel time to and from. The rate paid shall not be less than minimum wage plus \$2.50/hr. for one child, plus \$1.00/hr for each additional child. To receive the subsidy, members should submit their completed Event Accommodation Form along with a receipt for childcare services.

Publicizing Accessibility

Passed June 6th, 2007

SFPIRG's commitment to access will be made known via general publications and announced at all SFPIRG events. It is the responsibility of individual Action Groups to enact these policies for their events. In particular, publication for SFPIRG events should clearly indicate whether or not the event is physically accessible as well as include the following statement: "Childcare, transportation, and accessibility subsidies are available. Contact SFPIRG for details."

Ombudspersons

Passed Feb 6th, 2007

SFPIRG shall have at least 2 ombudspersons. They will be available to respond to concerns about the behaviour of members or to reply to feedback on how conflict is handled at SFPIRG. Anyone with concerns about SFPIRG is encouraged to contact either of these people before the situation escalates into a serious issue.

The positions will be filled by one staff member and one board member.

The role of the ombudsperson(s) is:

- To be a first contact for verbal complaints arising out of the SFPIRG environment
- To support the involved parties in resolution of the conflict
- To inform complainant
 - of related and relevant policies
 - of options for conflict resolution

Options for conflict resolution:

- The ombudsperson(s) may act as a mediator between the two parties involved in the conflict
- The ombudsperson(s) may bring in an outside mediator depending on the seriousness of the situation and context.

If it is an issue of harassment, the ombudsperson(s) shall inform the complainant of the protocol and if s/he files a complaint, is responsible for forming a complaints committee as laid out in the SFPIRG harassment policy.

The ombudsperson(s):

- shall remain neutral. Their role is not that of an advocate.

If the ombudsperson(s) initiates a procedure that affects the involved parties, the procedure must be agreeable by the involved parties.

In addition, the ombudspersons will work others at SFPIRG to:

- publicize the existence of the SFPIRG ombudspersons within SFPIRG
- research community resources on conflict resolution and help SFPIRG members to access them
- raise awareness about conflict resolution within SFPIRG membership and help to develop the capacity of SFPIRG members to resolve conflicts effectively and in a manner reflective of the mandate

Resources

Library and Resource Files

Passed April 11th, 2003

SFPIRG operates a Library and Resource Centre available to all members. Library and Resources centre materials are intended to complement those housed in the libraries of SFU. The materials available cover a broad variety of topics related to social, environmental and political issues from a wide range of perspectives. Through our library and resources, SFPIRG aims to reflect its commitment to a diversity of approaches to social and environmental justice.

The Library includes books, videos, CDs, DVDs, and periodicals which members can sign out. Books may be lent out for a period of two weeks. Periodicals, videos, CDs, and DVDs may be lent out for one week. Although no fines are applied to late materials, members are expected to return all materials on or before the due date. Failing to do so will result in the suspension of borrowing privileges until the overdue materials are returned.

The Resource Centre includes bound reports as well as unbound materials (including relevant articles from past issues of periodicals) called “resource files” that are arranged alphabetically by subject and stored in filing cabinets for members to access in the SFPIRG office only. These files may not be signed out; however, with permission from a board member or staff person, the files can be photocopied in the SFPIRG office (to a 15 page limit). The bound reports are also for use in the SFPIRG office space only.

The SFPIRG Library also provides access to the Women’s Centre Library for men interested in accessing that collection. The SFPIRG library houses a catalogue of resources available at the Women’s Centre, and members can request specific items via SFPIRG’s Education Coordinator. These materials can then be returned directly to the Women’s Centre by using their drop box.

Members are expected to use all resources respectfully and in a manner that ensures continued access for all members. Members are also encouraged to sit on the Resources Committee which manages the library and to make suggestions for on-going library purchasing. Wherever possible, SFPIRG aims to support local, independent book sellers by purchasing our resources from them.

Lounge

Passed April 11th, 2003

A lounge is available within the SFPIRG space that contains a fridge, microwave, couches, dishes, a coffee maker, and children’s toys (children’s books can also be found in the library). All members are welcome to use this space. Members are expected to clean up after themselves.

