

**SFU Students of Caribbean and African Ancestry (SOCA)**  
**Dec 11, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER: 4:20**

**ATTENDEES:**

- **Monique Leslie, Tsion Gebremedhen, Giovanni HoSang, Fegor Obuwoma, Carol Tee, Jennifer Chou, Balkees Jama.**

**MEETING AGENDA**

**TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

SOCA recognizes we are situated on the unceded territories Coast Salish Territories of the Musqueam, Kwikwetlem, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh peoples and we recognize the importance of this acknowledging that this land has never been granted, surrendered nor sold to any government but taken by force.

**ROUNDS**

(Name, Something that brought you joy/made you happy this week and your Access needs)

**APPROVE MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING**

- [Meeting Minutes - August 28, 2020 - SFU SOCA - Google Docs](#)
  - **Monique moved/Giovanni seconded**
  - Motion Carried**

**REPORT OF OFFICERS**

- **President**
  - Communication around SUB move
- **Vice President**
  - Attends BIPOC Committee meetings
  - Been a busy semester with classes and not at capacity
  - A move to the SUB was completed (LOA pending)
- **External Relations Officer**
  - Leave of Absence
- **Internal Relations Officer**
  - Council
    - Juanita has been attending over the semester report
    - Council Bylaws have been passed, SOCA has to hold elections between Week 7 and 10.
  - SFU Black Caucus - students and profs and workers
    - Meeting happened Henry Daniels, June Francis - Professors, Student Reps from ASA and SOCA, as well as SFSS and folks from SFU Theatre
      - looking for forward

- to talk about issues over the year et al, interest around documentation, conversation re: caucus to come
  - intention to have a conversation with wider Canadian Academia
- Secretary
  - N/A
- Events Coordinator
  - NA
- Treasurer
  - N/A
- First Year Rep
  - N/A
- Grad Rep
  - SUB move assistance
- FIC Rep
  - N/A
- Execs at large
  - Lofty: SUB move assistance
- Other Assigned Members
  -

## REPORT ON SPECIFIC MATTERS

- N/A

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

- SOCA SUB space move and LOA
  - Move: Stressful, in between classes - moved from Rotunda, alumni and current execs, socially distanced move to SUB, Tim followed up with boxes et al. Hadie and Tim to split the space boxes and seems we have a lot to work with which is good. SFSS offered to furnish space, need ideas
  - LOA:
    - Agreement has terms with length at the term of the SUB space granted to SFU
    - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tNpLXaL6-5yIWFS55ZYWZsaE2s50tqcfUBfxsYibVJY/edit?usp=sharing>
- SOCA elections
  - The SFSS bylaws now stipulate when SFSS council elections must be held by. Since the rest of the exec elections and the council election happen at the same time, SOCA election will have to be within the timeline set by the SFSS.
  - SFSS Bylaws outline that elections must be held between week 7 and the end of Week 10 ie: by Mar 21. SOCA can call our voting days to be in the week of March 19. And set notice and campaign periods to be the two prior weeks before that.
    - Nomination Period: Feb 22 to Mar 2

- Campaign Period: March 3 to 12
  - Voting Period: March 13 to 16.
- With Voter registration being all people on the membership list by the end of the campaign period at 11:59pm who suffice as SFU Undergrads and Graduate students.
- If we agree to this we can draft a motion to do so in the meeting similar to the motion that did this last year.
- Black Student Support Coordinator and Centre
  - Motion passed at SFSS Board meeting after BIPOC committee passed it previously
    - Went over the document | Note on support and functions and job description | Talked about what would SOCA's preference be
    - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11OQZhBXsvM03xv87HIBW8HVIXvpIJ0kX/view?usp=sharing>

Whereas the Board voted on June 12, 2020 to look into the hiring of a Black student support staff person to assist in effective support, advocacy and service delivery for the space that has been allocated for the SFSS Students of Caribbean and African Ancestry (SOCA) constituency group in the new Student Union Building,

