

My name is Tsatia Adzich, and I am a queer Cree and Metis woman. I attended Simon Fraser University from September 2011 to December 2015, and was an active part of the campus community. I graduated with a Bachelor's of Arts in Communications and First Nations Studies with Honours, and was nominated as the convocation speaker for the Faculty of Communications, Art, and Technology for the June 2016 convocation ceremony. Since graduating from SFU, I have completed a Masters of Arts in Indigenous Governance at the University of Victoria, and am currently working on a Masters of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia. I have served on the board of the Metis Nation of British Columbia as the Minister of Youth, as well as the Chairperson for Metis Youth British Columbia.

I arrived to Vancouver in 2011 from the small northern community of Smithers, BC, and one of the first places that I truly felt like I had found a place that I could be myself was with Simon Fraser Public Interest Group. Adjusting to the big city and all of the ideas and conversations that I was encountering for the first time was overwhelming, and SFPIRG helped me feel comfortable to actually be part of those conversations in a meaningful way. SFPIRG helped me engage in movements that I hadn't realized I was passionate about prior to that, and set me on a journey of self-discovery and community accountability that I will always be grateful for. This includes being part of the organizing committees for campus events like the 2013 SFU Says No to the Pipelines Rally, and advocating for low income campus housing pending the closure of the Louis Riel building. Serving on the board of SFPIRG gave me the confidence to pursue leadership opportunities beyond campus, and to speak up for what I believed in and wanted to see changed, both at SFU as well as in the broader Vancouver community.

To me, the spaces that SFPIRG offered were havens during hectic exam times, a library to discover new authors, and cozy corners to develop exciting and lasting friendships with like-minded folks. The staff helped me grow in so many ways, and always made time to talk through whatever I was struggling with. It was a place of discovery, understanding, and of community that was invaluable to me as a queer Indigenous woman, who during my time at SFU was still figuring out what that meant. I am proud of who I am today because of the resources, the community, and the opportunities that SFPIRG offered, and continues to offer students who have come after me. I developed friendships and networks that I still value and care for today in the meeting rooms and the office spaces of SFPIRG. Its proximity to other campus community spaces, including the First Nations Student Association, the Women's Centre, CJSF 90.1 FM campus radio, and Out On Campus made being on campus an experience that I cherish. Part of the reasons that I look back so fondly on the 4 years that I spent at SFU is because of the vibrant memories and meanings that I owe to SFPIRG, both as an organization but also as a home.

Tsattia Adzich