



# SFPIRG Board of Directors Info Package – 2023 Nominations

## About SFPIRG

The Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG) is a student-based campus resource centre dedicated to social and environmental justice. We promote critical thinking through education, action, and research.

We support groups and individuals by providing resources, training, and other opportunities for skills development. Our mission is to engage students and community in social and environmental justice, and we use consensus decision making as the basis of our work. SFPIRG is a student society and a registered non-profit organization. We have our own constitution and bylaws, and are legally governed by our own Board of Directors.

## Values

SFPIRG values: intersectional anti-oppression; body sovereignty and diversity; Indigenous sovereignties and decolonization; self-representation, self-determination, and empowering student and community leadership; accountability, integrity, wholeness and healing; sustainability; inclusive and accessible space; and respectful communication. Check [our website](#) or contact us for a full explanation of our values.

## Some SFPIRG History

Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) were initiated by American consumer activist Ralph Nader and 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,

Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. BC has two PIRGs - SFPIRG at Simon Fraser University, 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.

## **SFPIRG Membership**

SFPIRG is a student-funded non-profit organization, autonomous from the University, Simon Fraser Student Society, and the Graduate Student Society. Each semester we receive \$3.00 from full-time undergraduate students and \$1.50 from part-time undergraduate students. A successful graduate student referendum in Spring 2020 increased grad student membership fees and tied them to local inflation rates. As of Fall 2022 we received \$5.85 from full-time graduate students and \$2.92 from part-time graduate students. After paying their student fees, all students are members of SFPIRG and can use the resources available through our centre. Non-students can also become associate members of SFPIRG and get involved with us.

What do we do with fees we collect? We offer many great services such as equity support on research, homework, and for TAs and TMs to improve their classroom environments as well as trainings for the campus community throughout the year. We offer funding for student activities and projects such as through the Usamah Ansari Creative Justice Award. We also offer resources such as projectors, art materials, and rally supplies for student events and activities. Our equity library also offers many resources on marginalised research topics such as disability justice, abolition, and the steps and skills it takes to transform the world.

We realize that not everyone shares SFPIRG's values, so we do offer students the ability to revoke their membership. We offer a fee refund period every semester, usually during the 4th week.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers are involved at all levels of SFPIRG, from project members, Action Group members, Board members, committee members, and more!

## **Consensus Decision Making**

SFPIRG uses consensus decision making as a basis for our work. It is a philosophy that works to include everyone's input into decision making processes.

Instead of simply voting for an item and having the majority of the group getting their way, a consensus group is committed to developing and agreeing to support solutions that everyone actively supports – or at least can live with.

Ideally, this ensures that all opinions, ideas and concerns are taken into account. By listening closely to each other, the group aims to come up with proposals that work for everyone.

Consensus is neither compromise nor unanimous decision-making – it aims to go further by weaving together everyone's best ideas and most important concerns – a process that often results in surprising and creative solutions. This is because when a decision is not favourable to the whole group, we need to take the time to find better solutions.

# More Details on the Board of Directors

## What Does the SFPIRG Board Do?

The SFPIRG Board of Directors can legally be comprised of between 3 and 9 individuals, but the minimum target is 7. Most often, Board members are students from SFU, but staff, faculty and community members are also encouraged to apply. A maximum of 2 members of the Board can be non-students. SFPIRG works as a non-hierarchical organization.

The role of the SFPIRG Board is to:

- support the work of SFPIRG's Projects, Action Groups, and Committees
- be part of the planning, visioning and setting of priorities for the organization
- be responsible for the society as defined by the Societies Act and the SFPIRG constitution
- be the employer as defined by the Collective Agreement with CUPE
- work collectively with the staff to oversee the work of the organization

Board members cannot receive any remuneration for their work with SFPIRG.