Whereas SOCA is a constituency group that supports and advocates for Black students, providing services and promoting Afrocentric intellectual and cultural experiences through open and interactive exchange of ideas among members of the university community,

Whereas the SFSS has implemented a similar model with the First Nations Student Association (FNSEA) Coordinator providing support alongside the FNSEA Council on behalf of Indigenous students,

Whereas the Black student support coordinator would provide adequate support to Black students on campus,

Be it resolved that the Board of Directors approve the creation of the Black Student Support Centre - Coordinator as outlined in the attached briefing note "BN-2020-12-11 Black Student Support Coordinator and Centre" to assist in effective support, advocacy and service delivery for the space that has been allocated for the SFSS Students of Caribbean and African Ancestry (SOCA) constituency group in the new Student Union Building;

Be it further resolved that the Board of Directors authorize Osob Mohamed and Balqees Jama, alongside the HR and Personnel Committee, to initiate and complete the process to employ a Black Student Support Center - Coordinator (SOCA's Support Staff), ensuring input and active participation from SOCA and other relevant parties for the creation of a job description and creation of the functions of the office as outlined in the attached briefing note "BN-2020-12-11 Black Student Support Coordinator and Centre";

Be it further resolved to authorize the HR and Personnel Committee to strike and appoint members to the Hiring Committee for Black Student Support Center - Coordinator (SOCA's Support Staff), based upon the seat composition of the Hiring Committee as mutually agreed upon by the Society and the Union, depending on the inclusion of voting seats to SOCA as the group that the office shall primarily serve, whereby such inclusion may cede Union and Employer voting seats as agreed.

- Monique will sync with Execs on what's SOCA's preference re hiring committee [To-Do]

- Update on BIPOC committee #OurDecision campaign.
  - Name change happened but the previous president of the SFU Andrew Petter made an inadequate statement. BIPOC committee led some advocacy around this. #IAmNotYourClansman campaign was won where the Athletics team name was change but there was no real commitment or acknowledgement of Harm on Black Students and Athletes
  - SFSS asked for four demands as a art of the #OurDecisionCampaign  
<https://sfss.ca/ourdecsionsfu/>
    - Celebrating Black Athletes, Students, and Allies
      - Firstly, the SFSS BIPOC Committee wants to congratulate Black athletes for their successful advocacy and organizing! It is important that in this movement, we amplify Black voices without simultaneously contributing to Black erasure. The SFU Athletics name change is the direct result of countless hours, energy, and emotional labour of Black students and movement organizers. We also want to highlight the crucial role of allies such as students and athletes, SFSS Council, faculty, staff, and SFU community members. This is an example of a community organizing effectively to amplify marginalized voices so that the institution was forced to act.
    - SFU Needs to Acknowledge the North American Context of the C[K]lan
      - In the North American context, people too often heard the 'Klan' instead of the 'Clan', being associated with the Ku Klux Klan. In SFU's colour-blind statement, the history of the name was recognized for its good Scottish heritage and addressed with care. However, the Clan's racist undertones and realities in North America were not acknowledged, despite it being the reason that Black people and allies called for change. The C[K]lan has a dark and terrorizing history in North America; The lack of attention placed on the North American context undermines the experiences of racism for Black people. The selective attention also reinforces colonial priorities, thus idealizing a Eurocentric framework where Black, Indigenous, and People Of Colour (BIPOC) are ignored, or at best, considered an afterthought.
    - Recognizing Black Labour and Trauma
      - Though we celebrate this achievement, we recognize that harm and labour was inflicted on Black students, particularly student-athletes, throughout the name change process. The adoption of the name is a direct result of systemic exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People Of Colour in decision-making processes. The C[K]lan name put athletes and SFU members in unsettling - even dangerous - situations, as they were bound by this name that people misunderstood. Representing the C[K]lan

was undoubtedly distressing for Black athletes, further adding to Black trauma. Moreover, Black athletes' and allies' calls were deliberately ignored by the SFU Administration as students were met with gaslighting and institutional racism.