Button-Maker and Supplies

Passed July 24th, 2014

SFPIRG has a 1.5" DIY button-maker available for students, student groups and community organizations to borrow and use. The button-maker itself is available to rent for free, and comes with a graphic punch to cut out correctly-sized button images.

All groups are asked to return the button-maker within 3 calendar days, or risk losing button-maker rental privileges. Exceptions can be made to this deadline if arranged in advance with a staff member.

Button supplies come in increments of 50, and include metal fronts, pin backs and plastic covers. SFU student groups may receive their first 50 supplies per semester for free, and will be invoiced for any further supplies at the current cost rate of the supplies. External groups will be invoiced for all supplies used, at the current cost rate of the supplies. Any group wishing to use more than 450 supplies are welcome to use the button-maker, but are asked to speak with a staff member about how to purchase their own supplies.

Other Resources

Passed April 11th, 2003

The offices of the SFPIRG hold other resources that are available to members including computers, a printer, a scanner, a photocopier, a meeting room, a TV and VCR, a megaphone, a photocopier and a resource cabinet (including poster-making materials). All resources are available for SFPIRG-related work. Members wishing to use resources for other purposes that are consistent with the SFPIRG mandate should first secure permission from a board or staff member.

Computers are available to members, but the priority for use is for SFPIRG-related work. Members wishing to use computers should receive training on using the file directory. Also, before downloading files onto SFPIRG computers, members should secure permission from a board or staff member.

The printer is reserved for SFPIRG-related work only.

There are several phones available. The middle phone is designated for volunteer use. Members can make long distance calls regarding SFPIRG-related work; all long distance calls must be recorded in the Phone Log Book.

Members wishing to use materials from the Resource Cabinet must sign them out on the front of the cabinet.

Copies made on the photocopier machine should be recorded on the Photocopy Log Form.

Members can arrange for use of the meeting room, TV/VCR, and megaphone through a board or staff member.

Grants and Sponsorship

Introduction

One way that SFPIRG aims to fulfill our mandate is by making funds available to be granted to individuals or organizations engaged in local, grassroots social and environmental justice work. There are three categories of grants available each semester: small grants (up to \$500), large grants (up to \$1,000), and conference and workshop grants (up to \$200). In addition, \$500 is set aside for the annual Usamah Ansari Creative Justice Award.

Groups or individuals may also seek endorsement or co-sponsorship from SFPIRG. Endorsement means that the SFPIRG will announce its support of a group or an event, but does not necessarily involve a financial or time commitment. Co-sponsorship involves both a financial and a time commitment from SFPIRG toward an event or coalition that we are involved with.

General Grants Policy

Passed June 27th, 2013

The Grants Committee (composed of at least one staff member, one board member, and one volunteer) shall meet once per semester to review grant applications. Deadlines are posted on the SFPIRG website. At this meeting, the committee shall decide what level of grant shall be awarded to each request. Funding is available to SFU students and student groups, to community groups with an annual budget of less than \$200,000, and for projects that have a commitment to social and environmental justice.

Application for funding should be for events, projects and initiatives occurring within the current academic semester, or within the timespan of the two upcoming academic semesters. Retroactive applications for previous semesters will not be funded.

Preference will be given to:

- Groups and projects in the Lower Mainland
- Groups working within their own communities
- Groups working on the following issues: indigenous sovereignty; gender queer, trans* and two-spirit issues; disability justice (esp. invisible disabilities); anti-gentrification and affordable housing; food sovereignty; prison industrial complex & police brutality; migrant justice; climate justice; sex worker support / rights
- Groups that clearly demonstrate accessibility and long-term vision

SFPIRG will not fund:

- Individuals fundraising for student or work exchanges (This is because the number of these requests is quite high and the benefits of such exchanges are limited.)
- Groups or projects that contravene SFPIRG's own constitution and mandate
- Masters and PhD research at the University
- Groups fundraising to donate to other groups or causes (we prefer to donate directly)
- Events or projects that are held in spaces that are not wheel accessible, including washroom access.

