

SFU LIBRARY

SFU LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS 2022/2023





Elamin Abdelmahmoud (left) and Jen Sookfong Lee (right) in conversation for our One Book One SFU event, celebrating Son of Elsewhere.

W.A.C. Bennett Library is located on the lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikwəłəm (Kwikwetlem) Nations.

Samuel and Frances Belzberg Library is located on the lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Fraser Valley Real Estate Board Academic Library is located on the lands of the ǵíćəy̓ (Katzie), kʷikwəłəm (Kwikwetlem), qíqéy̓t (Qayqayt), qʷa:ńł'əń (Kwantlen), Səmyámə (Semiahmoo), and sčəwaθən (Tsawwassen) Nations.

Acknowledging the benefits of occupying this land, the Library commits to becoming a more welcoming space for Indigenous Peoples by centring Indigenous voices in our collections, services, and programs.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

It is my pleasure to share this report featuring highlights from the 2022-2023 year at the SFU Library. With the full return to campus, we were encouraged to see all three library locations fill up with energetic students once again, as they came to access collections and seek expertise. Of course, students also come to find spaces where they can collaborate, be inspired, create, contemplate, write, and much more. We are so pleased to see our libraries and programs full and animated once more.

As planning proceeds for SFU's proposed new medical school, we have been involved in work to detail what a medical library should look like in 2026 and beyond. Obviously, digital access to collections within and beyond the library will be critical, but so will bookable team rooms for small group work, tools at the point of need, support for systematic reviews, and virtual reality studios.

One of the challenges of the past year has been the discovery of asbestos-containing debris shedding from ceiling tiles in W.A.C. Bennett Library. In November 2022, the entire building was closed for ten days for testing and clean-up. We re-opened all but the fifth floor, and work will continue for the coming year on that floor for asbestos abatement. We prioritize the health and safety of library employees and users, and we are taking all possible steps to ensure continued access to collections housed on that floor while the work is underway. As you will read in the pages of this report, the SFU Library is thriving on all three campuses, and we continue to build connections with the community. You are warmly invited to visit – we will be delighted to see you.

*Gwen Bird,
Dean of Libraries*



WELCOME TO SFU LIBRARY

**OPEN FOR RESEARCH
OPEN FOR LEARNING
OPEN FOR COLLABORATION**

Authors and guests joined us at our 2023 Celebration of SFU Authors, celebrating the creative and academic publications of the SFU community.



Award-winning investigative journalist Angela Sterritt joined SFU Library as our 2023 Non-Fiction Writer in Residence in Spring 2023, launching her residency with a free, public event at SFU's Vancouver campus.

Over the 2022-2023 fiscal year, Simon Fraser University Library has played a key role in the ongoing learning and research of the university through curation of our spaces and collections, and provision of critical expertise to SFU students, faculty, staff, and the wider community.

At our three physical branches, the W.A.C. Bennett Library at SFU Burnaby, the Samuel and Frances Belzberg Library at SFU Vancouver, and the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board Academic Library at SFU Surrey, and in our online platforms, we work to offer inclusive spaces for teaching, learning, research, and engaging with our community. This year, we continued renovations to create new learning spaces at Fraser Library and a physical site for our Indigenous Curriculum Resource Centre, and we look forward to official openings in the coming year. We build and curate rich, responsive collections, and provide expertise on research, writing, and learning through instruction and consultation. We also host writers and speakers in dynamic public events; this year included Lawrence Hill, Dr. Afua Cooper, Elamin Abdelmahmoud, and Angela Sterritt.

This fiscal year also saw the development and publication of a refreshed three-year strategic plan for the library, which calls on us to pause, reflect, and reorient our work. Affirming the essential work we continue to do in the areas of research, teaching and learning, and community-building, this plan also centres five priority approaches to ground our work:

- Relationships and community
- Reconciliation and decolonization
- Evidence-informed decision making
- Equity
- Climate action

As we are still in the early stages, we look forward to sharing more about this reflective, foundational work.

Through our deeply rewarding partnerships, our rich and responsive collections, and our indispensable expertise, SFU Library continues to advance the learning, research, and creativity of the SFU community.

