

SFU

# ENGAGE

CELEBRATING THE IMPACT OF SFU'S DONOR COMMUNITY



VOLUME 4

SUMMER 2024

SFU

ALUMNI

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## Message from the Vice-President, Advancement & Alumni Engagement

Your generosity is making a big difference for SFU students and what's next for our university.

We are grateful to partner with you in addressing the complex challenges of our times and building an inclusive, sustainable future.

Students are at the heart of all we do at SFU. For almost 60 years, they have energized our campuses and communities with their fearless optimism and intense inquiry.

We must ensure they continue to thrive by creating engaging, inclusive opportunities and spaces that will elevate their learning experiences—and foster their success.

In this issue of *Engage*, we are pleased to showcase how your enthusiastic participation and support are helping to transform the SFU experience for our students as well as researchers, staff and the broader community.

We introduce you to alumnus Allan Merrill, whose own experiences studying abroad while at SFU inspired him to give back so more students can benefit from global learning opportunities. We celebrate the commitment of the Jenabai Hussainali Shariff family, who are creating collaborative international experiences that address climate change. We highlight how Indigenous Business Leadership EMBA students are engaging in transformative learning opportunities on Indigenous land and in Indigenous communities.

Learn how SFU researcher Stephanie Cleland, the Legacy for Airway Health Chair in Promotion of Lung Health, is tackling the impacts of B.C. wildfires on human health. Discover how multimedia artist Kaleb Thiessen is pushing creative boundaries through a new student award established by Serein Properties. See how the Marianne and Edward Gibson Art Museum is already transforming our Burnaby campus as construction progresses.

These are just some of the many and dynamic ways in which our generous partners are contributing to the next phase of SFU's journey.

Thank you for being a vital part of the university's story and our bold aspirations for the future. We couldn't do it without you!

Erin Morantz  
Vice-President, Advancement & Alumni Engagement

# FINAL

## With Gratitude

Simon Fraser University respectfully acknowledges the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səlilwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh), q̓ícəy̓ (Katzie), kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem), Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen peoples on whose unceded traditional territories our three campuses reside.

# SUMMER 2024

Cover:  
SFU Archives. School of Contemporary Arts fonds,  
F-109-7-1-0-12

## Feature Stories

- |           |   |           |  |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| <b>06</b> | Supporting land-based learning for Indigenous business students           | <b>22</b> | Fostering global perspective   |
| <b>08</b> | New award nurtures artists to push creative limits                        | <b>24</b> | Raising the bar to improve food security for students                        |
| <b>10</b> | Meet the physicians helping lead the journey to B.C.'s new medical school | <b>26</b> | Meet SFU's 2024 Outstanding Alumni Award recipients                          |
| <b>12</b> | Bridging continents for critical international climate research           | <b>34</b> | Inspiring future leaders: A charter alumnus' legacy                          |
| <b>16</b> | Addressing the urgent human health impacts of B.C. wildfires              | <b>38</b> | Gibson Art Museum construction progresses: Design earns national recognition |
| <b>18</b> | Uplifting students in need  | <b>40</b> | In Memoriam: Cathy Daminato  |
| <b>20</b> | Preserving Vancouver's community-engaged art history                      |           |  |

## In Every Issue

- |           |                        |           |                |           |                   |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <b>01</b> | Message from the VPAAE | <b>14</b> | By the Numbers | <b>33</b> | From the Archives |
| <b>04</b> | People of SFU          | <b>29</b> | SFU News       | <b>36</b> | Ask an Expert     |





# MEET ANNETTE SANTOS

**Director, Student Engagement and Retention;  
Strategic Lead, Career & Volunteer Services  
and Work-integrated Learning**

Credit: Gwynne Roseborough

Annette Santos and her teams work across the university and with the external community to support the educational journeys of students inside and outside of the classroom. As an SFU alumnus (BA '01), long-time staff member and current EMBA student, Annette is driven by a generous, collaborative spirit and a commitment to create meaningful connections within the SFU community.

Informed in part by her own experience as a first-generation student, she believes SFU plays a vital role serving the Lower Mainland and contributing to positive change for a better world.

Learn more about what why Annette loves being a part of the SFU community and who inspires her as a leader.

## **What do you enjoy most about being a part of the SFU community?**

It is a real honour to work with people not only in my unit but across the university who are so committed and passionate about supporting students. We look at our students as partners—they are the only reason we are here. Our goal is to ensure they make the most of their time at SFU, and to help them feel that they matter and are a part of something. The only way we can do that is by listening and trying to meet them where they are, partnering with them on what that experience is.

**In addition to being a dedicated staff member, you are also an SFU alumnus and a current graduate student. Through your work, you see how students benefit from the involvement and investment of our donor and alumni community. Can you share your thoughts on why it is important for people to give back to the university?**

Many students experience financial or identity barriers to education; they struggle in many different ways. We need to be looking at how students can be holistically successful and focus on removing those barriers and enhancing the support students need—scholarships and bursaries, mental health support, initiatives that support identity-based groups, creating

opportunities to help students build connection and a sense of belonging so they feel less isolated. Once our students graduate from SFU, they've had an experience that they will take with them and will go on to influence what happens in the world whether it's their family, a business or community. By giving back through time, finances, and caring, people can enrich not only the SFU community but our impact on other communities.

### Who would you say inspires you the most, and why?

Terry Fox, his determination, everything that he did and that his family continues to do has really influenced me personally. I think having him as an alumnus has also influenced our institution's identity and given us this additional layer of care that informs how we work differently.

I am also continually humbled by the unsung heroes of Student Services and Student Affairs, by their commitment and care for students in crisis, families and communities, and everything that quietly gets done and goes unseen. We enter into a partnership with students when we bring them here—they are part of the SFU community and we believe they are going to be successful. It's up to us to be the organization that they need us to be.

### What is the most important lesson you have learned that informs your leadership approach?

Collaboration is always the way. There is that saying that often gets misquoted—"if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." My ideas and my thoughts will always be richer by broadening the scope of who I work with, being open to the views and needs of others, and building together. I have been at SFU almost 26 years and in my experience, there has never been something made better by someone doing it on their own.


### Can you tell us more about how you and your colleagues are supporting the success of SFU students and helping to transform their experience?

We strive to support students in the journey throughout their degree. One of the most important things we can do is to help students feel they are not alone, that they matter and are among others who they can be safe with while navigating the unknown. Creating more opportunities for experiential learning, we aim to not only contribute to skill development and career prospects but also space for learning reflection and how students' education integrates with their career and life goals. Students are here not only to enrich their intellect and challenge themselves—they

ultimately want to get a job! We're helping students to be competitive for the real world and working closely with employers to ensure they are creating safe, supportive and enriching learning environments for our future alumni.

### What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?

There is such a community of collaboration across this institution and I'm proud to have a hand in building it. This collaboration has resulted in programs like Back on Track, which has contributed to thousands upon thousands of students in academic difficulty completing their degrees or the HIVE program, which helps new students make a smooth transition at SFU. These aren't achievements I "own." I can only own the fact that I championed the collaboration of them, and that the results show they have made a meaningful difference. **E**



"One of the most important things we can do is to help students feel they are not alone, that they matter and are among others who they can be safe with while navigating the unknown."

Annette Santos





Prof. Dara Kelly-Roy, who is from the Leq'á:me! First Nation, part of the Stó:lō Coast Salish, teaches in the Indigenous Business and Leadership Executive MBA

# SUPPORTING LAND-BASED LEARNING FOR INDIGENOUS BUSINESS STUDENTS

Gathered around a fire inside a longhouse at the Stó:lō Nation, Rebecca Kragnes and fellow students in SFU's Indigenous Business Leadership Executive MBA (IBL EMBA) learned about the potlatch and other aspects of the Coast Salish economy in the very place where transactions traditionally unfolded.

With donor support, the IBL EMBA is delivering select classes hosted by Indigenous communities, providing students with transformative experiences that honour nationhood and sovereignty. Rebecca and the 2023-2024 cohort have been guests to a diversity of nations: Squamish, Lil'wat, Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam and Stó:lō in British Columbia, Chippewas of Rama in Ontario and Whitecap Dakota in Saskatchewan.

"We had the opportunity to visit different territories across Turtle Island where we learned different medicines and different teachings from different regions, which I found so fascinating and really enriched the program," says Rebecca, who is Cree-Métis and a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta from Treaty 8 Territory in the Fort McMurray region.



Rebecca Kragnes



# Unique learning opportunities

Launched in 2012 as the first graduate program of its kind in North America, the IBL EMBA prepares and empowers experienced Indigenous leaders, professionals and managers for today's changing global business environment. In addition to core concepts covered in most MBA degrees, the IBL EMBA recognizes and respects the knowledge, cultural protocols and history that play significant roles in Indigenous communities and organizations.

"It's an opportunity for our faculty to highlight the great work these communities are doing to create prosperous futures for the next seven generations," says Stephanie Merinuk, who is a member of Berens River First Nation and manages academic and administrative services for Indigenous graduate programs at SFU's Beedie School of Business—while currently enrolled in the IBL EMBA.