All applications for funding should include the following information:

- Summary of the nature of the group or project
- Description of the intended use of the money
- Detailed timeline and budget for the project
- A description of how accessibility for people with disabilities will be built into the project/event – including the planning stages – and confirmation that only a fully accessible space will be used for the event/project itself.
- Contact information
- Name to whom the cheque should be written

In order to make information about grants awarded accessible, the Grants Committee will:

- Record all grants on the tracking chart
- Include documentation in the grants binder stating the amount, the group or individual receiving the grant, as well as the intent of the grant
- Present a semesterly report on donations to the Board of Directors

Conference and Workshop Grants

Passed June 27th, 2013

The Grants Committee is responsible for reviewing requests for funding from SFU students wishing to attend conferences and workshops. Budget Line 5620, Conferences and Workshops (\$600/yr), is designated for SFU students only, to a maximum of \$100 per fiscal year per person, with up to \$200 to be awarded per semester. If only one application is received in a given semester, the full \$200 can be awarded

Small Grants

Passed June 20th, 2013

Applications for up to \$500 fall under this category. Applications can be submitted by organizations or individuals. This fund is available to groups with little organizing experience as well as established groups. Can be used for small campaigns, one-time events, art projects, publications and other forms of social justice organizing.

Large Grants

Passed June 27th, 2013

Applications for up to \$1000 fall under this category. This fund available to groups and not to individuals. Groups applying for large grants must have a bank account in the organization's name, and must have previous experience organizing events or campaigns. In addition to meeting our general grants criteria, preference will be given to groups that share our organizational philosophies and values, including a commitment to anti-oppression work, consensus decision-making and grassroots organizing.

Usamah Ansari Creative Justice Award

Passed June 27th, 2013

In memory of SFPIRG volunteer Usamah Ansari, this annual \$500 award supports creative social justice work including art, poetry, music and writing. Individuals or groups can apply. Priority is given to communities of colour, refugees and youth. Application deadline is April 6th, the anniversary of Usamah's birthday.

Endorsement

Passed June 27th, 2013

SFPIRG is committed to endorsing educational and awareness-raising events, campaigns or groups with aims and philosophies that coincide with those of SFPIRG's mandate. SFPIRG will not endorse events that have the intent to initiate or engage participants in illegal activity. Groups or individuals seeking endorsement from SFPIRG (but not requesting further support) for an event should contact the Board of Directors *or* the staff collective. If the request for endorsement is successful, the group or individual has the right to formally announce SFPIRG's support of the event or campaign on any publications.

Co-sponsorship

Passed June 27th, 2013

SFPIRG may choose to co-sponsor events that support our mandate along with other organizations. Co-sponsorship involves an endorsement from SFPIRG as well as the commitment of funds and/or access to SFPIRG resources (such as photocopying). Any funding supplied by SFPIRG should be considered internal spending and is *not* a grant. Groups seeking co-sponsorship from SFPIRG should send an email or letter detailing the funds and/or resources requested and submit it to the Board of Directors *and* the staff collective. SFPIRG will only co-sponsor events that are at least minimally accessible (i.e. wheels can get in and there is a wheel-accessible washroom), and we require that access information be included in event promo materials.

Co-organizing

Passed June 27th, 2013

Co-organizing represents a third, more extensive commitment from SFPIRG toward an event or campaign. In addition to providing endorsement, funds, and access to resources, co-organizing involves both a financial and a time commitment from SFPIRG. As with co-sponsorship, any funding supplied by SFPIRG should be considered internal spending and is *not* a grant. While co-organizing does not necessarily mean that SFPIRG is the primary coordinator, it does indicate a commitment to the cause or event by becoming part of a larger coalition. Generally, this means that SFPIRG has volunteers, **board members or staff represented in the organizing of the group's events.** Groups seeking co-organizing from SFPIRG should submit a proposal to the Board of Directors *and* the staff collective which includes a description of the group(s) involved, a summary of the event, and an explanation of the expected commitment from SFPIRG. SFPIRG will only co-organize events that are at least minimally accessible (i.e. wheels can get in and there is a wheel-accessible washroom), and we require that access information be included in event promo materials.

Hiring and Selection

Hiring Policies

Passed Sept 15th, 2006

Affirmative Action

SFPIRG is an affirmative action employer. This means that, in order to increase the range and diversity of perspectives, skills, and experiences presently existing within SFPIRG, hiring preference shall be given to qualified applicants from groups who face systemic discrimination as well as barriers to access and participation in SFPIRG.