## What kind of skills or experience would be an asset?

- experience working with student and/or community groups
- able to work well and communicate within a volunteer based, grassroots, non-profit setting
- have experience with consensus decision making
- have experience with drafting policy
- have conflict resolution skills

## You Can Gain Skills:

Many skills can be gained or improved through your participation on the Board. These include:

- consensus decision making
- successful meeting facilitation
- administrative and computer skills
- education on various social and environmental justice issues
- non-profit organizational skills
- financial management skills

## Inclusion & Access is a Priority at SFPIRG

SFPIRG is working towards inclusiveness in its membership at all levels particularly the Board. We encourage people from under-represented groups on campus as well as people with a strong anti-oppression analysis to put forth a nomination. These include, but are not limited to women, people of colour, Indigenous people, people with dis/abilities, queer and trans folk, and others who face systemic barriers to full participation.

## How Much Time is Required?

The Board requires a time commitment, which sometimes varies from week to week, but generally looks like:

- 3-5 hours a week
- at least one year on the Board
- One 2-hour meeting or training every other week (must be able to stick to a 'fixed' meeting schedule, which changes at the beginning of every semester).
- Participation in at least one committee

## Committee Work

Committees are also part of the ongoing work of each Board member.

Our current Committees are:

- **Policy** – responsible for creating and reviewing organizational policies in a wide range of areas, and developing actions to create a more accessible and inclusive environment.
- **Human Resources** – responsible for creating and reviewing policies related to employment and staffing, including hiring, appraisals, Collective Agreement, and more.
- **Finance** – responsible for creating and reviewing financial policies and budgets, and allocating our grants budget to community and campus social justice initiatives.

## Other Board Responsibilities

Fiduciary Duties:

- **Skill:** In carrying out their obligations, Board members are expected to use an appropriate degree of skill. This means using the skills each Board member has to make competent decisions on behalf of the organization.
- **Diligence:** Board members are expected to attend meetings and to become as fully informed as possible regarding all aspects of SFPIRG operations, including any issues that affect SFPIRG.
- **Loyalty:** Board members must act with honesty and in good faith in what they reasonably believe to be the best interests of SFPIRG. Board members must act with loyalty at all times.

Loyalty includes:

- **Honesty:** disclosing benefits and threats to the organization.
- **No Conflict of Interest:** Board members cannot place themselves in a situation where their duty as a Board member conflicts with their interest or with their duty to others.
- **No Self-Dealing:** Board members may not profit in any way from their relationship with the organization and should not enter into contracts with it.
- **Confidentiality:** Board discussions and internal workings of the organization must be kept confidential.

Further, SFPIRG board members are expected to communicate respectfully with each other, staff members, volunteers, members of the electorate and the greater community. They are expected to represent SFPIRG in a fair and accurate manner at all times, and clearly distinguish their own opinions from those of SFPIRG. Board members are not to express opinions on behalf of the organization unless specifically given leave to do so.

## **Once you become a Board member, you are also responsible for the following:**

- Abiding by SFPIRG constitution and bylaws, policies and the collective agreement signed with SFPIRG's unionized staff.
- Fulfilling your portfolio and/or committee responsibilities.
- Preparing for meetings, which means being aware of the agenda, reading correspondence, email and preparing for the meeting ahead of time.
- Communicating reasons for meeting absences.
- Acting in accordance with the principles of consensus decision-making.

## **You are also required to be familiar with SFPIRG's:**

- Action Groups, Projects and Committees
- Mission Statement
- Diversity and Access Policy
- Collective Agreement
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Budget and Financial Statements
- Policy Package

You can find this information on our website: <https://sfpirg.ca/>

You can find our governance documents here: <https://sfpirg.ca/governance-documents/>

# How to get involved: Nominations and Elections Info

## Overview:

If you are interested in being on the SFPIRG Board, you will need to complete all items of an SFPIRG Board of Directors Nomination Package and submit it to SFPIRG's Electoral Officer (EO) by **Monday April 4 2023 at 5pm**. You will need to get signatures of 10 active members (SFU students or associate members) using Nomination Signature forms, provide a candidate statement, a photo, and to answer some questions about why you want to be on the Board. There are up to nine positions on the Board. If more than nine people are interested in being on the Board, we will be holding an election for the positions **from Fri April 7, which will run for one and a half weeks through Wed April 19 (ending at midnight (12:01am on Thurs April 20th))**. If elections are held, your candidate statement, your answers to the questions, and your photo will be available to members during the election process.