The land-based classes are designed and supported by Indigenous faculty in collaboration with host communities to showcase a wide variety of economic initiatives. These

visits are made possible through the generous support of the Suncor Energy Foundation, which provides funding for student meals and accommodation, rental of community spaces, honoraria for guest speakers, events, workshops and tours.

"This investment from Suncor is uplifting Indigenous business studies within SFU and is having a huge impact on students, along with the communities and organizations they work with," explains program director Alexia McKinnon, a citizen of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation and herself a graduate of the IBL EMBA program.

Building on the bonds formed between classmates and host nations, students are encouraged to collaborate on new endeavours. One student is developing a retirement plan based on Indigenous values and others are working on a joint venture company that will eventually be entirely First Nations-owned.

## Holistic support for Indigenous changemakers

Alexia says that with the help of land-based learning, the program is reaching its full potential to support its students mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually throughout their learning journeys.

"What these students are bringing to life is so inspiring," she says. "You can see that they are changemakers who are advancing important conversations."

Rebecca says the land-based lessons directly apply to her role as director of Indigenous relations and community engagement at Bird Construction Inc., where she implements policies that maximize Indigenous participation in building projects across Canada and throughout the organization.

Growing up on a trapline in northeastern Alberta, she says the visits also helped reinforce values and knowledge gleaned through her own upbringing.

"The land-based classes justified the perspectives I learned from my parents but were never really talked about in post-secondary education," says Rebecca.

In 2024, the IBL EMBA will celebrate reaching more than 200 Indigenous business leader alumni. Reflecting on this milestone, Stephanie says that the program has had positive impacts throughout SFU Beedie—in the course content and school administration, as well as the campus spaces. For example, one of Stephanie's first initiatives was to organize decolonizing workshops with the entire business school staff, and since 2023, visitors to the Segal Graduate School building have been greeted by a beautiful Coast Salish weaving created by an IBL EMBA alumnus prominently displayed in the entrance hall.

"The world of business is changing and Indigenous voices are starting to be included in decision making tables," says Stephanie. "It's crucial for schools to evolve and adapt the programming to meet shifting needs."

What's Next: The SFU Strategy, a framework for action for the university, prioritizes our commitment to uphold Truth and Reconciliation. Initiatives such as land-based learning are critical in illuminating the truth of Indigenous people in Canada and globally and advancing an inclusive culture. **E**

Photo: Piece/( )Peace?  
by Kaleb Theissen, found  
objects/digital sculpture  
(March 2024).

“Knowing my efforts  
and creative practice  
are valued and that  
someone believes  
in my talent—that  
they believe art is  
worthwhile—is even  
more powerful. It’s  
motivation to keep  
doing what I love.”

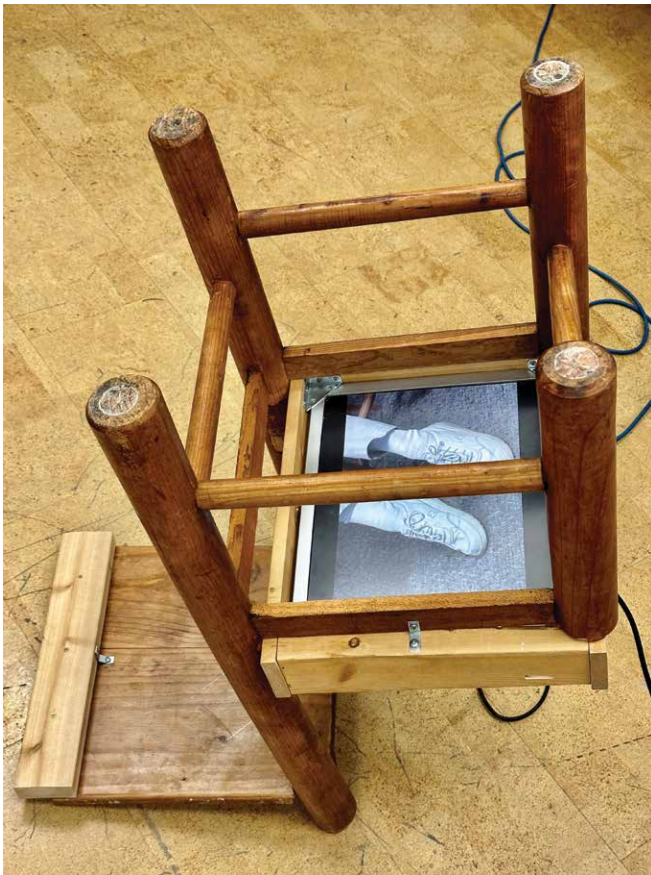
Kaleb Theissen



**NEW  
AWARD NURTURES  
ARTISTS TO PUSH  
CREATIVE LIMITS**

Melding found objects with images on video screens, multimedia artist Kaleb Thiessen is blurring the lines between physical and digital art works. In recognition of his keen ability to push creative boundaries, this spring he became the inaugural recipient of the Serein Properties Award in Visual Arts, the first award of its kind at SFU to recognize students with a talent for sculpture and installation arts.

“It is truly an honour and so meaningful to receive this award, particularly during this last stage of my undergraduate journey,” says Kaleb, who recently completed his fourth and final year in SFU’s School for the Contemporary Arts (SCA) visual arts program.



*SQUATTED CONSUMING*, found objects/digital sculpture (March 2023)

“The financial support is greatly appreciated, however, knowing my efforts and creative practice are valued and that someone believes in my talent—that they believe art is worthwhile—is even more powerful. It’s motivation to keep doing what I love.”

Serein Properties—which was founded by an SCA alumnus—has generously made a five-year commitment to annually fund the new award and it will be disbursed in the fall semester.

Kaleb initially studied communications at SFU, but also craved a creative outlet and was drawn to SCA’s cohort-style program in visual arts. He also notes being encouraged from a young age to explore his artistic side.

“My family has always been supportive of my art and engaged in the arts themselves. I have grown up with family involved in music, acting and dance. My dad worked in graphic design for years, and my sister is currently in the dance program at SCA. My mom also completed her BA at SFU. She teaches kindergarten in Burnaby and did a master’s degree with a focus on teaching through the arts.”

Within SCA, Kaleb found a platform to explore digital and physical realms, combining found materials and screens to create thought-provoking installations that blur the lines between art and function, and of physical versus digital modes of display.

His works, like *SQUATTED CONSUMING* (March 2023) and *Piece! ( )Peace?* (March 2024) have served as poignant reflections on consumerism, technology, and the passage of time, for example. Through these interactive sculptures, Kaleb invites viewers to reconsider their relationship with technology and the material world, challenging them to engage with his art on a visceral level.

Throughout his artistic and learning journey at SFU, Kaleb has ventured beyond campus by participating in the SCA Berlin field school.

“Being in an international city with my peers, experiencing art and learning about Berlin’s history, was a life-changing experience. It was amazing to gain new perspectives on art—especially thinking about how art can commemorate a complicated past or shape the future,” he says.

For the 2024 SCA graduating exhibition in April, he collaborated with 16 fellow artists in his cohort to put together *Look Both Ways*, which raised metaphysical questions about collective consciousness, the meaning of existence, archival authority, and loss.

The horizon is looking bright for Kaleb, and he is excited to be applying for artist residencies and to keep making art.

“It really does make a big difference; receiving recognition through this award is something I can carry forward with me as I continue to push my creativity, exploring the materiality of objects and technology’s role in changing our understanding of ourselves and its place in art.” **E**





# MEET THE PHYSICIANS HELPING LEAD THE JOURNEY TO B.C.'S NEW MEDICAL SCHOOL

**In 2022, the BC government announced that it hopes to establish a medical school at SFU, which would become the first new medical school in Western Canada in over 50 years.**

The SFU School of Medicine intends to train a new generation of physicians to add much-needed capacity to B.C.'s health-care system while re-envisioning medical education to better support community-embedded, socially accountable and culturally safe care.

To support this new approach, SFU is collaborating with Fraser Health to ensure its laser focus on supporting communities in the Fraser-Salish region.

In late 2023, Fraser Health hired two physicians, Dr. Navreen Gill, a family physician, and Dr. Anastasia Neufeld, an ophthalmologist and surgeon, to bring strategic medical leadership as the medical school moved toward Senate and Board of Governors approval, which was granted in May 2024. We sat down with these two leaders to learn more about their vision for this shared role:

## **What attracted you to this role?**

**DR. GILL** "After my clinical traineeships in Abbotsford and Mission, I became even more passionate about the Fraser Valley. As a family doctor, I can advocate for my patients—but I realized I can also do more. This role is an incredible opportunity to contribute to get patients more resources and more physicians—because they deserve more."

**DR. NEUFELD** "As an alumnus, I have always been a huge SFU cheerleader. When I heard about the new medical school being at SFU, I kept looking for ways to be involved. When this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in the establishing a new medical school came up, I was very excited to be involved."

## **Why is the partnership between SFU and Fraser Health so important?**

**DR. NEUFELD** "The partnership between a health authority and a university is a huge strength, because it allows for a lot of flexibility. At an administrative level, it provides for a much more cohesive approach to education. On the ground, it allows for all clinical sites to act in unison towards better medical education and eventually better medical care for the population."

