

To whom it may concern,

My name is Scott Neufeld and I am a PhD student in the Department of Psychology at SFU. I am writing this letter to express my appreciation, and support for the important and valuable work of SFPIRG on campus.

One of my earliest memories of SFPIRG was as a new MA student in Fall 2013 wandering around my new campus, checking out the sights and services. I came across the SFPIRG office and popped inside to say hello. I was greeted by a friendly woman who welcomed me to SFU as a new grad student, and offered to help me learn more about how to do my work as a TA with an anti-oppression lens, for example by getting more information on how to interact with transgender or gender non-conforming students in a way that would be inclusive and respectful. I appreciated SFPIRG's making me feel welcomed at SFU, as well as the offer of support for me to do my work as a grad student in ways that would make SFU a more welcoming and inclusive space for all.

As I continued in the graduate program at SFU I would regularly check out the SFPIRG website. I admired the myriad opportunities they had for students of all stripes to get engaged in the work of social inclusive and social and environmental justice in and around campus. I only wished I had more time and energy to get involved in such awesome programs as Letters To the Inside or their various practical and interesting workshops and trainings on anti-oppression, body positivity and .....

One area that especially drew my interest was the Action Research Exchange program (ARX). The program offered a nexus between community organizations with research questions in need of answering and SFU students in search of community-based research projects. This struck me as such a valuable way of ensuring community-engagement and community-based research is truly community led and results in products that are of practical use for the communities involved. This is community engagement at its best. I got involved in a small project with PACE Society, a peer-run organization that supports sex workers in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), helping research peer-run models of organizational governance to improve their practice as an organization.

In early 2016, I and a colleague in the Department of Psychology received a small grant to organize three workshops on "diversity training" for psychology students and faculty. We wanted to ensure these workshops didn't merely focus on "understanding difference" as a means of making our practice more respectful but that we ground these conversations in an understanding of the roots of oppression and prejudice that make 'diversity training' necessary. Kalamity Hildebrandt, SFPIRG's very gifted anti-oppression training workshop facilitator (who plays several other important roles at

SFPIRG in addition!), graciously offered to come to the psych department on a saturday and provide a full-day (7 hours) training for about 20 students and faculty for the ridiculously low cost of \$50. Their willingness to offer this invaluable training on a sliding scale enabled us to make the small grant we had received go further than it would have without SFPIRG and Kalamity's generosity, and we were very grateful for the sensitive and insightful information and exercises Kalamity provided as a general introduction to systems of injustice, privilege and anti-oppressive practice. This was the perfect groundwork to lay before continuing with follow-up workshops on Queer competency training and Indigenous cultural competency.

Most recently, I have been very grateful for the insights and generosity of SFPIRG (and specifically Kalamity once again) in helping me to prepare for a series of workshops on community research ethics in the DTES (a project entitled, "Research 101"). Kalamity's experience coordinating the Action Research Exchange program at SFPIRG (currently on hiatus), and facilitating countless workshops is an invaluable resource I can draw on to help me think through the complexities of these upcoming workshops in a way that will enable them to be as useful and collaborative as possible. I am so grateful for SFPIRG's support with this preparation, and am proud to name them as a partner in the Research 101 project.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate how important I feel it is that SFPIRG continue to have the space and capacity to do its valuable work on campus. There are so few resources on campus for students and faculty alike to so easily draw on for support in the difficult work of unlearning our privileged entitlements, identifying the matrices of oppression and dominance that we are all entangled in, and growing in our capacity to do our work in ways that foster inclusion, respect, and welcome. SFPIRG offers the support to do this, and so much more, making them an integral part of the SFU community, and an invaluable resource to help students and faculty work towards a vision of making SFU the most welcoming, inclusive and community engaged place it can be.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Vanier Scholar (SSHRC)