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SFU Archives Research Guide

SFU Campus Politics: Guide to Sources

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1. Introduction

SFU Archives Research Guides

The SFU Archives acquires the official records of the university, the personal papers of individuals and families, and the archives of non-SFU organizations. Archival materials are arranged by provenance, that is, by the bodies or persons that accumulated the records in the course of their everyday activities. It is these archival *fonds* that are described in our main finding aids. A key to effective archival research, accordingly, is to know which fonds and which finding aids to consult: who are the main "players" in a given field or topic, who did they interact with, what kind of records were created as an outcome, what has survived of this documentation and where did it wind up?

The purpose of the series *SFU Archives Research Guides* is to help users to discover relevant resources by addressing these questions for particular themes. Some will relate to the history of SFU, others to more general topics reflecting the scope of our holdings. In addition, we have created a number of instructional guides for effectively using archives in research.

The guides make no claim to being definitive or exhaustive. Archival records are documents made or received by persons and organizations as they go about their everyday business. This lends a certain unpredictability to archival research, and surprising documents will always turn up in surprising places. Use these guides just as a starting point for your own research as you make your own way through the record.

Campus Politics

The SFU Archives holds a wealth of material relating to "campus politics," using the term here in a broad sense to indicate the efforts of students, faculty and staff to act collectively to effect changes in the university and / or their larger social and political environment.

SFU opened its doors in 1965, just as popular movements were everywhere emerging – often with students in the forefront – that challenged the status quo. Within the space of a few years, SFU would experience protests, sit-ins, an occupation, and a faculty and student strike. SFU quickly became known as "Berkeley North" – in reference to the University of California at Berkeley, where campus activism and unrest had gained international attention.

While the radicalism of the early years receded in the 1970s, subsequent generations of SFU students have continued to rally around issues affecting their conditions at the university: grading policy, campus housing, the construction of a student union building, rising tuition fees. The 1970s and '80s saw successful unionization drives by teaching assistants, sessional instructors, and non-academic staff. SFU students, faculty and staff joined the province-wide protests against the government's restraint program in Operation Solidarity in 1983, and through the 1980s and '90s much of campus protest focused on funding cuts and budget crises.

This Guide is organized into the following sections:

- [Key Events](#) (section 2) provides a brief narrative for a number of the main episodes in campus politics up to the 1980s.
- [Campus Organizations](#) (sections 3) identifies the bodies created by campus members to articulate their concerns and act. Some of these have been more overtly "political" than others, and some again have left a broader mark on the archival record than others. Each entry briefly describes an organization, the fate of its records, and the location of other materials relating to it in the files of university offices and departments; where other archival repositories hold related records, these are also indicated.

- [University Records](#) (section 4) discusses where to find material relating to campus politics in the archival records of the university.
- [Oral Histories and Personal Papers](#) (section 5) highlights relevant interview collections and material among the archival fonds of individuals.
- [Campus Periodicals](#) (section 6) lists print publications produced by the university and by campus community groups.
- [Special Media and Other Resources](#) (section 7) gives an overview of "special media" documentation (films, sound recordings, photographs, posters), as well as books and publications relating to SFU campus politics.

The best starting point for anyone interested in politics at SFU is Professor Hugh Johnston's *Radical Campus: Making Simon Fraser University* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005). Ty

Occupation of the Administration Offices (November 1968)

SFU's admissions policy and the issue of transfer credits became the focus of student protest in the 1968 fall semester: students transferring from BC colleges were not getting university credits for all courses previously taken at college. In November, 180 students occupied and barricaded the university's administration offices, then still located in the Library building. On the third night, Strand called in the RCMP to remove the protesters, and 114 students were arrested. In December, Senate appointed John Ellis to investigate the university's admissions policy; the Ellis report was delivered in March 1969, recommending sweeping changes, many of which were implemented.