**DR. GILL** "In many ways, medical education is like an apprenticeship. But to have an apprenticeship, you need mentors—and some of the best mentors are in Fraser Health."



## How do we strengthen physician engagement?

**DR. GILL** “The biggest thing is community outreach. We want to listen to the ideas people in the health system have and try to put them into action, and make sure that people know they can reach out to us at any time. Building this community is key to physician retention. We also want students to feel connected to the community, so they’ll stay and work in the Fraser Valley.”

## What makes SFU the ideal host for a medical school?

**DR. GILL** “I love SFU’s inclusiveness. Whenever I hear that about SFU, it’s from people saying they feel accepted here. SFU is also very big on innovation, and in health care, innovation is where we have to be. Health care is changing every single day. Major issues like climate change are affecting health, and SFU is at the forefront of trying to find solutions.”

**DR. NEUFELD** “Firstly, SFU’s ability to provide an individualized education to its students is incredibly important, which I hope will translate to the medical school as well. In my experience, SFU faculty and teachers seek out each student’s individual strengths and encourage the development of those strengths. Secondly, SFU is known for its health and population health research, which I think will greatly complement the medical school at SFU and provide a non-traditional approach to medical education. My hope is that local population research guides medical education at SFU to help meet the specific needs of the Fraser Valley patients.”

## What are some strengths you bring to this role?

**DR. GILL** “I bring passion and an endless amount of energy for outreach. I also have extensive experience in many different settings (rural, urban, and international). Finally, I’m incredibly optimistic. I might sound idealistic at times, but I think that’s what you need when you have such a big project.”

**DR. NEUFELD** “I think it’s my ability to connect with people. I’ve always taken a keen interest in my colleagues, their interests and opinions. Between my position at Vancouver Coastal Health as well as my academic appointment at University of British Columbia, I hope to be a bridge to support connections and relationships among all stakeholders. Finally, I am excited to offer my perspective as both a specialist and an evidenced-based researcher.”

## What are you most excited about?

**DR. GILL** “I’m excited to show our community of Fraser Health that we care. And I’m also incredibly excited for B.C. to have more doctors! When you have physicians trained

in the community they’re likely to stay in, they better understand the patient experience and are able to provide even more holistic care.”

**DR. NEUFELD** “We have the opportunity to establish a medical school from the bottom up. By creating a new school, we can look at the core curriculum and implement changes from the beginning. Right now, this project is breathing new life into clinical care and education. I can’t wait to capitalize on all of those positive feelings, and create something that complements what we already have in the province.” **E**



Dr. Gill is a family physician with a passion for teaching and making a difference. Graduating from a rural family medicine residency at UBC Prince George, Dr. Gill’s journey has been dedicated to the well-being of patients in diverse healthcare settings. Born and raised in Abbotsford, Dr. Gill carries a profound

connection to the local community. This connection fuels a relentless commitment to primary and preventative care. Dr. Gill feels exceptionally fortunate to be engaged in cradle-to-grave healthcare, providing patients with comprehensive and compassionate support throughout their lives.



Dr. Neufeld is an ophthalmologist and an educator with experience of teaching learners across all levels (medical students, residents and fellows). She completed her undergraduate degree at SFU with a First Class Honours Joint Major in Molecular Biology, Biochemistry and Business Administration.

She obtained her medical degree at UBC and completed her ophthalmology residency at Dalhousie University and fellowship in neuro-ophthalmology at the prestigious Moran Eye Center at the University of Utah. She has been practicing ophthalmology and neuro-ophthalmology in the Vancouver area since 2017. Dr. Neufeld is a clinical assistant professor at UBC and holds active surgical privileges at Fraser Health Authority and active consulting privileges at Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. She also holds certifications as a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada (FRCSC) as well as a diplomat of American Board of Ophthalmology (DABO).



# BRIDGING CONTINENTS FOR CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE RESEARCH



Credit: Prof. Woo Soo Kim

Arusha is the starting point for many Tanzanian safaris and climbs up Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa. It is also home to Aga Khan University's Arusha Climate and Environment Research (ACER) station. Located in a renowned hotspot for biological and cultural diversity, ACER is perfectly situated for community-centered environmental education, stewardship, innovation and demonstration.

Through generous support from the Jenabai Hussainali Shariff Family Awards, SFU students are visiting ACER for a once-in-a-lifetime experiential learning opportunity to broaden their perspectives, collaborate with local scholars and make a positive impact on the planet.

"International engagement helps raise awareness about climate change and address food security.

Most importantly, it allows students from different parts of the world to meet and work together in finding solutions," says Aziz Shariff.

Aziz and the Shariff family are providing funding for two groups of students to visit ACER in 2024, creating an incredible experiential opportunity for them to learn and collaborate.



The first delegation represented SFU's School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering in its inaugural field trip to Arusha, where they field-tested newly-developed innovations on ACER's more than 3,700 acres of rich, diverse farmland with crops that include avocado, coffee and chili.



Prof. Woo Soo Kim

Led by professor Woo Soo Kim, nine undergraduate and two graduate students

collaborated with local university students and farmers to apply the principles of mechatronics systems engineering—the synergy between electrical engineering and mechanical engineering—to help advance sustainable agriculture in Tanzania.

One team deployed a weed management robot equipped with an AI-connected camera and laser that autonomously roams the fields identifying and zapping weeds while leaving the desired crops unharmed and free from pesticides. The other team took to the sky with a drone that captures images of the farms and inputs that data into a crop analyzing algorithm designed by the SFU students. By identifying variations in crop height and volume, local farmers are provided with valuable information about which areas require more resources, such as water or fertilizer, to optimize crop growth.

Woo Soo says this research is especially important given that two thirds of Tanzania's population depend on agriculture.

"Our aim is to engineer sustainable and eco-friendly solutions that enhance productivity while



L-R: Vice-President, Research and Innovation Dugan O'Neil, President Joy Johnson, Aziz Shariff, Provost and Vice-President Academic Dilson Rassier

optimizing resource utilization, thus strengthening climate resilience and fostering a more sustainable agricultural ecosystem," he says.

The second trip, comprising eight students from the Faculty of Environment and Faculty of Education, is focused on climate resilience and sustainable food systems. This field school partners with the local Nashipay Maasai Initiatives, a non-profit organization that invited SFU students to stay in the community, build cob houses, learn about permaculture and contribute to the Maasai Education Center and certified eco-school.



Prof. Tammara Soma

"The support from the Shariff family is truly transformative because it creates an opportunity for students who would otherwise not be able to afford this international experience," says Tammara Soma, the 2024 summer field school director and professor in resources and environmental management at SFU.

"There is a great opportunity to really teach students what sustainability and community engagement means on the ground."

The university entered into a formal partnership with AKU and Arusha's Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology in November 2023. The goal of this alliance is to collaborate on environmental research aimed at dealing with the impact of climate change while also enhancing opportunities for joint projects in East Africa.

Aziz says he hopes that taking this first step will inspire other donors to support this and other immersive, international experiences that address climate change as a global concern.

"The world has to wake up to the importance of this cause because many are in denial at the moment. Our grandkids will never forgive us for not taking the opportunity to fix this before it gets too serious," says Aziz.

"When universities increase their international engagement, more awareness gets created, more funding becomes available and more partnerships can be created." **E**

# SFU STUDENTS BUILDING

# 37,350+

**STUDENTS**

(2022 calendar year)

Every student is a valued member of the diverse and growing SFU community. The support of generous friends and alumni like you can fuel their SFU experience, helping them become our next generation of leaders who will advance a more inclusive, sustainable world.

# 31,900+

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

# 5,500+

**GRADUATE STUDENTS & POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS**

# 364

**UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS**

# 149

**GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

# 8

**ON-SITE FIELD SCHOOLS**

(2023)

# 2,293

**STUDENTS ENGAGED IN VOLUNTEERING**

&

# 3,219

**TERM-LENGTH, OR SHORTER, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FILLED**

(2019 calendar year)

# 8,800

**STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CO-OP EDUCATION**

(as of June 2023)

# 2,900

**ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE WORLD POSTED OPPORTUNITIES WITH SFU'S WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING, RESULTING IN MORE THAN 12,500 STUDENT WORK-TERMS**

(2020 to 2022)



# 8,640+

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM 132 COUNTRIES**

(2022 calendar year)

# → 280

**OUTBOUND EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

(fiscal year 2022/23)

