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Unceded Coast Salish Territories

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What is SFPIRG?

The Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) is a student-funded and student-directed centre dedicated to social and environmental justice.

PIRGs were established across North American campuses in the 1970s and ‘80s as a way for students to advocate for social change. SFPIRG was set-up by students on SFU's Burnaby campus in 1981! SFPIRG has done loads of amazing work over the years and has positively impacted the lives of students and the wider community.

Our mission is to engage students and community in social and environmental justice. Areas of work include education, action, research and community-building initiatives. We are non-partisan, which means we are not allied with any particular political party.

SFPIRG brings together a diverse range of people and our work is all centred on a shared set of values. These include: intersectional anti-oppression; body sovereignty and diversity; Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization; self-representation, self-determination, and empowering student and community leadership; inclusive and accessible space to build community on campus; accountability, integrity, wholeness and healing; sustainability; and respectful communication.

We are a registered non-profit organization with our own constitution and bylaws. We are governed by a student-led board of directors and we use consensus decision-making as the basis for our work. We have a team of three permanent, unionized staff who carry out the work of the organization. SFPIRG is a certified Living Wage employer. We are independent from both the University and the Simon Fraser Student Society.

We work closely with other student organizations on campus, including the Women’s Centre, Out on Campus, CJSF, First Nations Student Association (FNSA), Embark, The Peak, and Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry (SOCA). Collectively, we are known as the Rotunda groups. Find us in **TC326 in the Rotunda** or visit [www.sfpirg.ca](http://www.sfpirg.ca) for more info.

### Program Statistics

Although most of 2018 was dedicated to the space campaign, we still had a great deal of engagement with our programs!

SFPIRG ran over **27** events, workshops and talks throughout 2018, with **415** people attending them all! Over the year, we received **108** letters from inmates through the Letters For The Inside (LFTI) program, and our **30** active LFTI volunteers responded to **85** letters. The Bike Tool Co-op was also accessed **38** times. What a year!

### Support for Community Groups

We supported many community groups in 2017-18 with booking space at SFU campuses, accessing resources, and more. Some of the groups we supported include:

- Alliance Against Displacement
- BC Civil Liberties Association
- Black Lives Matter Vancouver
- CJSF Radio
- Embark Sustainability
- FUSE Society
- Ignite Retreat
- Indigenous Alternative Media
- Left Alternative
- Out On Campus Collective
- PeerNetBC
- POC Self-Defense Course
- Queer ASL
- Secwepemc Indigenous Language Project
- South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy
- SFU Autistics United
- SFU Institute for the Humanities
- SFU Labour Studies Student Union
- SFU Red Cross
- SFU Self in Social Context Lab
- SFU Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry
- SFU Women’s Centre
- STEPS Forward
- Trans Day of Justice: Community Consultation
- UNITE HERE Local 40
- Vancouver BSD Users Group
- Vancouver Chicken Save
- Vancouver Co-op Radio
- Vancouver EcoSocialists Group
- Vancouver Linux Users Group
- viet* collective for community justice
- Wings of Hope SFU
- World Media in English
- YWCA Youth Education Programs

### Accountability, integrity, wholeness and healing

therefore we strive to be accountable to our membership, hold space where people can be their whole selves, find support, and act to bring their values and their day-to-day lives into greater alignment. We believe that all of this requires continual learning and growth and so we encourage curiosity and compassion, and we strive to be self-reflective and supportive of the learning process in others.

What does SFPIRG value as an organization?

Turn the pages to learn more about some of the values that influence our work! For a full list of our organizational values and for more information about what they mean, please visit us online at [www.sfpirg.ca](http://www.sfpirg.ca)!
**Financial Statements**
September 2017 - August 2018

Revenues = $231,872
- Student assessments 95.22%
- Grant and project revenue 0.27%
- Interest and miscellaneous 0.01%

Expenses = $228,573
- Human resources 71.97%
- Office and administration 15.82%
- Organizational development 0.29%
- Outreach and media 0.14%
- Program and education 0.12%
- Special projects 6.17%

The above graphs provide a visual breakdown summary of SFPRG’s revenues and expenses during the September 2017 - August 2018 fiscal year. The full audited financial statements, including the auditor’s report, are available in digital format at www.sfprg.ca under "Governance Documents". Paper copies are available to SFPRG members upon request - members may contact us at info@sfprg.ca or visit us in TC 326 to request a paper copy.

**Board of Directors (Term Starting May 2018)**
Aiswariya Alagu-Sunder | Maisaloon Al-Ashkar | Adriano D’Alessandro
Simran Randhawa (joined Oct 2018) | Emma Warner Chee

**Board of Directors (May 2017 - April 2018)**
Maisaloon Al-Ashkar | Damon Chen (joined November 2017)
Matthew Provost | Rodney Stehr | Emma Warner Chee

**Permanent Staff Team**
- Susan Chiv | Director of Administration
- Kalamity Hildebrandt | Director of Research & Education
- Craig Pavelich | Director of Communications

**Workstudies & Temporary Staff**
- Hannah Babki | LFTI Coordinator
- Teresa Dettling | Space Campaign Coordinator
- Michaela Evans | Electoral Officer
- Karina Fagerstrom-Castro | Communications & Resource Coordinator
- Breanna Fraser-Hevlin | Communications & Resource Coordinator
- Madisin Grier | Decolonization Project Coordinator
- Aliya Khan | Communications & Resource Coordinator
- Tushar Khattar | Communications & Resource Coordinator
- Abhishek Nanjundappa | Bike Tool Co-op Coordinator;
- Nancy Nguyen | Communications & Resource Coordinator
- Brinda Odedra | LFTI Coordinator; Electoral Officer
- Mateo Zepeda | Communications & Resource Coordinator

**Intersectional anti-oppression**
therefore, we acknowledge that systems of oppression exist, are interconnected and multifaceted, and must be challenged in multiple ways.