■ Demands

- We urge SFU to appropriately and urgently address the concerns brought forth by Black and POC athletes, movement organizers, and SFU community members.
- Publicly state that SFU is dropping the name due to its racist connotations and association with the Ku Klux Klan. Address the colonialism, violence, and trauma towards specifically Black athletes due to the name.
- Publicly acknowledge the harm inflicted and unpaid labour forced on Black students and athletes.
- Recognize that Black athletes came forward and bravely shared their experiences, facing gaslighting, harassment, and resurfacing of trauma.
- Credit those who spent countless hours advocating and organizing for the name change, and recognize the BIPOC community in general who have undergone trauma and discrimination under the previous name.
- Uphold the values of the Okanagan Charter, which Simon Fraser University signed in 2015:
  - “Embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations and academic mandates.”
  - “Lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.”
  - Support Black students, with specific resources for Black athletes. This includes allocating designated funding for culturally competent and racially aware mental health resources and counselling services for BIPOC.

■ In response: Joy Johnson released the following statement

- Statement: [Statement on SFU's Athletics Team Name Change - The President - Simon Fraser University](#)
  - Providing culturally appropriate safe mental health supports to Black students. Black students can now request to work with Black mental health providers via MySSP. Health & Counselling Services is working with Black counsellors in the community for specific programming and to improve the capacity of Health & Counselling Services staff to support Black students.
  - Student Services and Health & Counselling have committed to reviewing and updating systems and

procedures that limit mental health accessibility for Black students at SFU.

- Mental Healthsupport launched:
  - <https://www.sfu.ca/students/health/programs/healing-antiracism.html>
- BIPOC committee action note: link
- FHS Caucus Meeting Requested a meeting with President
  - scheduled for end of January, action items happening
    - to take in and bring it into their faculty, another step of holding the institution accountable
- Black History Month Events
  - [Ideas - Google Docs](#) by VP Student Life, SFSS side
  - BHM SOCA
    - BHM Kickoff on Zoom: QA, couple performances, Poetry, Cultural Dance, Song Session, Video, Roundtable on why we love Black people and ourselves? **(first week)**
    - AfroDance workshop or alt (second week sfss collab)
    - Movie Week **(after reading week)**
    - Panel Discussion (talk to lofty discussion wednesday type style and outside invite?)
      - **Same week of movie week** on Saturday for Panel
    - BHM committee, Call out for Committee members via email and SFUSOCA Official (**Monique TO-DO**)



A calendar grid for February 2021. The header shows 'February 2021' with up and down arrows. The days of the week are abbreviated as Su, Mo, Tu, We, Th, Fr, Sa. The dates are arranged in a 6x7 grid, with the last row containing dates 7 through 13.

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13

- 
- Catch a Vybz January (**Jan 22** tentative):
  - Not a lot of people came last time, Games Night and Movie? Jam session with Music
  - Need help on promotion
    - (Tsion willing to help)
    - SFSS-Events a resource
  - need a poster and start promoting early
- Clubs/Student Union Days Spring

- Anybody willing to volunteer? To put out a ask in the group, SFSS will be putting out a call so an Exec liaises
- Survey Promotion Request from Member
  - Disseminate information around a survey, asking SOCA to send to membership (Monique will respond To-Do)
- EDI Committee update
  - Information needed on this going forward, connect offline
- SFSS Council Transition Steering Committee
  - Request for a member from SOCA to be a part of
- Black Youth Initiative
  - [Black Youth Initiative](#) - SOCA members and groups can write a grant
  - Priority will be given to folks aged between 18-30. Individual fund award: \$1500 cad. Group grant fund: \$3000 cad
  - [Application form — Black Youth Initiative](#)
- Antiracism Black Support space
  - Anti-racism Group for Current and Alumni Black Students at SFU - led by Black facilitator - January 21, 28, February 4, and 11 at 6pm and February 25, March 4, 11, and 18 This is the Link - Here is the webpage:  
<https://www.sfu.ca/students/health/programs/healing-antiracism.html>