# ← 290

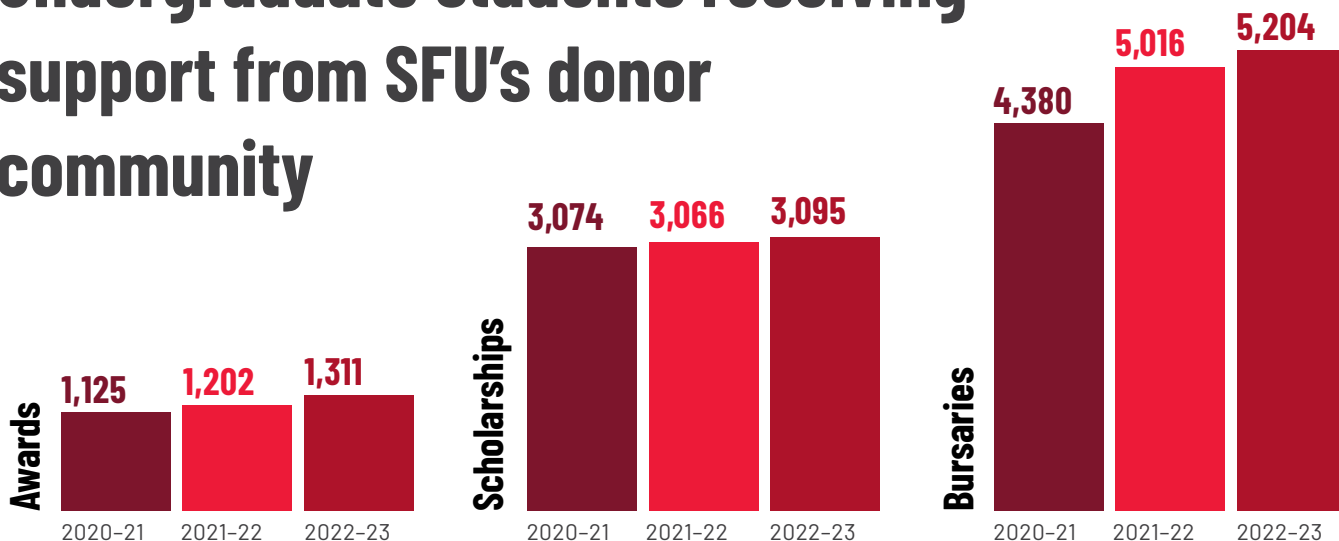
**INBOUND EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

(fiscal year 2022/23)



# A BETTER WORLD

## Undergraduate students receiving support from SFU's donor community



## Estimated university costs

(PER 4-MONTH TERM, DOMESTIC UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, 2024/25)

### Tuition (5 courses)

**\$3,182**

### Medical and dental

**\$268**

### Meal Plan

**\$3,381**

### Fees

**\$498**

### Books/Supplies

**\$1,185**

### Residence

**\$3,496**

Total

**\$12,010**

# ADDRESSING THE URGENT HUMAN HEALTH IMPACTS OF B.C. WILDFIRES



Prof. Stephanie Cleland

Climate change is bringing more frequent and severe wildfires to B.C., prompting health authorities to sound the alarm about worsening impacts of smoke and extreme heat—especially for the province’s most vulnerable people.

As the Legacy for Airway Health Chair in Promotion of Lung Health, SFU professor Stephanie Cleland is part of a burgeoning movement to better understand and adapt to these pressing challenges.



“Wildfire smoke and heat are problems that are definitely not going away anytime soon. It is important in both the short- and long-term to protect communities across Canada, and try to get the research we need to support those policies and interventions,” says Stephanie.

Since first beginning her studies on wildfires in 2018, she says public interest has rapidly gained momentum. Growing up in Oregon, Stephanie recalls that wildfire smoke wasn’t nearly as prevalent when she was a child as it is today.

“Seeing it hit close to home increased my motivation to understand how wildfires impact human health, because it is affecting my loved ones and many other people,” says Stephanie, who joined SFU’s Faculty of Health Sciences in 2023.

Through environmental epidemiology, exposure assessments and health impact assessments, Stephanie says her and other’s research is showing that certain demographics—children, older populations, pregnant people, and those with pre-existing conditions—are most at risk. This research can then guide public health initiatives such as improving building air filtration systems or raising awareness about strategies to minimize harmful exposure.

“For example, if we can pinpoint certain periods in a child’s early life when they are most vulnerable, or certain levels or types of exposure that are most dangerous, this information can be really useful to daycares and schools,” she says.

This new chair at SFU is made possible by an endowment from the Legacy for Airway Health, a multidisciplinary initiative based at the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute that addresses the two most common chronic lung diseases—asthma and COPD—with the goal of accelerating improvements in practice, behaviour and policy change.

“Although wildfire smoke is an area of pollution research that is clearly front-and-centre in the minds of scientists and the public, we are way behind in terms of really understanding its effects compared to what we’ve done related to pollution from traffic,” says Dr. Chris Carlsten, a distinguished

professor, clinician and researcher, who, as director of Legacy for Airway Health, was instrumental in establishing the chair as a bridge between healthcare practitioners and academics like Stephanie.

“Seeing it hit close to home increased my motivation to understand how wildfires impact human health, because it is affecting my loved ones and many other people.”

Prof. Stephanie Cleland

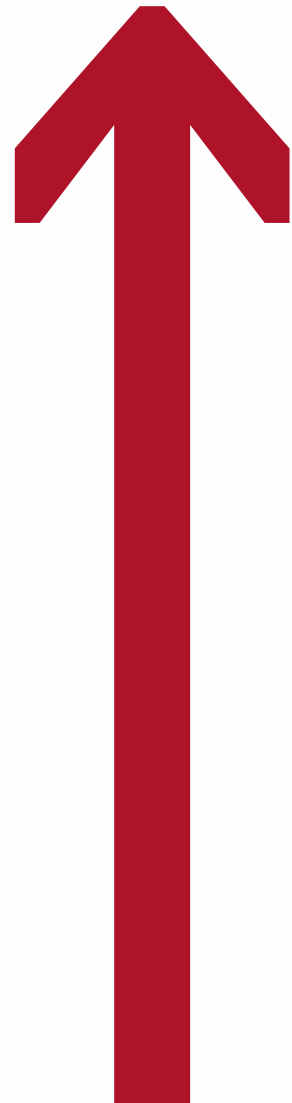
“Stephanie is in a group of up-and-coming faculty members who have harnessed the best technology for identifying exposures as precisely as possible, which increases our ability to understand the effects on people.”

Stephanie says one major benefit of this chair is that it allows her to work with interdisciplinary faculty at SFU, in addition to researchers at Legacy for Airway Health and public health agencies across the province.

“This position exposes me to a really rich network of people thinking about respiratory health and climate change, giving me access to ongoing projects and existing datasets from diverse sources,” she says.

“Faced with a situation that isn’t very optimistic, it gives me a bit of optimism that we’re understanding it’s important to research and understand climate change as a public health issue.” **E**

# UPLIFTING STUDENTS IN NEED



Marie-Éloïse  
Leclair





Surging costs of living are impacting the lives of countless people across Canada, and SFU students are no exception.

“The cost of housing in our city is unparalleled, food prices are still high, and paying for those essentials alongside tuition is really out of reach for so many deserving students,” says Tom Nault, SFU registrar and executive director of student enrolment.

According to Tom, more than 3,000 SFU students rely on bursaries for critical financial support throughout fall and spring semesters; demand is slightly less during summer semesters when enrollment is lower. Bursaries vary based upon students’ financial need, however all bursaries positively affect students in their ability to complete their term and work toward graduation.


Marie-Éloïse Leclair is a fourth-year undergraduate student majoring in health sciences and minoring in Indigenous studies. A sprinter on the SFU track team and the Paris 2024 Canadian Olympic team, she is also one of our many students for whom receiving a bursary has made a big difference.

“Receiving a bursary is such a privilege,” Marie-Éloïse says. “I am very grateful for the tremendous impact of the bursary on my life as an SFU student. It provides me financial stability so that I can fully focus on my studies. I am profoundly grateful for [this] generous support.”

This spring, through SFU’s annual giving campaign, generous alumni and donors like you are helping students like Marie-Éloïse.

Your support, as Tom explains, not only helps students afford basic necessities. It also removes some of the worry of financial constraints and gives students precious time to focus more on their studies and university experiences.

We are deeply grateful to all donors whose generosity ensures our students can access the support they need to succeed. Your contributions are an investment in the next generation of leaders and innovators who will drive positive change in our society.

Additional contributions toward SFU student bursaries will make a meaningful difference. Please scan the QR code to learn more. 

# Fiscal Year 2024 Fall & Year-end Campaigns

Thank you for thoughtfully contributing toward our fall and year-end campaigns last year. Your generosity means numerous SFU students and their varying needs are supported across our campuses.

**\$72,668**  
DURING THE FALL CAMPAIGN  
FROM 449 GIFTS

→ **\$46,968**  
STUDENT WELLING BEING AND  
ACTIVE HEALTH & RECREATION FUNDS

**\$143,923**  
FROM OUR YEAR-END CAMPAIGN  
FROM 608 GIFTS

→ **\$45,358**  
FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM FUND\*

**13** NEW BURSARIES CREATED  
FOR A COMBINED \$27,000

TOTAL RAISED:  
**\$216,591**

\*Excluding matching funds

For close to 50 years, Terry Hunter and Savannah Walling have created a repertoire and nurtured the artistic spirit of the Downtown Eastside, one of the city's most historic, diverse and socially-complex neighbourhoods.

With relentless energy, they co-founded dance, mime and theatre companies, including the award-winning Vancouver Moving Theatre (VMT). In addition to creating and presenting original performance works and concerts, VMT also produces the Heart of the City Festival—conceived “with, for, and about the Downtown Eastside.”