Posting

Please refer to the document, "How to put out a Posting" to guide you through the specifics and current information on sending out a job posting.

SFPIRG's affirmative action policy shall be included in all job postings, along with the following: "Please discuss any barriers you may face in your cover letter. Applicants are encouraged to include skills and experiences other than those outlined. SFPIRG is committed to accommodating people with mental and physical disabilities, including, for example, adaptive technologies."

Postings should include, where relevant, the start & finish dates of the job, the salary/rate of pay, hours, union information, required skills, duties & responsibilities, application procedures and a description of the position. Postings should indicate that only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

Jobs shall be posted for at least 10 working days. The posting shall be distributed as thoroughly as possible to communities throughout the lower mainland that face systemic barriers.

Job posting locations should include, but not be limited to :

On Campus:

- SFU Employment Centre (HCCC/Workopolis)
- Women's Centre
- Out on Campus
- ACHSA
- Students United For Disability Support
- International Students Office
- International Students Constituency Group
- Centre For Students With Disabilities
- First Nations Student Association
- Native Students Centre

- SFSS Offices, General & Executive
- CUPE 2396 list
- SFPIRG website
- CJSF
- my.sfu.ca
- Residence
- TSSU
- Peak Classifieds
- Women Studies Student Union
- Other related/relevant campus departments

Off Campus:

- Local resource/community centres/offices catering to immigrants, women, people of colour, the LGBTQ community, low-income people, people with disabilities, environmental groups, youth community, social and environmental justice groups.
- Community-based and campus employment centres
- Other campus student papers
- Other campus career centres

For Permanent Postings:

- Paid ads in at least one or two community newspapers where job hunters look such as: Vancouver Sun (weekend edition), Georgia Straight, and Employment Papers
- Other Canadian PIRGs
- www.charityvillage.com

Note: If eligibility for a position is limited (i.e.: SFU students only), this should be clearly indicated in the posting.

Committee Membership

All hiring committees should be composed of at least one staff member, one board member, and one volunteer. Hiring committees should not be composed of more than one permanent staff member. In keeping with an anti-oppressive, affirmative action framework, committees should strive to have diverse membership, representing a variety of backgrounds. If this is impossible to achieve with available staff/board/volunteers, committees should recruit extra members from outside SFPIRG, including (but not limited to):

- Other PIRGs
- Women's Centre
- First Nations Student Association
- Out on Campus
- ACHSA

- International Students Group
- Students United For Disability Support

All committee members must familiarize themselves with the following SFPIRG policies:

- Hiring
- Conflict of Interest
- Diversity and Access
- Article 34 from the Collective Agreement (Hiring, Transfer & Probation)

Hiring Process

The hiring committee shall strive to have as speedy a process as possible. Long processes can reduce the pool of available candidates, especially low-income candidates, as they take other jobs. A decision should be made within two weeks of the closing date for applications.

Hiring committees should, whenever possible, avoid doing second interviews, as this lengthens the process and puts more stress on both candidates and committee members. However, it is recognized that sometimes, in order to make a good and accountable decision, this may be necessary. Making use of candidate's references can reduce the need to do this.

If the hiring committee is not comfortable with the pool of candidates, then the position may be re-posted. This is especially encouraged for the hiring of permanent positions. The re-posting should be more widely distributed to different communities and places in order to receive a wider pool of applicants.

The process shall remain confidential. This is especially important at SFPIRG because committee members may well know some of the applicants. The only information to be given out to board members, applicants or anyone else outside of the hiring committee is:

- The total number of applicants
- The total number of interviews
- Breakdown of applicants (i.e.: how many women, people of colour, people with disabilities etc.)
- Details on the hiring process
- Suggestions for the future hiring processes

All resumes will be sent to confidential recycling for shredding within 2 weeks of the end of the hiring process.

Hiring committee members shall observe SFPIRG's Conflict of Interest policy.

Affirmative action is a priority at SFPIRG. To enact the Affirmative Action policy, hiring committees should reflect upon where SFPIRG is lacking in representation of historically marginalized groups.

Volunteer Experience within SFPIRG should not take greater precedence over other applicant qualities, skills and experiences (ie should be considered on equal ground as other applicant assets).