## COMMITTEE AND SUB-ASSOCIATIONS UPDATE

- SSA (Somali Student Association)
  - Need to Re-ratify the agreement with SSA **[To-do]**
- NSA (Nigerian Students Association)
  - Need to Re-ratify the agreement with SSA **[To-Do]**
- Social Justice and Advocacy Committee
  - N/A
- Cultural Events Committee
  - N/A
- Space (BCSC) Committee
  - A/A
- Dance Team (N/A till Fall)
- Parties and Pub Nights Committee (N/A till Fall)
- Adhoc Black History Committee
  - There will be a callout for members to be a part of this
- Nominating Committee
  - Struck and shall give updates each meeting

## MOTIONS

1. **Motion for SOCA - LOA**

*Whereas SOCA has been allocated space in the SUB by the SFSS, and SOCA has been in talks with the SFSS regarding the terms of the letter of agreement,*

*Whereas the SOCA x SFSS Letter of Agreement is in line with the direction and mandate set by the members of SOCA and provisions align such as the Black student staff support, the length of agreement for 50 years plus two consecutive 10 year periods renewable, the Black student levy if established by SFSS members as outlined in the agreement,*

*Be it resolved that SOCA ratify the attached SOCA x SFSS Letter of Agreement outlining the terms of the Space Allocation in the SUB and other terms around the institutional relationship between SOCA and the SFSS*

**Monique Moved/Fegor Seconded**

**CARRIED unanimously**

2. **Motion for Nominating Committee**

**Whereas, Nominating Committee is to be struck for formation of elections and policies,**

**Be it resolved that Giovanni HoSang, Monique Leslie and Tsion Gebremedhen be appointed as per constitution VI.6, and in the event that someone else is interested from membership, they be appointed from amongst to occupy the fourth seat on the Nominating Committee at a future meeting**

**Monique Moved/Fegor Seconded**

**CARRIED unanimously**

3. **SOCA Elections Spring 2021**

**Be it resolved that SOCA calls elections as follows for the Nominating Committee to create policies and execute the elections within these periods**

**Nomination Period: Feb 22 to Mar 2, Campaign Period: March 3 to 12, Voting Period: March 13 to 16**

**Monique Moved/Fegor Seconded**

**CARRIED unanimously**

**OPEN ISSUES OR CONCERNS**

- N/A

## **ACTION ITEMS FOR EXEC & Other Assignees (THIS WEEK 12-11-2020)**

- **Monique:**
  - Ask in General - Create whatsapp group for the BHM committee
  - Respond to email to Tsion and send to Membership (include the black youth initiative)
  - Will reach out to library to see if they can do BHM display
  - Monique will sync with Execs on what's SOCA's preference re hiring committee (2 solid voting seats or 1 nonvoting)
- **Nominating Committee Whatsapp Group to be created (Giovanni)**
- **SubAssociation - send emails to find out if they want to extend the agreement for another two years (SSA and NSA)**

**Meeting Adjournment Moved by Monique Seconded by Giovanni**  
**ADJOURNED 5:49**

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

- SFSS BHM Ideas doc
  - [Ideas SFSS Events - Google Docs](#)
- SOCA SFSS LOA
  - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T5B-P2Uwc\\_oUIN673oPa7dZQqJYy\\_why/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T5B-P2Uwc_oUIN673oPa7dZQqJYy_why/view?usp=sharing)
- Transition Committee Standing Order
  - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ivXrHJNIPZL\\_ILryoF2joCLWtzQRT7vv/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ivXrHJNIPZL_ILryoF2joCLWtzQRT7vv/view?usp=sharing)
- SFSS - BN Black Student Support Staff
  - [Black Student Support Coordinator and Centre - Combined PDF - BN 2020-12-11.pdf - Google Drive](#)
- SFSS BIPOC Actions
  - [Briefing Note: SFSS BIPOC Committee on SFU Anti-Racism Efforts - Google Docs](#)