“Over the years, we gathered materials about amazing productions and festivals showcasing creativity coming out of the Downtown Eastside cultural community,” says Savannah.

To ensure this rich history is preserved for future generations, the couple are donating their expansive archive to SFU Library's Special Collections and Rare Books.

The Terry Hunter and Savannah Walling Collection chronicles a four-decade journey through thousands of show programs, photos, video and audio recordings, article clippings and educational course guides. It also reveals behind-the-scenes elements of running a performing arts company by including administrative documents such as financial reports and grant applications.

# PRESERVING VANCOUVER'S COMMUNITY-ENGAGED ART HISTORY



Terry Hunter and  
Savannah Walling.  
Credit: David Cooper



Hosting this collection at SFU is particularly meaningful for Terry and Savannah, who met while performing in the 1971 SFU Mime Troupe and soon became partners in theatre and in life.

“SFU was my entry point into the arts,” says Terry. “It was a time of protest, a time of change and a time of a really huge burst in the arts as a way to give voice to people and their concerns.”

After initiating their craft at SFU and co-founding Terminal City Dance with SFU alumnus Karen Jamieson, they rented a floor of the Lim Sai Hor Kow Mock Association building in Chinatown. In 1983, they launched VMT. After touring productions around the world, they established and immersed themselves in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and its cultural mosaic of Indigenous, Chinese, Japanese, Ukrainian, European and Black communities.

“The interdisciplinary quality, the collaborative nature, the creative work, the innovation, the breaking boundaries—all those values were established at Simon Fraser University, and stayed with us as we moved forward,” says Terry. “They still inform the work that we’re doing today.”

“We’re building a bridge to the future, with an exit ramp for ourselves.”

Terry Hunter and Savannah Walling

Vancouver Moving Theatre’s Storyweaving Project, produced in partnership with the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association. Credit: Mark Montgomery



L: 2023 Heart of the City Festival poster. Credit: David Cooper photo, John Endo Greenaway design

R: Vancouver Moving Theatre’s 1994 Heron Woman. Credit: David Cooper

Savannah and Terry’s lives have frequently intersected with SFU over the years. They have contributed to course curriculums, partnered on the evolving theatre production of Bah Humbug! with SFU Woodward’s Cultural Programs and assisted a Faculty of Education PhD student with doctoral thesis research on the Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival.

Alexandra Wieland, Acting Head of SFU’s Special Collections and Rare Books, says their gift will serve as a valuable resource for SFU’s School for the Contemporary Arts and Institute for Performance Studies, to be used and appreciated by students, researchers, practitioners, and the public for many years to come.

“I am delighted that Special Collections will preserve Terry and Savannah’s enormous creativity and illuminate a vital part of Vancouver’s vibrant cultural history. We are honoured to make the archive accessible to support new cultural works and scholarly research,” says Alexandra.

For Savannah and Terry, this gift comes at a time of transition as they hand the reins of VMT to a new team of leaders and embark on other endeavours. It is also a time of reflection, as the couple were named members of the Order of Canada in 2023, in recognition of their visionary, community-engaged arts practice.

“We’ve been aware that we’re coming to that time of succession in our lives and wanted to benefit the next generation of artists, educators, policymakers, researchers, and communities,” says Terry.

“We’re building a bridge to the future, with an exit ramp for ourselves.” **E**



# FOSTERING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

## A Q&A about paying it forward with alumnus Allan Merrill

Accomplished alumnus Allan Merrill (BBA '00) was a business student and athlete during his time at SFU, and credits study abroad experiences in Mexico and Chile with changing the trajectory of his life and career. Following graduation, Allan obtained both his JD and MBA from Harvard and went on to build a successful career in New York as a senior executive and portfolio manager in the hedge fund industry.

Through a generous gift to establish the Merrill Family Global Campus Experience at SFU, Allan is now ensuring that other undergraduate students in the Beedie School of Business can benefit from study abroad opportunities. He recently spoke with Engage magazine to share more about the inspiration for his giving and how his SFU experience transformed his journey.

**We understand SFU has a special place in your life. You were a first generation SFU student as well as a student athlete. Can you share a particular memory or experience from your time at SFU that stands out for you?**

It would be hard to pick just one. Some of the highlights that stand out include residence life and friends I lived with in the townhouses on campus during the first two years of my time there; the late-night exam cramming sessions with fellow business students and lots of coffee in the West Mall Centre; participating in the co-op program; and an inspiring accounting professor, person and associate dean, Maureen Fizzell, who was one of the more impactful people that I was fortunate to spend some time with and someone that I kept in touch with for a number of years after leaving SFU.

We sit through many classes and read a lot of books in any degree program, but for most of us, the memories are really around the people that we've shared experiences and developed relationships with.

**What impact did student support have on your own student experience?**

Scholarships, awards and grants highly influenced my choice to come to SFU and were critical to enable me to make the most of my SFU experience and the opportunities it gave me. Without the financial support, I would have needed to work more part-time hours than I did, leaving less time to get the full intellectual experience and excel academically; to explore clubs, on-campus leadership positions and careers; and to participate in varsity athletics and in business case competitions. And I certainly would not have been able to benefit from two study abroad experiences without financial support.



The Merrill family, left to right, Jack Merrill, Sydney Merrill, Vera Merrill, Allan Merrill

**You had the opportunity while at SFU to study abroad in Mexico City and Santiago, Chile. Can you tell us a bit more about these experiences and why you were inspired to give back to your alma mater?**

Study abroad experiences were transformative for me in a number of ways. I grew up in the Lower Mainland and had limited experience traveling outside of British Columbia. Being truly outside of my comfort zone for the first time, living in a foreign culture and trying to communicate in a foreign language was frankly humbling. But the personal growth and confidence that resulted from pushing my boundaries and surviving—and thriving—in that experience inspired me to take more risks and try new things both when I came back to SFU and beyond.

I expanded my world views, made global connections with others for the first time—not only local students in Mexico and Chile but other international students who were on exchange programs there—and learned new perspectives. Altogether, study abroad experiences

completely altered my prior career path and led me to dream bigger about the world of opportunities I could pursue after graduation.

My path at SFU and beyond was made possible by the financial aid I was fortunate to receive at the time. Financial obstacles are very real for most students and can prevent them from benefitting from all that SFU has to offer. I was inspired to give back specifically to help more students benefit from the transformative experience of studying abroad.

**The Merrill Family Global Campus Experience will make studying abroad much more accessible for SFU Beedie students. What would you tell a young person who might be considering an international learning opportunity?**

Just do it! Once you decide to do it, you can overcome any obstacles that appear to be in the way to make it happen. Be prepared to experience a lot of personal growth, and for your view of the world to expand. You will return to SFU a more interesting person as well as a more marketable

employee. You will not regret it, and there is unlikely to be a better time in your life to do it than now.

**Can you tell us how your SFU experience and degree prepared you for success after graduation?**

When I think of my SFU experience I really think of the totality of different experiences I was fortunate enough to take advantage of that, together, maximized what I got out of SFU. My SFU experience prepared me for success by allowing me to try many new things—co-op internships, study abroad programs, clubs and student government, a varsity sport, and business case competitions against other universities. Together with the rich classroom learning environment, these experiences strongly shaped my goals and career aspirations and nurtured a confidence to pursue them.

**What would you say to other SFU alumni or community members who may be considering partnering philanthropically with SFU?**

It is very rewarding to know that through philanthropy you can help students in the next generation explore and achieve their full potential. It is even more rewarding if you also have the opportunity to connect with and hear directly from these students about their dreams while helping contribute to their ability to achieve them. I highly recommend reaching out to the Advancement office at Beedie or SFU, and opening a dialogue with the very gracious and professional staff there. There are a variety of ways to give back, and so many student and university needs. The Advancement team can help illuminate these needs and match them to a philanthropic vision that is meaningful to you. **E**

A collage of fresh vegetables including potatoes, a yellow bell pepper, radishes, and carrots.

# **RAISING THE BAR TO IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY FOR STUDENTS**

Thanks to the incredible support of donors and community partners, this year's Surrey Community Mixer raised over \$39,000—including \$25,000 from the Surrey Fire Fighter's Charitable Society—toward the SFU Food Security Program, ensuring struggling SFU students can access the comfort and health of good food.



# Nurturing powerful pathways for student success

Among the guests was Don Murray, SFU alumnus, dedicated community leader and co-founder of Surrey-based Safe Software. In addition to attending the event, Don and the team at Safe Software helped kickstart donations with a \$2,500 contribution to support food security.



2024 Surrey Community Mixer

"If you're hungry, it's impossible to have the energy to get up and out of the house, never mind studying or thinking critically so you can succeed at school," Don said, when asked why he chose to support this important program at SFU.

"At Safe Software we support many local initiatives, including local food banks, breakfast programs in Surrey public schools and more. We were proud to contribute and help make sure university students at SFU have the nourishment they need to thrive."

Don shared that many SFU graduates have gone on to work for his company, which has also employed the university's students through co-op placements over the years. Safe Software has also shown remarkable support for initiatives within the Faculty of Applied Sciences including the 2019 Technovation B.C. Regional Pitch Event, where young women studying computing science worked to address a community issue.