The PSA Strike (1969)

The academic department at the centre of many of SFU's early controversies was the Department of Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology (PSA). The PSA quickly developed a reputation as a home for radical politics, and both PSA faculty and students were active in the events of 1967 and 1968. By the spring of 1968, there were tensions between the PSA and other units in the university. The University Appointments Committee blocked the PSA appointment of a visiting scholar (Andre Gunder Frank), and in April 1968 the Dean of Arts made a series of accusations against the department in a closed session of Senate (with 80 PSA students outside the locked doors). In 1968-69, the PSA adopted a constitution giving students parity on departmental committees and in faculty tenure, renewal and promotion processes. This conflicted with the SFU's new tenure policy and the University Tenure Committee would not accept the tenure recommendations of the PSA committee. In July 1969, the university refused to recognize the elected Head of the department and put the PSA under trusteeship. The tenure process proceeded under an appointed committee, and a number of PSA professors were threatened with termination. In September 1969 a meeting of PSA faculty and students voted to strike. The strike would last 5 weeks, but President Strand responded quickly by suspending 8 faculty members in October (Kathleen Aberle, Saghir Ahmad, Mordecai Briemberg, David Potter, John Leggett, Prudence Wheeldon, Louis Feldhammer, and Nathan Popkin). Dismissal proceedings began in November 1969 and continued through a series of committees right through the first half of 1971. In May 1971, the CAUT passed a motion of censure against SFU when the university refused to re-instate the suspended faculty members, and by June the dismissal proceedings were discontinued. In 1974, the university split the PSA into two departments (Political Science / Sociology and Anthropology). The CAUT lifted its censure only in May 1977, following the efforts of Strand's successor, Pauline Jewett, though no settlement with the dismissed faculty was ever reached.

SCUS and SFU Grading Policy (1975)

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS) proposed changes in February 1975 that would tighten up the university's grading system and make it more difficult to drop courses and get deferrals. A rally in the Mall in March drew 700 students; 400 of them marched on the Administration offices and walked into a closed SCUS session. A student referendum overwhelmingly rejected the proposals, petitions were presented to SCUS, the Student Society passed resolutions calling for greater student control over academic matters, and students organized their own Student Grading Committee (which issued its own report in February 1976).

Tuition Fees Protest (1977)

SFU students participated in the province-wide student protests against tuition fee increases in March 1977 and set up a picket at Curtis and Gaglardi. In November the Student Society applied for a court declaration that the increases were unlawful; the petition was dismissed by BC's Supreme Court in March 1978.

AUCE Strike (1978-1979)

The Association of University and College Employees (AUCE) Local 2, representing SFU clerical and administrative staff, began rotating strikes in December 1978. The bitter strike would last five and half months, with AUCE declaring full strike in March 1979. Pro-AUCE demonstrations and mass picket lines were held at Curtis and Gaglardi in March, and at one of these, confrontations with the RCMP resulted in 18

arrests. The strike was settled in April, though legal action against the "SFU 18" continued through 1979 and into 1980, with supporters marching to the Burnaby courthouse in January 1980.

Deficit, Cutbacks, Operation Solidarity, PACUP (1982-1984)

Amidst the recession of the early 1980s, SFU faced a budget crisis. In January 1982, the President proposed a series of cuts to meet SFU's \$1.5M budget deficit. In the face of protests from faculty, students and other universities, the Administration backed away from the proposal to eliminate the SFU football team and track and field programs. The budget was further hit in November 1982, when the provincial government cut \$12M from universities' funding, of which SFU's share was \$2.7M. In July 1983, the newly re-elected Social Credit government introduced a package of "res

Peak Publications Society, 1965-

The Peak student newspaper was established in October 1965 following the amalgamation of SFU's original, rival papers, *The Tartan* and *SF View*. It incorporated as the Peak Publications Society in 1966 and publishes the paper weekly during classes each semester. The Archives holds ca. 4 m of the Society's records, including administrative and financial records, photographs, and a complete run of *The Peak* and its predecessors. A separate collection was donated to the Archives by Evelyn Woods in 1998, comprising a scrapbook of news clippings, selected issues of *The Tartan*, *SF View*, *The Peak*, as well as other memorabilia given to Woods by Peak staffers in 1968. The fonds of both the President's Office and Student Services contains correspondence with or relating to *The Peak*

- Office of the President fonds > [Series 6-6-4](#), Unions (1994-1998).