# Briefing Note: SFSS BIPOC Committee on SFU Anti-Racism Efforts

Prepared by Co-Chairs of the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) Committee: Balqees Jama (At-Large) and Matt Provost (VP Student Services)

Prepared for: SFU Administration Meeting with Joy Johnson and Rummana Khan Hemani

October 19, 2020

## BACKGROUND

### SFU Athletics Team Name Harm

After years of advocacy from Black students and athletes at SFU, we have seen SFU Athletics Department change the name away from the “Clan”. Throughout the name change process Black athletes and POC organizers were met with gaslighting, trauma and racism. Former SFU President Andrew Petter’s statement regarding the name change lacked acknowledgement of the Ku Klux Klan connotations, racism, and Black athletes’ experiences. The former president framed the name-change as his decision, disregarding the amount of work and emotional labour that went into this movement from Black students and athletes. Even with the statement’s vague acknowledgement of trauma, the lack of resources provided for those harmed directly violates SFU’s commitment to the Okanagan Charter and causes much more harm to BIPOC. Though the [Report on the Clan Team Name Change](#) published touched on some concerns, there were no tangible commitments to redressing harms caused by the team name and its name-change process.

### Indigenous Student Exclusion

Indigenous students' voices are being underserved by SFU. Reconciliation projects that are occurring through the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council are being done without proper consultation with key community stakeholders, and Indigenous student voices. By not including these community members SFU is upholding values that do not validate the mandate of “reconciliation”. We need to acknowledge the past and not recreate harm in the present. Indigenous students are the key to reconciliation efforts at any educational institution. As stated in the [Diversity Meter Survey](#), “Indigenous Persons reported the

lowest agreement for the indicator that assessed if they believe they are treated fairly and with respect at SFU.”

There have been a number of instances where Indigenous students have been disregarded, and we are still seeing the impacts of those in the present day. The Atrium in Saywell Hall is one example of how Indigenous students' needs were disregarded by the university, and even to this day Indigenous students do not have priority over this space. This has broken trust and relationships with the university from past Indigenous alumni.

### **Lack of BIPOC resources**

BIPOC folks at SFU do not have adequate services that meet our needs. As of right now there are no Black and Indigenous counsellors at SFU Health and Counselling Services. The lack of mental wellness support for BIPOC students at SFU is another barrier that must be addressed. Adequate and appropriate support needs to be prioritized for the BIPOC community at SFU. Safe spaces and resources that address Anti-Blackness and anti-racism on campus are essential.

### **SFU Lack of Race-based Data Collection**

While the meaningful collection of data is not a solution itself to systemic racism, it is long-overdue, and a necessary first step in identifying specific barriers. SFU's [Diversity Meter Survey](#) report, Black and Indigenous people have noticeably higher rates of exclusion and barriers at the University. The 2017 [UN Report of the Working Group of Experts on Anti-Black racism in Canada](#) highlights that there are challenges that Black Canadians particularly face, that are not necessarily shared with other racialized group when it comes to structural discrimination in health, socio-economic status, poverty, education and systematic racism. SFU must take this into account.

### **Lack of BIPOC in SFU Senior Administration, Faculty, and Staff**

The report shows that there is significant underrepresentation of BIPOC folks in senior administration roles at SFU, as well as faculty and staff positions. Most notable lack is Black and Indigenous people in these roles, there being zero in senior admin roles.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Established Black Student Support In Other Universities**

There are established support programs, centres, and initiatives to base SFU's Black student support initiative off of in Eastern Canada and the US. An example is Black empowerment center in student services at the University of Guelph [Supporting the Needs of Black Students / Student Experiences](#). Throughout the process of building support systems, reparations are needed to support Black and Indigenous folks on campus. This is to validate that Anti-Racism and EDI initiatives are key to building trust and to reinforce that BIPOC students are prioritized on campus.