When asked what motivates him to stay engaged with SFU both philanthropically and otherwise, Don says it all comes down to reciprocity, and the spirit of innovation at SFU.

"I genuinely loved my time at SFU as a student. SFU was and is a unique place where people aren't afraid to do things differently, and experimenting with new approaches is encouraged," he says.

"Co-operative education was part of my academic experience, and it was invaluable to come out of university with practical skills. That was a unique opportunity which very few other institutions offered back then. After co-founding and building Safe [Software], it just made sense to reciprocate—to give back and offer students a similar chance to build their skills and experience. At Safe we've had many great people from SFU. It's been wonderful."

## Leading with compassion

Bruce Fingarson, Vice President of Engineering for Surrey-based Automation West Technologies, also attended the Surrey Community Mixer with his wife, Edith. The couple generously contributed \$1,000 to the food security program. Bruce is a sessional instructor at SFU and has seen first-hand how supporting mental and physical health is a key factor in students succeeding in their educational pursuits.

"My wife and I both grew up with unhindered access to good food and we raised our family with the philosophy of always welcoming others to our kitchen table. We also value higher education and have been fortunate enough to provide both for our kids," Bruce says.

"We contributed to the Food Security Program Fund at SFU because we believe access to healthy food is critical for young people's overall mental and physical health, as well as their future success. From my perspective as a leader, to focus and perform well at anything, people need to be well-rested and well-nourished. We were happy to contribute to this important initiative, which helps give students the fuel they need to keep going." **E**

If you are interested in helping provide SFU students with the comfort and health of good food, please consider making a donation today!

# MEET SFU'S 2024 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS

SFU shone a spotlight on the remarkable achievements of our grads with the 2024 Outstanding Alumni Awards, celebrating members of our community who are serving society, advancing knowledge and making many other positive impacts on the world.

SFU's honourees this year are Kluane Adamek (Aagé), a visionary leader and the youngest woman to hold the title of Yukon Regional Chief; Anne Giardini, a business executive, lawyer, writer and community advocate who served as SFU's chancellor; Elio Luongo, an esteemed CEO, international board director, and advisor dedicated to creating opportunities for Canadians and improving equity in the boardroom; and Poh Tan, an entrepreneur and scientist advancing more inclusive STEM education.

Read more about how these dynamic individuals exemplify the spirit of SFU's vibrant community: demonstrating how determination, leadership, and a passion for meaningful change can lead to extraordinary outcomes.



## Kluane Adamek (Aagé)

**EMBA IBL '19**

**Yukon Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations**

**AWARD CATEGORY** Service to the Community

Regional Chief Kluane Adamek (Aagé) is a citizen of Kluane First Nation, and is from the Dakl'aweidi Clan. In 2023, Kluane and her family proudly welcomed their daughter, Tayāna Copper-Jane.

Kluane is passionate and committed to uplifting and creating opportunities for the next generation of leaders. She has worked in support of youth leaders throughout her life and career, most recently, supporting the advancement of the Yukon First Nation Climate Action Fellowship and the Yukon First Nation: Reconnection Vision, led by 13 Yukon First Nation youth climate leaders.

In 2019, Kluane completed her Indigenous Business Leadership Executive MBA at SFU, where she further expanded her governance and leadership experience. In 2021, she was named one of Canada's Top 25 Women of Influence, and was part of the WXN Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100. She was also awarded with the 2023 David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award.

Kluane has served as the Assembly of First Nation (AFN) Yukon Regional Chief since 2018. She approaches issues and solutions through a values-based leadership approach, and is deeply committed to advancing the interests of the 14 Yukon First Nations.

Kluane proudly leads the AFN National Portfolios for Environment, Climate Change, Water Stewardship, and Modern Treaties. Her leadership has been critical in advancing environmental action as a top priority for First Nations, both nationally and internationally.



## Dr. Anne Giardini

**BA '80, LLD '22 (HONORARY)**

**SFU Chancellor Emeritus  
and Corporate Director**

### **AWARD CATEGORY** Service to the University

Chancellor of SFU from 2014 to 2020, a member of SFU's Board of Governors from 2010 to 2014, and an alumnus herself, Anne Giardini, OC, OBC, KC, is a long-time champion of the university.

As a celebrated corporate director, lawyer, community advocate and author, Anne is acclaimed for her groundbreaking leadership in the Canadian resource industry and contributions to numerous community and nonprofit boards, and for supporting the advancement of women, the environment, higher education and the arts.

In the business community, Anne pursued a successful two-decade career with the Canadian subsidiary of Weyerhaeuser Company, where she enhanced sustainability and ethical practices in a variety of leadership roles including as president from 2008 to 2014.

Anne has written two best-selling novels, and has been a news columnist and public speaker, covering topics including the environment, law, diversity and inclusion.

For her contributions to SFU, the business community and society as a whole, Anne was presented with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 2022.



## Elio Luongo **BBA '83**

**Chief Executive Officer  
and Senior Partner, KPMG in Canada**

### **AWARD CATEGORY** Professional Achievement

With three decades of experience serving clients at KPMG, Elio Luongo has advised some of Canada's largest companies, helping these businesses grow and achieve long-term success.

He has held senior leadership roles at one of the world's most prominent professional services firms, including acting as KPMG Canada's CEO and Senior Partner and a member of the Global Board of KPMG International.

Through his inclusive and visionary leadership, Elio has created career development opportunities for thousands of aspiring CPAs, growing KPMG in Canada from 6,000 to 10,000 employees. As a champion of diverse teams, he has led by example, appointing women to more than 50 percent of the roles on his executive team. Elio oversaw the appointment of the company's inaugural Chief Mental Health Officer—the first in corporate Canada—and KPMG Canada has been recognized for numerous employer awards, including by Forbes Canada for being the Best Employer for Diversity in 2022. He is also a member of the 30% Club which advocates for greater representation of women in Board Seats and C-Suites.

As a proud SFU alumnus, Elio has served on SFU's 50th Anniversary Campaign Cabinet, as a member of SFU's Board of Governors and as a Chair of the Dean's External Advisory Board for the Beedie School of Business.





## Dr. Poh Tan

**BSC '02 AND PHD '24**

**Founder and CEO, STEMedge Academy Inc.**

### **AWARD CATEGORY** Rising Star for Service to the Community

Poh Tan is an entrepreneur, stem cell scientist, and one of B.C.'s most renowned STEM educators.

As an educational consultant for BC Hydro's Power Smart for School's program, a long-term volunteer at Vancouver's Science World, and a researcher at Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association, Poh has spent hundreds of hours helping the community build culturally-inclusive education programming. Through her initiatives, she has inspired hundreds of fellow educators to adopt inclusive teaching materials, including post-secondary instructors in SFU's Decolonizing and Indigenizing STEM Community of Practice.

The two-time TEDx speaker previously served as the President of the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology and is a delegate of the National Council of Women of Canada to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Poh was the inaugural recipient of the Kris Magnusson Emerging

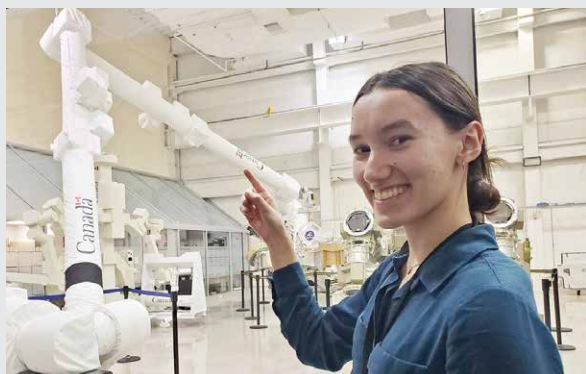
Leaders Award in Education, a YWCA Women of Distinction Award Nominee in Education, Training, and Development, and was recently the recipient of the Mantella Corporation Entrepreneur BIPOC Grant Award in recognition of BIPOC business leaders.

In 2019, Poh established STEMedge Academy Inc, a cultural-inclusive education consultancy that advises organizations on local STEM outreach programs.

She holds a PhD in Experimental Medicine from UBC and in 2024 completed her second doctorate at SFU in Educational Theory and Practice, receiving a Graduate Studies Convocation Medal. Her thesis research focused on understanding the development of scientific literacy through different lenses, including Indigenous Hawaiian epistemology.

Poh is proud to be an SFU alumnus where she continues to mentor SFU undergraduate students across different disciplines. **E**

# SFU NEWS & RESEARCH



## Out of this world co-op experience helps chart space dream to the stars

Tianna Sequeira, an SFU student in the School of Sustainable Energy Engineering (SEE), once dreamed of the stars and space exploration. She recently landed a role with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and is now working in systems engineering on the Canadian contribution to the NASA-led Lunar Gateway program—a project that will send humans deeper into space thanks to the Simon Fraser University Co-op program.



## SFU re-appoints Joy Johnson as president and vice-chancellor for another term

Early in 2024, SFU Board of Governors voted unanimously to re-appoint Joy Johnson as president and vice-chancellor of Simon Fraser University. The further five-year term begins Sept. 1, 2025, and runs to Aug. 31, 2030. Board Chair Angie Lamarsh, who led an extensive review and community consultation, said the board was pleased with Johnson's performance to date and her ambitious plans for the university.