**Self-representation, self-determination, and empowering student and community leadership**
therefore, we value individuals and communities working and speaking from their own experience. We respect that our different life experiences, social locations, and community histories necessarily requires a diversity of approaches, and we seek to support skill sharing, mentorship, mutual feedback and capacity building.
In the Fall of 2017, SFPIRG ran a full program of events aiming to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in their work on campus. In September, we offered a full-day workshop on governance practices for students interested in joining the Board of Directors of a nonprofit society, and those who were already on a Board. We ran a full-day introductory workshop in October on intersectional anti-oppression theory, all about building a strong and compassionate framework for understanding social inequities.

In November, we offered two events. As part of Disability Awareness Week 2017, we ran a critical discussion and film screening on Canada’s “Immigration and Refugee Protection Act,” specifically examining a clause that explicitly excludes people with disabilities. We also presented a full-day workshop to equip students and campus service providers with the language and theory needed to respectfully support survivors of sexual violence.

As if the Fall 2017 semester wasn’t busy enough, it was also the impetus of SFPIRG’s ongoing campaign to secure long-term space on campus.

The Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) currently resides in TC 326, a lounge and office space in the Rotunda at SFU Burnaby. This space is leased to SFPIRG by the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), through a Sublease. The space the SFSS occupies in the Rotunda is leased to them by SFU, through a Head Lease. The Head Lease for all of the SFSS’s space in the Rotunda has no set expiry date, extending automatically until the new Student Union Building (SUB) opens and the SFSS moves into its new offices.

In September 2017, the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) put out a call for expressions of interest for the organizational suites available in the SUB. As one of the independent student societies that had participated in SUB consultations since the project’s inception in 2012, and as a student society interested in continuing to collaborate on the SFU student experience in the SUB, SFPIRG participated in this expression of interest process and submitted an application.

During a meeting on November 14th, 2017, SFPIRG was told by SFSS representatives that we had been denied organizational space in the forthcoming SUB, and was asked whether we would be interested in occupying existing SFSS space in the Maggie Benston Centre (MBC), specifically Forum Chambers, or the Undergrounds.

In January 2018, SFPIRG formally replied to this offer of space stating that the organization was indeed interested, but that SFPIRG moving into one of the suggested spaces could only happen under certain circumstances. Note that we were not thinking of these so much as ‘conditions’ in the sense of being ‘demands’ in a negotiation, but rather a recognition of real prerequisites that would need to be in place before SFPIRG could actually accept one of the spaces:

1. that the space be accessible to all students, including students with disabilities – given our commitment to disability justice and accessibility for all members, and given legal obligations not to discriminate against students with disabilities, this is a core space need for SFPIRG.
2. that the space meet operational needs – for a space to work it needs to be able to actually hold our permanent staff, workstudy students and volunteers, filing cabinets, etc. At minimum, it’s estimated that SFPIRG would require 820 square feet to maintain our current level of operations.
3. that any necessary renovations to make these SFSS-controlled spaces be accessible to all students, including students with disabilities, be funded by the Student Society Building Fund / Capital Levy (also known as the Space Expansion Fund) and the Accessibility Fund. SFSS funds that undergraduate students already pay into semestery for the express purpose of covering the costs of renovations to SFSS-controlled space. SFPIRG does not have the money to cover this, and the SFSS does. Asking us to cover structural renovation costs when we simply do not have the funds is not only prohibitive—it is the same thing as denying us space.
4. that no rent be charged on the space beyond the symbolic $1/year rent and standard operating costs, as calculated by SFU per square foot—equivalent to what SFU charges the SFSS for its space. Again, SFPIRG does not have the funds to pay rent and to demand it effectively nullifies the offer of space. Moreover, the SFSS should not seek to profit off of other student funded organizations—this ultimately does students a profound disservice.
5. and that SFPIRG’s acceptance of such space not render another organization homeless. The SUB was designed to be a solution to the space crisis at SFU, and was designed with enough space for all of the Rotunda groups to be housed within—and so putting SFPIRG in the Undergrounds or Forum Chambers should not leave anyone displaced.

The SFSS said that they were unable to meet these conditions, and stated that, given the language in SFPIRG’s letter, they understood SFPIRG to have rejected the offer.

Thus began SFPIRG’s campaign for space on campus. Attempts at communications and meetings and dialogue with the SFSS have been consistently dismissed, with seemingly no regard for the most marginalized of student communities. The campaign launched in Spring 2018, and as of February 2019, the campaign continues on. SFPIRG is not the only organization facing imminent displacement at the hands of the SFSS—our allies at SOCA (Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry) and CJSF 90.1 FM are also facing a lack of space. We are hopeful that this crisis can be resolved, and that space for grassroots student organizing will continue to exist at SFU.

For more information about how you can support SFPIRG’s campaign for space on campus, and for a complete history of the campaign including communications with the SFSS and SFU, please visit www.sfpirg.ca.

Indigenous sovereignties and the process decolonization globally;

We acknowledge that SFPIRG is located on unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples. Based on our current knowledge, this includes the territories of the Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh (pronounced Skoahomish), Tsleil-Waututh and Kwikwetlem nations. We seek to support the varied strategies that Indigenous peoples are using to protect their land and their communities, and we commit to dedicating time and resources to working in solidarity.

Body sovereignty and diversity;

therefore we resist violence against all marginalized beings and bodies. We support and encourage a critical approach to a wide range of intersecting issues.