Training

Full & adequate training of new staff members shall be provided or otherwise arranged by the Hiring Committee. As well as general training about SFPIRG and their specific duties, the hiring committee shall ensure that specific needs identified during the hiring (i.e.: computer skills, consensus training, etc.) are addressed during training.

The Hiring Committee should keep in mind the differences between permanent and temporary staff positions. It is important to recognize the implications of hiring permanent staff.

If consensus cannot be reached amongst the staff as to which staff member will sit on the hiring committee, then the board will make the decision.

Conflict of Interest:

Passed April 11th, 2003

A person is in a conflict of interest situation when:

- a) They, their family member, relative or spouse stand to gain, financially or otherwise, as a result of a decision made by the Board or any committee, or:
- b) They do not act in the best interest of SFPIRG by compromising their position as a board member, committee member or paid staff member of SFPIRG as a result of involvement with an individual, group or organization (this does not include one's membership in a cultural, racial, gender, etc. group).

Spouse:

Co-habiting partner of the same or opposite sex or gender.

Board and paid staff members of SFPIRG should act in the best interests of SFPIRG. Board members and paid staff members should avoid all conflict of interest and even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Board and paid staff members should immediately declare a conflict of interest and excuse themselves from the decision making process and discussion when appropriate.

Board or paid staff members should raise the issue of a potential conflict of interest involving another board or paid staff member whenever they feel one may exist and the person in question does not declare a conflict of interest. The board or paid staff member may then discuss the issue and ask the person with the conflict of interest to excuse themselves from the decision making process and discussion when appropriate.

If an ongoing conflict of interest situation is identified, the board or paid staff member will be asked to remove themselves from the conflict of interest or, if this is not possible or desirable, to resign from their position at SFPIRG.

Probationary Period for Staff

Passed April 11th, 2003

In accordance with the Collective Agreement, a probationary period of 2 months for permanent staff and one month for temporary staff will be in effect.

In the case of permanent employees, a review committee (made up of the original members of the Hiring Committee, or, if they are not available, the two Staff Liaisons) will submit a report to the board on the new employee's performance. The review committee will begin collecting feedback about the new staff member's performance one month after their start date. Feedback should be collected from as many staff/board members and volunteers who have worked with the new staff member as possible. In addition to providing feedback on the new employee's performance, the review committee will recommend to the board whether or not the employee's probationary period should end. This report will also be made available to the employee. If the board feels that the probationary period should be extended or that the employment should be terminated, then they must contact the union as soon as possible.

In the case of temporary employees, a review committee will only be struck if any SFPIRG member has raised concerns about their performance within the employee's first month of work.

Staff Appraisals

Passed October 8th, 2013

Appraisals Purpose

Staff Appraisals are a vital part of SFPIRG's attempt to grow and develop both the skills of its staff and the soundness of its organizational structure. Appraisals are conducted by the Board via the Human Resources Committee on an annual basis.

Most of the time, SFPIRG is such a busy beehive of activity that the Board does not have an opportunity to provide feedback to our staff on how they are doing. Evaluations allow the Board to do this, and they enable the staff to be more aware of how the general SFPIRG community views the work that they have been doing.

Just as importantly, evaluations allow staff to provide feedback to the Board, so that the Board knows whether it has been doing an acceptable job of caring for its staff, and whether process, style, or structural changes at SFPIRG are required (which they inevitably will be in an ever-changing organization).

SFPIRG is a unique organization in that the Board is the Employer of the staff; and at the same time Board members are often being mentored by staff members. Given these dual hats that both Board and Staff have to play, it is important that in undertaking responsibility for the Appraisal process, the Board also seeks external training where possible to equip them with the skills and confidence required to conduct the appraisals. For example, Vantage Point offers workshops on how to do performance reviews for non-profit Boards.

Appraisals can also provide the opportunity to set some personal and organizational goals for the future year. In short, they help everyone give feedback to each other, in a structured, non-confrontational manner, and hopefully can allow all of us to make SFPIRG a better and stronger organization.

It is the right of all staff to have an evaluation and the responsibility of the Board to see to it. It is the responsibility of the Board as a whole to ensure that everyone understands the appraisal policy and process; that appraisers feel competent and supported to carry out their role; and that any fears or concerns surrounding conducting the appraisals are addressed. It is also the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the parameters of confidentiality are discussed and they are clear to everyone.