## Earth Sciences professor assessing carbon storage potential beneath Metro Vancouver

Professor Shahin Dashtard is looking at the viability of storing large volumes of carbon dioxide in a soda pop-like solution thousands of metres below the streets of Metro Vancouver to help B.C. meet its net-zero emission goals. With business and industry among the highest emitters of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Metro Vancouver, contributing half of the 15 million tonnes of total regional emissions, with industrial facilities accounting for approximately 2.5 million tonnes (17 per cent).

While multiple approaches are being implemented to reduce industrial emissions, these are unlikely to achieve carbon neutrality in the industrial sector within the next 30 years.







## Bringing Indigenous culture to the heart of SFU's Surrey campus

SFU has installed two of four new public works of art to acknowledge, honour and respect the unceded traditional territories of the First Nations, where SFU's Surrey campus is located. More than static installations, the pieces are platforms for learning that invite audiences to deepen their understanding of the region's Indigenous peoples' traditions and their relationship with the land. Our Roots Run Deep, produced by Phyllis Atkins and her son, Noah (Kwantlen First Nation), and Step by Step, by Rain Pierre (Katzie First Nation), are the first two Indigenous art pieces to be installed at the campus.



## Digital repatriation of Tse'k'wa archive democratizes 50 years of archaeological and cultural knowledge

Materials and artifacts from one of the most significant cultural and archaeological sites in B.C. are being digitally repatriated to the Dane-zaa people. Tse'k'wa ("rock house" in Dane-zaa/Beaver language) is a cave that has been home to the Dane-zaa ancestors for more than 12,500 years. SFU's Knut Fladmark and Jon Driver led excavations there from 1974 to 1991, unearthing artifacts crucial to understanding human habitation from the last ice age to the Second World War. In 2012, the Dane-zaa Nations purchased the property and formed the Tse'k'wa Heritage Society, and it was designated a National Historic Site in 2019. Tse'k'wa's materials, currently housed at SFU's Burnaby campus, are being returned digitally, facilitated by John Driver and SFU Library.





## IUPP student Morgan Peequaquat finds her voice and a community while organizing the Skoden Indigenous Film Festival

When Morgan Peequaquat transferred to SFU from UBC, she didn't plan to take a class about Indigenous film or help to plan a film festival in her second semester. CA 389: Selected Topics in the Fine and Performing Arts is a course that curates and organizes the Skoden Indigenous Film Festival each year. The course is open to any SFU student interested in learning more about Indigenous film and what goes into planning a film festival, and it was an elective available to Morgan as part of the Indigenous University Preparation Pathway (IUPP).



## Growing pains? SFU research tracks 100 years of salmon adaptation to climate change

Juvenile salmon in British Columbia are growing larger than they did 100 years ago due to climate change, according to a new Simon Fraser University-led study.

Century-old fish scales are yielding new insights into how salmon populations are responding to climate change in northern B.C., and how maintaining the integrity of freshwater habitats may help salmon adapt to warming temperatures. SFU biological sciences Liber Ero Postdoctoral Fellow Michael Price, with other SFU researchers and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, have used modern genetic tools to analyze fish scales collected from fisheries since 1913 to reconstruct the historical growth of juvenile sockeye in various lakes across the Skeena watershed.

## SFU-led B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation expands funding to boost B.C. food sovereignty

Thirteen new agritech projects aimed at strengthening the province's food production have received funding from the Simon Fraser University-led B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation (BCCAI). The 13 projects, announced on Jan. 26 at the 2024 Pacific Agriculture Show in Abbotsford, aim to solve critical challenges facing food producers in B.C., including soil health, pest and pathogen management, Indigenous food sovereignty and training opportunities. Together, they represent a total investment of \$2 million, including more than \$650,000 from the BCCAI. The BCCAI brings together academia, industry and government to create new opportunities toward food production and security. Located at SFU's Surrey campus, the BCCAI is funded by the province and the federal government, through Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan). **E**





# CREATING A LASTING LEGACY

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# THE BOLD & THE BARD

Before reaching international stardom, English actors Ben Kingsley and Patrick Stewart graced the stages and classrooms of SFU as artists-in-residence with the Royal Shakespeare Company—sharing their dramatic expertise with students and the public alike.

Over five days in February 1977, Stewart and Kingsley—alongside Sheila Allen, Juliet Aykroyd and Richard Pasco—engaged in a whirlwind of workshops, lectures and seminars and performed six plays that attracted more than 1,900 theatre fans to the Burnaby campus.

Instead of performing full-length plays with elaborate costumes and sets, each production offered a sampling of Shakespeare vignettes following a chosen theme, such as “Lovers and Madmen” or “Wooing, Wedding and Repenting.”

In addition to these special events, the quintet met with more than 600 English and Fine and Performing Arts students in individual sessions, which included everything from a sonnet workshop to a class on theatre movement for dancers.

The sojourn from Stratford-upon-Avon distinguished SFU as the first Canadian university to host the Royal Shakespeare Company and the only one on this hectic, six-week North American West Coast tour.

Five years later, Kingsley would go on to play Mahatma Gandhi in the eponymous 1982 epic biographical film, garnering widespread critical acclaim and an Academy Award for Best Actor.

It would be another decade before Stewart’s television career took off playing the leading role on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* as the celebrated Captain Jean-Luc Picard. **E**



“Program lacked Spirit,” *The Peak*, 15 Feb. 1977



“Snippets of Shakespeare,” *The Peak*, 11 Feb. 1977



From left to right: Richard Pasco, Sheila Allen, Patrick Stewart and Ben Kingsley.  
Credit: SFU Archives. School of Contemporary Arts fonds, F-109-12-5-0-193



# A charter alumnus' legacy

In the bustling mid-1960s, Brian Martin embarked on an unconventional journey that would shape not only his career but also his lifelong commitment to philanthropy.

After a brief stint in accounting in Calgary's oil and gas sector, Brian found himself yearning for more. Following a conversation with and gentle nudge from his colleague, Richard F. "Dick" Haskayne, later a legendary Canadian business leader and a mentor who saw potential in Brian's ambitions, he soon enrolled at Simon Fraser University—drawn by the promise of a unique educational experience and an opportunity to chart his own path.

"There was no other university in Canada that I'm aware of that had a semester system," says Brian when asked what attracted him to SFU. "So, with my background in accounting I was able to waive a bunch of programs and crushed the program within five semesters and graduated with Honours in Economics in May of 1967 as a proud charter student."

As he reminisces about those early days, Brian speaks of SFU with high regard, recalling the construction chaos and the promise of a flourishing academic community. "Simon Fraser had elevated their program to a different level than what we had seen typically in the Canadian university ranks at that time." Despite the challenges, he found reassurance in the dynamic economics program and the vibrant campus culture. SFU became his launching pad—an introduction to and foundation for a world of possibilities.

His next destination was business school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which propelled him into a successful career in consulting and venture capitalism. "Simon Fraser gets a lot of the credit," he notes, "because by making the break, and getting there to SFU, all those other things would not have happened."



# INSPIRING FUTURE LEADERS



Credit:  
SFU Archives  
IMC-80046\_011

Investing in education was “not just a good deed;  
it was a logical choice—an investment in the future.”

Brian Martin

Amidst the hustle and bustle of his professional life, Brian never forgot his roots. He remained steadfast in his commitment to giving back, inspired by his own experiences as a student struggling with student loans and his empathy for that situation. He has become one of SFU's most loyal supporters whose dedicated philanthropy has spanned more than three decades.

Brian's donor journey began with a simple phone call from one of SFU's student fundraisers and an invitation to support students in pursuit of their dreams. “You guys keep calling every year and the phone call makes a big difference to me.” What started as a modest contribution turned into a lifelong commitment to empowering the

next generation of leaders at SFU. For Brian, investing in education was “not just a good deed; it was a logical choice—an investment in the future.”

Today, as Brian reflects on his legacy, he finds comfort in knowing that his decision to leave a gift in his will to SFU will impact students for years to come. Having celebrated his 83rd birthday, his commitment to giving back and to the transformative power of education remains unwavering. In Brian's eyes, philanthropy isn't just about writing a cheque; it's about making a meaningful difference in the lives of others and ensuring that future leaders have the same opportunities that he did. **E**

# HOW TO PLAN TO REDUCE TAXES ON YOUR ESTATE

Part one in  
a three-part series

## ARTICLE BY PAMELA YOON, SFU ALUMNUS AND RBC DOMINION SECURITIES SENIOR PORTFOLIO MANAGER

As the old saying goes, the only two certainties in life are death and taxes. By planning for tomorrow today, you can retain more of your assets, protect your estate and leave a lasting legacy (for your family and charitable organizations that you love).

A common misconception is that only the wealthy need to concern themselves with estate planning. This misconception can result in significant unnecessary costs for your estate and additional burdens for survivors. In fact, just about everyone can benefit from the development of an estate plan. Regardless of your age or financial situation, an estate plan can reduce the taxes and expenses of an estate, simplify and speed the transition of assets to your beneficiaries, and ensure beneficiaries are protected.