Simon Fraser University Staff Association, 1966-1974

The SFU Staff Association was formed in 1966 to negotiate with the university for non-academic staff on salaries and work conditions. It was formally incorporated in 1968 and continued until 1974, when staff voted to unionize and picked the Association of University and College Employees (AUCE) over the Staff Association as their representative. The Archives holds half a metre of Staff Association records. Other material relating to the Association can be found in the correspondence files of several university bodies, including the Library, Student Services, the Office of the President, the VP University Services and the Faculty of Education.

Association records:

- Simon Fraser University Staff Association fonds (1966-1975)

Related records:

- Faculty of Education fonds > [Series 4-2](#), Department of Behavioural Sciences Foundations files (1964-1973)
- Office of the President fonds > [Series 22-7](#), Unions (1966-1982)
- Office of the Vice-President, University Services fonds > [Series 5](#), Assistant to the VP, University Services (1971-1975)
- Simon Fraser University Library fonds > [Series 9-33](#), SFU Staff Association (1966-1975)
- Student Services fonds > [Series 1-4](#), Committees and associations (1964-1971)

Service, Office, and Retail Workers of Canada (SORWUC), 1972-1986

SORWUC was established in 1972 to organize workers in banks, restaurants and offices. Many of the workers in these areas are women, and SORWUC emerged as a strong advocate of women's rights. At SFU, SORWUC organized and represented employees of the Student Society (SFSS) from 1977 to 1980, when they joined the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) instead. SORWUC files are included in the Working Women Unite fonds, and there is in addition some correspondence between SORWUC and SFU's Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) in the TSSU fonds. Other related material can be found in the archives of Press Gang Printers and Press Gang Publishers which respectively printed material for SORWUC and published a book

Percilla Groves. AUCE publications, including the *AUCE Anchor*, were printed locally by Press Gang Printers, a feminist printing collective whose records were donated to the Archives. Note also that the University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections holds records of AUCE Local 1, which represented UBC clerical and library workers.

AUCE records:

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- Office of the Chancellor fonds (1961 - 1985)
- Office of the President fonds (1963 - 1999)
- Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost fonds (1965 - 2000)
- Office of the Vice-President, Finance and Administration fonds (1966 - 1984)
- Office of the Vice-President, Legal Affairs fonds (1969 - 2007)
- Office of the Vice-President, Research fonds (1968 - 2006)
- Office of the Vice-President, University Services fonds (1970 - 1978)

Faculties and Academic Departments

The more local impact of SFU's politics will often be reflected in the records at the Faculty and Departmental levels. All of SFU's Deans' Offices (with the exception of the new Faculties created in 2009) have transferred

biographical material relating to SFU's first Chancellor. In addition to Shrum, journalist Peter Stursberg also interviewed Presidents Strand and Jewett. The first Director of University News Services, Dennis Roberts, compiled a large number of interviews over the years with students, faculty, staff and administrators and donated these to the Archives along with his personal papers. Hugh Johnston and his research assistants interviewed a number of subjects – and had access to older interviews – during work on his history of SFU, *Radical Campus*; these were included with his research files donated to the Archives. The SFU Retirees' Association produced an oral history of the university on the occasion of SFU's 40th anniversary in 2005; the dvd is available in the Archives, although the Retirees' Association fonds has not yet been processed. The SFU Childcare Society fonds includes oral histories of several Executive Directors. The Vancouver Women's Caucus, which had its origins at SFU, is the subject of Frances Wasserlein's thesis; she donated her research materials to the Archives, and it includes a large number of interviews (audio recordings and transcripts) with participants. While not dealing directly with SFU, Peter Poole's MA thesis on Operation Solidarity (in which SFU was caught up in the province-wide strike action) includes taped interviews with participants.

- Dennis Roberts fonds > [Series 2](#), Audio recordings (1968-1982)
- F. Margaret Hayward fonds (1963-1999)
- Frances Wasserlein fonds > [Series 3-2](#), Interviews (1986-1987)
- Gordon Shrum collection (1922-1989)
- Hugh Johnston fonds > [Series 1-7](#), Interviews (1974-2002)
- Kenneth Strand interview collection (Peter Stursberg collector) (1977)
- Pauline Jewett interview collection (Peter Stursberg collector) (1976)
- Peter Poole fonds > [Series 2](#), Interviews and transcripts (1984-1986)

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