This guide that you are reading has been adapted from a guide written by OPIRG – Guelph, and is designed to assist Board Members in conducting Staff Appraisals by outlining the process and the resources available.

Appraisals Timeline

Permanent Employees: Permanent employees should have an appraisal once per year, once they have completed the probationary period. Appraisals can also be initiated at **other times at either the whole Board's or any individual employee's request**. If the Board wishes to conduct extraordinary appraisals outside of the annual cycle, it is recommended that the whole staff collective be appraised as opposed to individuals being singled out. The Board also needs to have consensus collectively about initiating an extraordinary appraisal process and the reasons for doing so. If an employee wishes to have an appraisal conducted, they should approach one of the Staff Liaisons to initiate it. An exit interview should be done, where feasible, if an employee is leaving the position.

Probationary Employees: New employees are on probation for the first 8 weeks of employment according to the Collective Agreement, Article 34.3b. When the probationary period is almost over, an appraisal of the employee should be conducted upon which, barring any major issues, they should formally be made permanent. This initial 2-month appraisal allows for minor problems to be noted early and ironed out as well as allows for mutual feedback and adjustment between the Board and the employee, as well as between the new employee and other staff. This appraisal should ideally be conducted by members of the Board, however if necessary staff can also be called upon to take on the role of Appraiser in this instance.

Work-Study and Summer Employees: The Board does not hold appraisals for these employees. Permanent staff may evaluate people in these roles if it is deemed useful or necessary.

Board Evaluations: No mechanism really exists for doing this. However, we do have a Board Self-Reporting Form for when Board members conclude their roles. The form can be found in: Server - Share – Admin File Server – Board of Directors.

Board members are also encouraged to write exit reports about their term on the Board, major achievements and/or issues, work undertaken, and anything they would like to see the next Board follow-up on. These reports will be made available to incoming Board members to give them some institutional history and background.

Volunteer Appraisals: SFPIRG does not currently conduct volunteer appraisals.

Exit Interviews: **An exit interview should be done upon a Staff Person's departure from a position and / or they should be asked for an exit report.** The emphasis of the exit interview will be to get feedback from the staff person of their experience working at SFPIRG, comments about their role & job description, areas of outstanding work that need follow-up and final thoughts they would like to leave with the organization for follow-up. **This can also be a time to share feedback on that person's contributions to the organization and experience of working with them.**

Appraisals Checklist and Forms

A complete checklist of procedures and timelines, and all of the relevant appraisal forms can be found:

Server - Share – Admin File Server – Organizational Development – Policies & Procedures – Appraisals

Board Selection

Passed April 11th, 2003

These are the procedures to follow when the board is looking for new members outside the election period.

- 1) Appoint members to the committee. The committee should be comprised of a board member, a staff member, and a general volunteer. As per the board responsibilities, the Board members who are leaving should be on the committee. Staff should, as much as possible, rotate participation of this committee. Board members and staff are jointly responsible for finding a general volunteer to sit on the committee. Board members on the committee are responsible for scheduling meetings.
- 2) At the first meeting, members of the committee will identify potential candidates they can approach. Also, the deadlines for submission of applications will be established. Advertising duties will be distributed. They include:
 - a) Making a poster and distributing it.
 - b) Placing a paid ad and/or classified ads in *The Peak*
 - c) Sending e-mails to PIRG lists
 - d) Placing ads in the campus info monitors with the Instructional Media Centre.
- 3) Print copies of the application form and place at the front desk. Inform the Reception Coordinator and the Volunteer Coordinator. Set up a mailbox for collecting applications.
- 4) At the second meeting, applications are reviewed and interviews scheduled. Committee members decide who will call interviewees. The interview questions are reviewed and distributed amongst the interviewers (not more than one board member, staff, and volunteer should attend the interviews, to minimize intimidation of the interviewees).
- 5) After the interviews, the committee should meet to decide on the candidates. Once the decision is made, the board should be notified to give approval and the new board members should be notified. Committee members will need to schedule orientation times with the new board members. This orientation includes the handing out of an orientation package and a guided tour of the office.

Forms and interview questions can be found in the Forms folder in the Board Members' Files.

