

Student communities are diverse, with multiple different needs. University education, just like any formal education, is a way to receive knowledge, but how much of that knowledge turns into wisdom, understanding or something transferrable out in the real world? How much do we learn and grow from it? And how much do we take that knowledge, that vision and turn it into action? Into social Change? Into making a difference in the lives of people? Into making the world a better place for everyone? For a science student such as myself, my SFU experience was completely devoid of instilling me with any understanding of diversity, inclusion and social, environmental and behavioral justice, if it weren't for SFPIRG. Within the curriculum, there never was a course that focussed on understanding personhood, diversity, anti-oppression for me to take and SFPIRG filled those gaps.

During my time at SFU, I enjoyed the pursuit of knowledge, I thoroughly enjoyed developing a toolkit of skills and knowledge that made me a better informed, more responsible person and continue to make me a successful professional.

My work with SFPIRG certainly made my toolkit for making my knowledge transferable to workplace and making a difference in the world more robust. It made me a more informed person and enabled me to learn, real life social justice in action, and empowered me to see the world from a more informed lens, helping me develop my unique perspective. SFPIRG not only contributes to making SFU an inclusive university community but also supplements the curricula providing guidance to many students- semester after semester- in their socially focused projects, curricular and extracurricular assignments and supports students and faculties of departments such as Gender studies, Indigenous studies, Health Sciences and many others. Moreover, SFPIRG makes many valuable student volunteer and work-study experiences available to students thereby empowering and supporting them with their educational and vocational goals. When I was a student at SFU and actively involved in the student community- I had the opportunity to run SFPIRG as a member of the Board of Directors, I also had the opportunity to attend the National PIRG conference. It was one of the most profound experiences of my academic career to have the opportunity to learn and grow so much. These experiences, continue to enable, empower and inspire me to now run my own business as well as open a non-for-profit addressing stigma around mental health within my community.

SFPIRG is one of the many Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) in Canada and in my experience, an essential part of our campus community. My involvement with SFPIRG all those years ago, makes me a more informed, more conscientious individual, now that I am navigating the professional world and seeking further education. In fact, in my daily personal and professional life, I draw more from my

hands- on non-profit governance and organizational experiences with SFPIRG than the learning experiences from many of my in-class hours at SFU.

It is heartbreaking to hear that SFPIRG is once again, facing an imminent loss of our space, when it is such an organization so pivotal to many of our SFU experiences, our academic and professional careers.