## **Addressing Repeated Exclusion of BIPOC Students, Staff, Faculty, and Senior Administrators**

Barriers to BIPOC students at SFU exist because programs, policies, and practices were created without BIPOC directly involved. There is a history of exclusion of BIPOC, particularly Black and Indigenous communities at SFU. When SFU built the Saywell Hall Atrium, which was intended for Indigenous students, FNSA did not have priority to book for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Awareness Week. If we want to move forward so that Indigenous students can succeed at this university, accountability and action must be taken to amplify and work with Indigenous student leaders.

Ontario College of Art & Design University, known as OCAD University, [hired 5 Black tenured faculty](#) members in efforts to immediately address underrepresentation of Black Faculty. The principles driving the fast track tenure faculty appointments were decolonization, diversity, and equity. VP Equity at the University of Calgary Melinda Smith noted how white women in academia has increased a lot, but not much growth for BIPOC.

## **Framework for Accountability**

When discussing EDI initiatives, it is important that we have a clear point of accountability for immediate and long-term anti-oppression initiatives. This would ensure that BIPOC community members, including students, are well-informed and respectfully consulted along the way. Accountability includes regular updates and meetings. Students must be included, and appropriately compensated, throughout the process for their labour.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **SFU President to Release a Statement as SFU President on Name Change**

While it was the former President who released the statement on the name change, he was the spokesperson of SFU. To [begin redressing harms](#) caused by the 'Clan' name and its problematic changing process, we ask that Joy Johnson release a public statement acknowledging that SFU is dropping the name due to its racist connotations and association with the Ku Klux Klan. Address the colonialism, violence, and trauma towards specifically Black athletes due to the name. Publicly acknowledge the harm inflicted and unpaid labour forced on Black students and athletes, and commit to providing resources for BIPOC, with specific resources for Black athletes.

### **Respectfully Consult Indigenous Student Leadership**

Release a statement that recognizes the harm that has been done to key community members and dedicate time and resources to the [FNSA Calls to Action](#) regarding Indigenous student leadership and the First Peoples Gathering House to commit to real reconciliation.

### **Delegate funding for resources for BIPOC at SFU**

Hire more Black and Indigenous counsellors ASAP. Begin steps to establish a centre dedicated to supporting Black students at SFU, and allocate support uniquely for Black athletes. This should also include but not limited to compensating Black and Indigenous students for their emotional labour for consultative and advocacy work. SFU is currently benefiting and relying on the labour of Black and Indigenous students, our labour and advocacy is being used to better this institution through our experiential knowledge. SFU needs to stop undermining the experiential knowledge of Black and Indigenous students.

### **Collect Race-based Data Collection at SFU**

Collect disaggregated race-based data through SFU [Institutional Research and Planning](#) where students can self-identify upon admissions. Track the data throughout service delivery at SFU as well.

## **Establish Points of Accountability to Develop an SFU Anti-Racist Equity Strategy**

It is essential for SFU to establish a Vice-President Equity role, to lead, develop, and carry out the implementation of an anti-racism equity strategy, with a focus on Black and Indigenous folks. As an immediate action to show commitment to anti-racism until then, hire a short-term hiring under the Office of the Associate VP Students & International focused on Black and Indigenous empowerment. Their role would include focusing on recruitment, retention, service delivery, inclusion on campus. Meaningful anti-racism efforts also include the immediate appointment of Black and Indigenous people on EDI Executive Sub-Committee.

## **Fast-Track Hire Black and Indigenous Faculty**

Hire Black and Indigenous tenured faculty immediately. [The Employment Equity Act \(1995\)](#) states that “every employer shall implement employment equity by... instituting such positive policies and practices and making such reasonable accommodations as will ensure that persons in designated groups achieve a degree of representation...”.

## **REFERENCES**

- [SFU Athletics & Recreation: Report on the Use of the Clan Team Name](#)
- [Diversity Meter Survey](#)
- [UN Report of the Working Group of Experts on Anti-Black racism in Canada](#)
- [The Employment Equity Act \(1995\)](#)
- [African American/ Black Students Success Centre](#)
- [OCAD U Cluster Hiring 5 Black Tenured Faculty](#)