Probation and Recall of Board Members

Passed April 11th, 2003

A trial period of eight weeks is in effect for each new board member. At the end of the first eight weeks, the Board Selection Committee will determine whether a member will continue to sit on the board and will offer any feedback that may be required as to how to better fulfill their responsibilities.

Concerns about a Board member's performance after the first eight weeks should be addressed to one of the SFPIRG ombudspersons. If the behaviour of a Board member contravenes the mandate and policies of SFPIRG, the ombudspersons may decide to make recommendations to the remaining board members about possible consequences.

These consequences may include recall. Recalling a board member must follow the process outlined in SFPIRG's Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaw 4(4) – Recall.

Missing Board Meetings

Passed April 11th, 2003

Board members are expected to attend all board meetings. If extenuating circumstances do not allow for attendance, board members should notify the rest of the board of their absence in advance of the meeting. If a board member misses three consecutive meetings with notice, the board organizer will check in to see if there are ways to support that member's full participation. Board members who miss three consecutive meetings without notice will be considered to have vacated their seat on the Board of Directors.

Financial

Writing Cheques

Passed June 27th, 2013

Anyone requiring payment must fill in a cheque requisition form and submit it to the Administration Coordinator along with a supporting document. A supporting document is an invoice, a receipt, a letter requesting funding, or any document that clearly explains what the expense is and who the payment is going to.

Cheques are usually written every two weeks.

The Administrative Coordinator is responsible for making sure the cheques are written. The Administrative Coordinator is not permitted to be a cheque signer. It is preferable to have 4 people who are authorized to sign cheques. At least 2 board members must have signing authority. The cheques must be signed by two of the current authorized signors. At least one signature on all cheques should be that of a board member, whenever possible. People may not sign cheques made out to themselves.

Budget

Passed June 27th, 2013

Budget Purpose

The SFPIRG financial year goes from September to August of the following year (e.g. September 1st, 2012 to August 31st, 2013). A budget must be developed to ensure that overspending on certain line items does not occur so that the organization runs out of money to pay for others. The budget should reflect the current goals and priorities of SFPIRG, as well as be in accordance with our philosophy and values. However, budget numbers are not fixed and can be adjusted throughout the year accordingly; if one area is overspent in the current year, the following year's budget should be adjusted accordingly.

Budget Process

A Finance Committee will be struck in order to work on creating the budget and a process through which to get input. The Finance Committee, in conjunction with the treasurer and Administrative Coordinator (who will also sit on the committee), will come up with initial proposals. These proposals will be based on last year's spending, last year's budget, agreed changes in priority for the new year and general input and feedback. The budget process will include all board and staff, and as many volunteers as possible. Feedback and recommendations will be solicited from committees and groups affected by different elements of the budget. (For example, the resource committee would give input and recommendations for the resource section of the budget). The SFPIRG Board of Directors must pass the final budget. The final budget should be passed

no later than October 31st of the year the budget is for. The budget should also be reviewed at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters, and adjusted as necessary.

Financial Sustainability

In order to ensure the long-term financial stability and sustainability of SFPIRG, 2% of the annual membership fees should be placed into an emergency savings account. This account should only be accessed in the event of unforeseen, emergency circumstances. Furthermore, the Finance Committee shall strive to create a budget with a surplus of 0.5% of the annual membership fees. This is to allow for flexibility in the budget, without having to access the emergency savings account.

Carrying Over Staff and Board Training Budget

Policy passed Oct. 22nd, 2008

The individual allocation of the training budgets for staff and board members may be carried over from the previous fiscal year for a maximum of one fiscal year.

Petty Cash

The Administration Coordinator will maintain petty cash. All money taken from petty cash requires a receipt. A float of at least \$40 must be maintained. Under no circumstances can money be borrowed from petty cash. No revenue should be put into petty cash. Petty cash must be kept in a locked location.

Events

Large events require a budget in advance. This must be presented to the board. A copy of the approved budget will be given to the Administration Coordinator. This is in order for the Administration Coordinator to be clear about what spending has been authorized (i.e. what cheques can be written).

Other Payments

Passed June 27th, 2013

CUPE 3338 dues will be paid out at the end of each month.