## 2023 ELECTION TIMELINE

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Nomination Information Meetings Virtually on: **Mon March 27th from 2:00-3:00pm OR Wed March 27th 1:00-2:00pm**. Please email [eo.sfpirg@gmail.com](mailto:eo.sfpirg@gmail.com) for the meeting link.

- Come join if you are interested in being on the Board to find out more about what is involved, including more about SFPIRG, Board responsibilities & time commitment, the nominations procedure and other information.
- Anyone interested is strongly recommended to attend one of these meetings.

Nominations Open: **Tues, March 21, 2023**

- **Nominations packages and forms will be available by email via the Electoral Officer and on the SFPIRG website.** Physical Nomination Signature forms can be printed or picked up in front of SFPIRG's office (SUB 1410).

Nominations Close: **Tuesday April 4, 2023 at 5pm**

- All nominations must be submitted by email to [eo@sfpirg.ca](mailto:eo@sfpirg.ca) by 5pm in order to be considered for eligibility.
- Nominations will not be accepted after 5pm.

There are up to nine positions on the board. If there are more than nine people interested, then elections will be held and the below dates and events will go ahead.

Candidates Meeting: **One-hour on Wed April 5th or Thurs April 6th**

- All candidates are required to attend. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the EO, in advance of the meeting.
- An overview of the process, election guidelines and answering of questions.
- Candidates may start to submit their campaign material at this time. Campaign material can be submitted directly to the EO or to the SFPIRG office.

Campaigning can begin: **Friday, April 7th**

- The EO will arrange for a collective candidates poster that will be distributed starting on this date.
- No campaigning is permitted before this time. Any candidate who does not comply will be disqualified.
- Full campaigning guidelines are later in this package.

Campaigning ends: **Wed April 19 (ending at midnight (12:01am on Thurs April 20th**

**Voting: Thurs, April 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 12:01 am running until Fri April 21 ending at midnight (12:01am on Sat April 22nd at 12:01am.**

- All voting will be done online

Results: Will be posted on the SFPIRG website within 48 hours of the closing on the polls.

## **QUESTIONS?**

Contact the Electoral Officer, [eo.sfpirg@gmail.com](mailto:eo.sfpirg@gmail.com)

# 2023 SFPIRG Board of Directors Amended Election Rules and Guidelines (For 2022 Onwards)

## Nomination Eligibility

Acceptance of a nomination by the EO does not guarantee the eligibility of a candidate. If, at a later point in time, a candidate is found to be ineligible, that candidate will be disqualified.

In order to be eligible to be an SFPIRG Board Member, Nominees must be current Members in good standing of SFPIRG. Members include Ordinary Members, which are (from Bylaw 2.1a) “all registered Simon Fraser University [undergraduate and graduate] students who have paid a Membership fee to the Society in at least one term within the current academic year” who have not opted out of the SFPIRG fee in the current term; and Associate Members (non-SFU students who have paid their annual membership fee). As per Bylaw 2.4b), only two positions are available to Associate Members on the SFPIRG Board. SFU students in their final semester during the elections period (who will not continue to be enrolled as students for the following year) are designated as Associate Members.

## Candidates Meeting

The Electoral Officer shall call a virtual candidates’ meeting at the close of nominations, in order to clarify election procedures and requirements. The meeting is mandatory for all candidates. Other meetings may be called by the Electoral Officer, as needed.

## Regulations for Candidate Electioning

Candidates may begin campaigning 3 days after the close of nominations.

Candidates who wish to withdraw their candidacy must do so within 48 hours of the end of the nomination period.

Candidates in breach of any of the following rules or guidelines will be subject to disqualification and/or alternate consequences deemed appropriate by the Electoral Officer.

## Campaign Materials

No candidates will be permitted to produce their own posters to post on campus or online. Instead, the Electoral Officer will arrange for the production of a collective candidate poster. Candidates who wish to do so may submit an appropriate photo and a write-up of approximately 200 words to go into a collective campaign poster for all candidates.