In this first instalment in a three-part series, we look at some ways to minimize taxes at death. Please note these tips are intended for a Canadian resident who is not a U.S. citizen. If you have dual citizenship or residency in another country, there may be additional strategies and issues you need to consider.



## Fully maximize your tax free savings account (TFSA)

The annual TFSA contribution limit for 2024 is \$7,000. If you lived in Canada since 2009 and were eligible to open a TFSA but have not yet contributed to one, your contribution limit would be \$95,000 as of January 1, 2024. Any income earned (including capital gains) in the TFSA and any withdrawals you make from the account are tax-free and do not affect your federal government income-tested benefits such as old age security (OAS) and the guaranteed income supplement (GIS). The income you earn or the withdrawals you make will also not impact your entitlement to federal tax credits such as the age amount. The TFSA can also be used to shelter money you may not currently need. For example, if you don't require your entire mandatory minimum RRIF payment to fund your living expenses, consider contributing any excess after-tax amount to your TFSA.

## Registered accounts (RRSP/RRIF)

Ensure you have the right investments in the right accounts. If you own fixed income investments (like GICs and bonds), ensure these are invested inside your RRIF/RRSP. Interest income is taxed at the highest tax rate whereas capital gains and dividends attract a lower tax rate.

If you have had great success with your investments over the years and now have large investment balances in your RRSP/RRIF, as you get closer to your 70's and beyond, consider accelerating your withdrawals above the mandatory RIF minimum and contributing the excess after-tax amount to your TFSA.

If you are over the age of 65, consider splitting pension-income with your spouse (or common-law partner) while alive, which also allows you to consider accelerating your RIF withdrawals.

### Disclaimer:

This information is not investment advice and should be used only in conjunction with a discussion with your RBC Dominion Securities Inc. Investment Advisor. This will ensure that your own circumstances have been considered properly and that any action is taken based upon the latest available information. The strategies and advice in this report are provided for general guidance. Readers should consult their own Investment Advisor when planning to implement a strategy. Interest rates, market conditions, special offers, tax rulings, and other investment factors are subject to change. The information contained herein has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable at the time obtained but neither RBC Dominion Securities Inc. nor its employees, agents, or information suppliers can guarantee its accuracy or completeness. This report is not and under no circumstances is to be construed as an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities. This report is furnished on the basis and understanding that neither RBC Dominion Securities Inc. nor its employees, agents, or information suppliers is to be under any responsibility or liability whatsoever in respect thereof. The inventories of RBC Dominion Securities Inc. may from time to time include securities mentioned herein.

The information in this article is not intended to provide legal, tax or insurance advice. To ensure that your own circumstances have been properly considered and that action is taken based on the latest information available, you should obtain professional advice from a qualified tax, legal and/or insurance advisor before acting on any of the information in this article.

## Charitable donations

If you have philanthropic intentions, you may want to consider gifting directly to a qualified donee. Qualified donees may be charitable organizations, public foundations, or private foundations. Typically, a registered charity is a qualified donee. You will receive a charitable donation receipt which may reduce your tax bill. Donations can be made while alive or after you are gone (via your estate).

As a proud alumnus, I donate to SFU annually via the Pamela Yoon Award in Economics that supports SFU students wishing to go into the field of finance post-graduation, with a special emphasis on the Chartered Market Technician or the Chartered Financial Analyst program. My philanthropy is intentional and is built into my financial plan. **E**



*Before taking any action on any of the strategies discussed in this article, make sure you get qualified professional advice. To learn more, get in touch with Pamela Yoon at [pamela.yoon@rbc.com](mailto:pamela.yoon@rbc.com)*

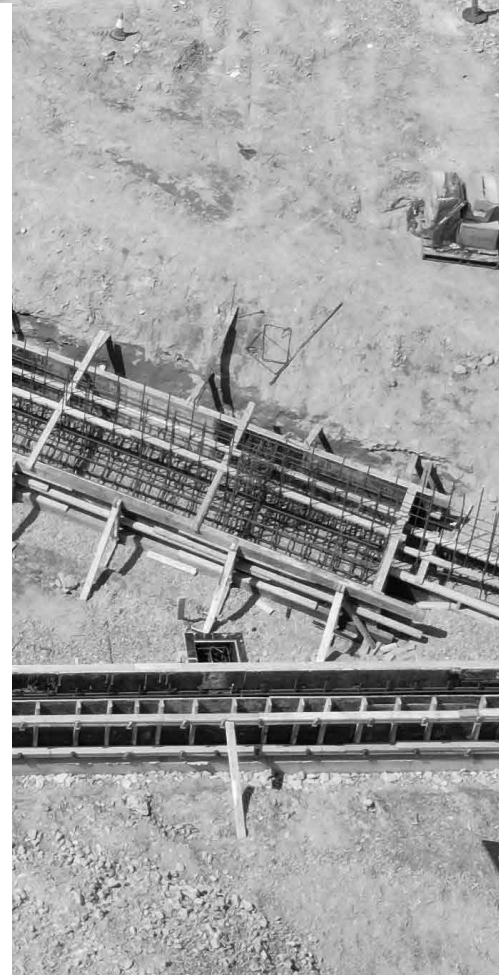
*Want even more tips on giving strategically? RBC Dominion Securities has a 28-page document on charitable giving.*



# GIBSON ART MUSEUM CONSTRUCTION PROGRESSES

## Design earns national recognition

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of SFU donors and outstanding community support, construction on the Marianne and Edward Gibson Art Museum is well underway. Set to open in 2025, the project is already beginning to transform the landscape of the university's Burnaby campus.





# A new type of hub for arts and culture

The Gibson Art Museum will be situated upon unceded territories of the x̱məθkwəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, Səlilwətał, and ḵwíkʷəłəm Nations, and located adjacent to Burnaby Mountain's main transit loop, steps from the new First People's Gathering House, Trottier Observatory and the anticipated Burnaby Mountain Gondola.

The museum offers 12,000 square feet of space, with free exhibits and public programming for SFU and neighbouring communities, and all who are interested in exploring and making connections through art.

## Gibson nets national architectural award

We are thrilled to share that in December 2023, Hariri Pontarini Architects and Iredale Architecture won a prestigious *Canadian Architect* Award of Merit for their designs for the museum. *Canadian Architect*, the national magazine for architects across Canada, hosted a reception in Toronto this past January to celebrate and honor recipients.

Jurors for the award praised the Gibson's "simple and refined approach to museum design" which "creates relationships with the landscape at varying scales and proportions." Read more about the award and jurors' evaluations in *Canadian Architect* magazine.

## Thank you

We are profoundly grateful for the leadership and generosity of SFU's donor community whose passion and enthusiasm have made the Gibson Art Museum a reality. Heartfelt thanks especially to Marianne Gibson and the Gibson Family Trust, and to those whose generosity have helped the project come to fruition, including: the Djavad Mowafaghian Foundation, the Tuey Charitable Foundation, the Audain Foundation, and an anonymous donation honouring Andrew Petter, SFU president emeritus.

To learn more about the Gibson Art Museum, please visit:

[gibson.sfu.ca](https://gibson.sfu.ca) 



Above: The Gibson construction site, SFU Burnaby campus; Marianne Gibson and team receive Canadian Architect Award of Merit at a reception in Toronto.





## IN MEMORIAM **Cathy Daminato**

It is with deep sadness that we share the loss of Cathy Daminato, cherished friend and inaugural Vice-President of Advancement and Alumni Engagement, who passed away in late February, after a courageous battle with cancer.


A person of many talents, Cathy is remembered for her warmth, compassion, and humour, as well as for her extraordinary leadership in the fundraising community.

Cathy held a BSc from Queen's University in Ontario, an MBA from the University of British Columbia, and an ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors in Toronto. She met her husband Paul while working in Yellowknife, N.W.T, and after raising a family with him in Coquitlam, the couple retired to Osoyoos, interior B.C.

Throughout her successful career in philanthropy, Cathy held executive roles at Simon Fraser University, Douglas College, BCIT, and the Royal Columbian Hospital Foundation, and inspired widespread support in aid of health and education initiatives throughout the Metro Vancouver area. In 2014, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) recognized her longstanding contributions with their Giving Hearts Lifetime Achievement Award.

At SFU, Cathy was a tremendous leader and champion for our community. With wise counsel and integrity, she guided our institution through times of immense growth and change. She led SFU's 40th and 50th anniversaries and coinciding fundraising campaigns with marked enthusiasm—personally contributing with her husband, Paul, to numerous initiatives. Cathy inspired countless people to join her in shaping SFU and we simply would not be the leading university we are today without her incredible dedication and generosity.

Cathy left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege to interact and work with her and we extend our heartfelt condolences to the Daminato family.

SFU is honoured to have established the Cathy Daminato Memorial Fund, which pays tribute to Cathy's life and her remarkable dedication to higher education by supporting SFU students and programs as they reach their goals. Learn more about making a contribution to this fund by emailing [donations@sfu.ca](mailto:donations@sfu.ca) or phoning 778-782-5315. 

**WE ARE HONOURED TO PARTNER WITH  
YOU IN ADVANCING AN INCLUSIVE AND  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO SFU.**





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