ADVANCING RESEARCH AND LEARNING

Fostering undergraduate excellence

The Library enables the academic success of SFU's undergraduate students by providing key writing, learning, and research services, including workshops, consultations, and self-help tutorials and guides. This expertise from the Student Learning Commons and the Research Help team aims to empower students with critical skills to build robust learning strategies, to find and evaluate information, and to communicate their ideas effectively – both during their academic studies and as global citizens.

Highlights of Library usage, 2022-2023

2,661

questions answered on
AskAway online chat

7,508

consultations with
library experts

657

writing consultations
provided by WriteAway



Over

1,016

workshops with

3.19M

digital items used (includes
downloads of articles,
ebooks & book chapters)

34,129

views of instructional
videos on YouTube

115

digital items accessed per
student and faculty member

20,125

participants

"AskAway has consistently exceeded my expectations. The Librarians are SO helpful, so fast, and I always walk away with the information I needed or a plan of my next steps. ... This service is so helpful and I've used it numerous times."

- SFU student on using AskAway online chat for research help

BELZBERG & FRASER

In the heart of the city: Belzberg Library

Located in busy downtown Vancouver, the Samuel and Frances Belzberg Library welcomes students, faculty, and members of the community to browse the collection and use the popular computer stations and study spaces. The collection's focus on contemporary arts and urban design supports students and researchers in unique Vancouver campus programs. Offering floor-to-ceiling views onto busy sidewalks, Belzberg provides a quiet oasis for study, research, and relaxation.

In the bustling city centre: Fraser Library

Located within the Central City complex in Surrey's downtown core with views northwards to Civic Plaza and local mountains, Fraser Valley Real Estate Board Academic Library is a robust, growing hub for students and researchers. In addition to work and study space and computers, the library offers a games room, screening room, and unique collections such as video games, board games, and camera and video equipment to support design and technology programs. Fraser Library is a welcoming spot for studying and research as well as relaxation and finding community.

ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE



"This was exactly what I needed! Momentum and practicing a productive routine. Also a place to connect with people who are going through the same thing as me. The facilitators made me feel supported."

- Graduate student participant in Thesis Writing Retreat

Popular graduate student programming returns

A long-running graduate student program organized by the Research Commons, the Thesis Writing Retreat successfully returned to in-person in February 2023 after several years of virtual programming. The three-day writing-intensive event has a culture of deep care at its foundation. At each retreat, held once per semester, up to 32 graduate students from across disciplines gather for three days of dedicated writing time in a supportive environment. These three days include opportunities for accessing research and writing support, goal-setting and reflection, exploration of thesis-adjacent topics, and making interdisciplinary connections.



Responding to changing student needs

Throughout our return to on-campus learning and research, the library's services and spaces continue to evolve to meet student needs. The launch of a streamlined, mobile-friendly room booking software, coordinated by our Digital Services team, is widely used by students to book group study spaces and individual study rooms across all three campuses.

As an example of changing technology needs, upon discovering that students were increasingly unplugging computers in Bennett Library, library staff recognized a need for stations where students could connect their own laptops to large monitors. Designating 31 computer stations across several floors of the library as Bring Your Own Device stations, these popular work stations now enable students to use the stations in ways that better suit their needs.

SFU students and researchers shine in international partnership

A first-hand account of the Jacobite Rising of 1746, Robert Forbes' *The Lyon in Mourning* is a unique 18th-century manuscript comprised of transcribed conversations, narrative accounts, poems, letters, and more. Partnering on a SSHRC-funded research project with SFU's Research Centre for Scottish Studies and the National Library of Scotland, the library's Digital Humanities Innovation Lab (DHIL) contributes tools and methods to ongoing analyses of the individual stories and historical networks represented in the manuscript. "I have worked closely with the DHIL team on two projects now ... and have benefited so much from the expertise that they offer," shared Leith Davis, director of the Centre and professor in the English department.

The project's research activities included organizing a 2022 symposium in Edinburgh and publishing a special issue of the *International Review of Scottish Studies*. The collaboration also offers unique research and engagement opportunities for students, employing seven SFU students who have all actively participated in outward facing research, such as writing academic journal articles, presenting at ScotFest BC, and being interviewed on BBC Radio.