In order to inform members, candidates’ answers to a set of standard questions will be available to members. (*See Nomination form for questions.*)



Photos, bios and answers to the questions shall be, at minimum, posted on the SFPIRG Elections website.

The order of appearance of the candidates' information will be chosen at random.

In support of health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, all campaigning shall happen online only.

The use of email or other online methods (including websites and social media) to promote individual candidates is prohibited. Any person, including candidates, may use these electronic means to promote the election in general, including providing a link to the SFPIRG Elections website with more information on each of the candidates, or sharing SFPIRG social media posts.

Candidates found in violation of these rules will be disqualified.

## Campaign Expenses

Since publicity will be taken care of by the EO in the form of a collective candidate's poster, candidates will not be given an individual campaign allowance. However, if a candidate feels that there is another form of publicity they would like to use, they may contact the EO to discuss costs and receive permission. A maximum of \$20 may be spent on campaign materials. The costs will then be reimbursed by SFPIRG to the candidate after the election period, providing that expense records and receipts are received by the EO by a deadline determined by the EO. In-kind donations must be included in the \$20 allowance.

## Elections

As per Bylaw 7.1(a) "Except for cases when positions on the Board are not contested, elections shall take place yearly." If there are more than 9 accepted nominations for the Board, the EO shall organize an election. If there are 9 or less accepted nominations, then the Board Members shall be acclaimed to their positions.

Up to two positions on the Board are available to Associate Members (as per Bylaw 2.4(b)). If there are 9 or less accepted nominations, but more than 2 who are Associate Members, then an election shall still be held for Associate Member positions. In this case the Ordinary Member Nominees shall be acclaimed.

If there are more than 9 accepted nominations for the Board, and an election held, only two Associate Members shall be voted in. In the case that more than two Associate Members are within the top nine, then the top two Associate Member nominees that get the most votes will gain positions on the Board, and the next top Ordinary Member candidate(s) will be given the remaining position(s).

## Voting

All voting members may vote for both Ordinary and Associate Member candidates. Each voting Member will have the opportunity to vote for up to a maximum of nine candidates. The top nine nominees who receive the most votes shall be considered elected to the Board.

## Voting Options

The Board has chosen balloting via electronic online voting.

## **Online Voting**

Polling shall be conducted online via SFU's authenticated web survey system. If Associate Members are not able to vote via this or another authenticated web survey system, then they will be able to vote via Google Form online ballot.

SFPIRG's Director of Finance and Operations (DoFO) shall email the Google Form link directly and solely to each Associate Member along with an individually identifying number the Member will enter in the ballot when voting. The DoFO shall not have access to the Google Form results. The Electoral Officer shall have access to the Google Form results, but not the list that identifies Associate Members with their individually identifying numbers. The Electoral Officer shall confirm with the DoFO that each ballot entry matches a valid individually identifying Associate Member number. Any ballots with invalid identifying numbers shall be discarded.

These processes shall ensure Member voter eligibility and the validity of secret balloting.

## **Posting of Results**

The Electoral Officer shall post the results of the election within 48 hours after the closing of the polls on the SFPIRG elections website.

## **Appeals**

The members of the incumbent Board who have not been nominated in the election shall constitute an appeal board for: the decisions of the Electoral Officer as to the eligibility of Nominees; and for complaints from any Member. Appeals must be filed with a member of the appeal board within four days after the close of polling. Appeals must outline the nature of the complaint and be signed by the Member submitting it.

After a hearing, the appeal board may order a new election to be held or make any such order as it deems necessary; its decision shall be final. If there are no incumbent board members, then the EO shall form a committee of three SFPIRG volunteers or previous Board Members who will constitute an appeal board.

## **Results**

In advance of balloting, the EO may advise voters of how the votes are to be counted; however, after the counting is complete, the number of votes received by each candidate shall not usually be publicized. The EO, Board, and candidates shall see the full voting results in order to ensure that the election was properly counted, and any candidate may call for one recount before the announcement of the results. The names of elected candidates shall be announced in alphabetic or random order, and the election shall be declared closed.