Receiver General payments will be paid out at the end of each month and are due by the 15th of the following month

Payroll

Staff are paid bi-weekly. Refer to the collective agreement for further details.

Fee Refund Policy

Passed June 27th, 2013

SFU students who do not wish to be members of SFPIRG can receive a membership fee refund. Students who receive this refund will no longer be members of SFPIRG and will not be able to access the resources available.

The fee refund date should be week 4 of each semester, and will run for 4 consecutive days, from noon – 4pm. An advertisement announcing the fee refund period should be placed in The Peak the week of the fee refund period. Notification shall also be placed on the door of SFPIRG 2 weeks in advance.

Representatives of SFPIRG giving out membership fee refunds should:

- Explain that the student receiving the refund will no longer be a member of the organization
- Have them fill out their name, student number and signature on the fee refund chart

Refund amounts are as follows:

Part-time student: \$1.50

Full-time student: \$3.00

In order to receive a refund, students must come by in person and provide the following:

- 1) Receipt of fee payment
- 2) Registration form indicating full-time or part-time student status
- 3) Student card

Students cannot collect a fee refund on another student's behalf.

Year End

The Administration Coordinator will liaise with the Accountant in order to supply the documentation required to finish off the financial year-end and for the production of annual financial statements.

Other Financial Matters

Passed June 27th, 2013

The Bank Statement must be reconciled every month, after the statement is received.

Semesterly financial statements will be presented at board meetings by the treasurer or administration coordinator.

Living Wage

Purpose

Passed June 27th, 2013

At SFPIRG, it is important to us to be aware of and maintain corporate social responsibility. We strive to make decisions and take actions that have a positive impact on our community, our staff and the people we serve. As a responsible employer, we believe that our employees need to earn a wage that sustains a lifestyle that meets the needs of daily living and provide some discretionary income. We recognize that paying a live wage constitutes a critical investment in the long-term prosperity of our organization by fostering a dedicated, skilled and healthy workforce.

Definition

Passed June 27th, 2013

The living wage is the hourly rate of pay that enables wage earners living in a household to:

- Feed, clothe and provide shelter for their family
- Promote healthy child development
- Participate in activities that are an ordinary element of life in the community
- Avoid the chronic stress of living in poverty

This hourly rate is calculated based on the living expenses of a family of four with two children aged 4 and 7, with both parents working full-time (35 hours/week). In BC 85% of families are headed by couples and 62% have two or more children. Living expenses are calculated in 10 categories – Food, Clothing and Footwear, Shelter, Transportation, Child Care, Medical Services Plan Premiums, Non-MSP Health Care, Parents' Education, Contingency Fund and Other (such as personal care, furniture, household supplies). The cost of government deductions (provincial and federal taxes, Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan contributions) and the value of government transfers like the Canada Child Tax Benefit are also factored into the calculation. The annual living wage hourly rate is calculated annually by the Living Wage for Families Campaign.

Application

Passed June 27th, 2013

The policy applies to all employees employed by SFPIRG, as well as all employers employed by a contractor or sub-contractor who perform services directly or indirectly for SFPIRG on a regular ongoing basis.

Direct Staff:

- Staff will earn at minimum a Living Wage.

Contracted Staff:

- Where services are contracted, e.g. food service, cleaning, etc., we choose vendors/service providers that also pay a living wage to their staff similar to this policy. This clause covers external contracts that provide services for SFPIRG on a regular ongoing basis, that is for at least 120 hours of labour per year.
- Living Wage clauses are included in all agreements and renegotiated agreements with contractors we hire.

Benefits in Consideration

Passed June 27th, 2013

In instances where non-mandatory benefits are provided to staff, the Living Wage may be adjusted to reflect the positive impact these benefits have on the employee's ability to meet basic needs and have some discretionary income.

- These benefits include health, dental, and disability coverage for staff covered by this policy.
- Benefits may be provided on a cost-shared basis; however, the premiums paid by the employee cannot reduce the wage to below an acceptable level with respect to a Living Wage.

Accountability

Passed June 27th, 2013

SFPIRG maintains its participation in this policy through the Living Wage Employer Recognition Program. We are accountable for upholding and keeping current with this policy. SFPIRG will ensure that a relevant process is in place for employees to raise any issues relating to the Living Wage Policy in a safe and confidential manner.