◀ The Take a Break exhibit in Spring 2023 featured SFU Publishing students' work on display in all three library branches, exploring the format, form, and content of publications.

Researching how librarians teach key skills to graduate math students

During a recent study leave, Jenna Thomson focused on a research question that was of particular interest to her as the liaison librarian for SFU's mathematics department: how librarians provide information literacy support to math students as they make the transition to researchers. Her study builds on findings that show STEM students enter graduate programs underprepared to search, read, and interpret the literature in their field effectively – a set of critical research skills. Librarians from across North America responded to Thomson's quantitative survey and semi-structured interviews on librarian-led graduate mathematics instruction, providing new insights into the extent of librarian teaching to this student group, and the tools, disciplinary resources, and research skills they teach.

Like Thomson, other SFU librarians and archivists engage in research activities, offering contributions to scholarship that demonstrate unique professional expertise as well as the grounded perspectives of research-practitioners. In Thomson's case, her research also equipped her with new information and strategies for approaching information literacy instruction with mathematics students at SFU.

Making SFU research widely accessible

In the fall of 2022, significant upgrades were completed to Summit, SFU's institutional repository, home to selected scholarship of SFU's faculty, students, and staff. Moving to a new platform with a modern look and feel, the refreshed site offers an improved search experience, including new options for filtering and browsing, as well as features for embedding video and other media. In addition, improved indexing with Google Scholar allows SFU's research to be more easily discoverable, including the university's theses. The upgrades to Summit support the flourishing of open access research, and improves access to SFU's research.

Voyages of exploration: a remarkable new collection

SFU Library's Special Collections and Rare Books is honoured by an extraordinary donation of a collection of 18th- and 19th-century books by Pacific and Arctic explorers such as James Cook, George Vancouver, and Roald Amundsen. These antiquarian books feature European efforts to document the geography, oceanography, botany, and zoology of the regions, including through maps and illustrations, and offer unique opportunities for learning and research on these colonial narratives of exploration.

This collection was painstakingly curated by SFU alumnus Frank Anfield for more than fifty years; in addition to donating his collection to SFU Library, Anfield established a generous endowment to support and maintain the collection over time, including digitizing some of the works, and to encourage use of the collection by students, researchers, and the public.

Growing our online collections

New scholarly electronic resources and tools added to our collection over the past year include:

- Covidence, a tool for literature reviews
- Expanded archival coverage of The Economist
- Labor and Employment: The American Worker
- The Oxford Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality in Education
- The Making of the Modern World, Module IV

GROWING COLLECTIONS AND CAPACITY

"Creating opportunities for reflection and learning is really the hallmark of an institution like SFU Library and we are grateful to donors like Frank Anfield who make this possible."

- Melissa Salrin, Head of Special Collections and Rare Books, on the new Anfield Collection



EXPANSION AND GROWTH

Students in the Media and Maker Commons, our collaborative, hands-on makerspace in Bennett Library, have opportunities to make, create, and play.

BUILDING THE FUTURE

In 2022-23, 291 generous donors contributed \$2,139,583.49 in support of SFU Library including:



\$21,440

to the WAC Bennett Fund to improve resources, pilot new services, and enhance physical spaces

\$15,000

to the Salish Weave Fund to research Indigenous art practice as pedagogy and storywork

\$35,548

to the Alumni Library Endowment to update student learning spaces

\$100,000

to the Anfield Collection Endowment Fund to preserve and make accessible the books in this unique collection

\$1,607,005

value of gifts in kind to Special Collections and Rare Books, including a significant gift of antiquarian books by Frank Anfield

EXPANSIVE ACCESS AND PROGRAMMING

4.11M
visits to the website

500
non-profits in BC who have access to academic research through the Community Scholars Program

\$282,023
awarded through the Open Access Fund to fund **138** articles by SFU authors

336
attendees of the Celebration of SFU Authors, One Book One SFU, and Dean's Lecture on Information + Society

216
participants in our Non-Fiction Writer in Residence events

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