USING THE SFU BRAND DNA

WHY A BRAND?
SFU’s organizational units are diverse and distinctive, yet they are all part of an institution with shared values and a common purpose. Every time members of SFU communicate with the public, they influence our reputation and shape our brand. The tools we use to communicate—advertisements, signs, publications, videos, websites, presentations—all contribute to the character of not just the individual or organizational unit, but also the entire university. Communicating our brand unity strengthens our individual messages and SFU as a whole.

BRAND DNA
SFU’s brand DNA expresses what makes SFU unique. This document details a clear brand promise, position and attributes. It includes a robust message framework and explicit reasons to believe, as well as direction on target audiences. The content can be adapted for specific uses and helps ensure consistency in messaging and communications across various units.

Using the brand DNA is the responsibility of all members of the SFU community. The Communications & Marketing team oversees regular updates and implementation.

Contact sfu-brand@sfu.ca with any questions about this document.
BRAND DNA
PROMISE, POSITION
AND ATTRIBUTES

PROMISE
Engagement and knowledge to improve life and advance society.

POSITION
Simon Fraser University is Canada’s engaged university. We generate knowledge and connect teaching, community engagement, research and innovation to help create the world our communities’ desire. Born from radical origins in the 1960s, SFU has a distinct west coast spirit that challenges conventions, celebrates new ideas, and embraces unconventional partnerships. Our students, faculty and staff hail from all over the world, and help inform our unique local and global perspectives. We believe in the potential of our people to shape and influence society. They are fueling research discoveries, initiating social innovations, and developing solutions that have purpose and impact.

ATTRIBUTES

Unconventional
We move beyond tradition. Our ideas and capabilities are timely, emergent and ahead of the pack.

Fearless
We go where others won’t. We take risks, give voice to difficult ideas and align our values and vision to create impact.

Compassionate
We improve lives using the power of knowledge, advocacy and engagement.

Approachable
We create a culture of openness where our campuses, programs, events and partnerships invite and welcome diversity and community participation.

Ready
We make things happen. We strive and reach to overcome limitations and barriers.
We are Canada’s engaged university.

→ Engagement is part of everything we do, and the strong foundation for our student experience and excellence in research.

→ Our commitment to engagement informs how we mobilize knowledge and further our contribution to citizenship in local communities across Canada and around the world.

→ We engage with communities, organizations and partners to create, share and embrace knowledge that improves life and generates real change.

We educate change makers, visionaries and passionate problem-solvers.

→ Our academic mission incorporates intellectual growth, individual exploration, interdisciplinary education and experiential learning.

→ We integrate academic intensity with unparalleled flexibility.

→ We teach students how to fuse critical thinking, compassion and collaboration, no matter their discipline or career path.

→ We give students the tools to create change by helping them realize their efficacy and capacity as citizens.

We deliver academic and research excellence.

→ Our students receive a world-class, interdisciplinary education culminating in a degree that has lifelong value.

→ Our researchers engage in a broad spectrum of knowledge creation, from understanding our origins, to investigating timely economic, environmental and societal issues.

→ Our research is informed by community input.

→ We are building a strong academic culture that benefits from the depth of our research excellence, and our strong partner networks.

We celebrate the diversity of people, ideas and cultures.

→ We have a track record of responding to emerging needs and opportunities aided by our flexibility across faculties and our support for the co-generation of knowledge.

→ We are striving to increase awareness of Indigenous history, culture and knowledge—both within the university and in the greater community.

→ We embrace new ways of working that are transformational for our students, faculty, staff and community.

→ As a public institution of higher learning, we are vital to democracy and civic transformation.

Our alumni, donors and community partners embrace the world and bring the promise of SFU to life.

→ Together we make a difference, advancing engagement, learning and research for societal good.

→ Through connection and lifelong learning we enable our alumni to meet their full capabilities.

→ Donors give to SFU because of our unique ability to benefit the communities we serve.
We are Canada’s engaged university.

- Community engagement is a core value and is part of our academic experience in all faculties.
- We offer one of the most flexible, interdisciplinary student experiences in Canada.
- We have one of Canada’s highest percentages of international students.
- We have created over 210 institutional partnerships with 110 countries around the world.
- We have one of Canada’s strongest co-op programs, with 8,500 students placed with organizations like Tesla and Facebook.
- Our downtown Vancouver and Surrey campuses and community relationships are central to civic engagement, revitalization and city-building initiatives.
- We have the first and only athletic program outside of the United States that competes in the NCAA.

We are known for our commitment to diversity and community. Our commitment is evident in our work with the Indian Summer Festival, the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies, the SFU-India Advisory Council, and the David Lam Centre for International Communication.

- We are delivering on recommendations as part of a deep commitment to Aboriginal reconciliation.
- SFU has one of the highest percentages of student volunteerism in Canada.
- 155,000 engaged alumni in 143 countries.

We deliver academic and research excellence.

- According to the latest Times Higher Education rankings, SFU is one of the top 55 “tech challenger” universities in the world for having innovation at the core of its strategy and strong industry links.
- SFU is the first Canadian research university accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
- SFU is consistently ranked as the top comprehensive university in Canada in Maclean’s Magazine university rankings. According to Maclean’s, universities in the comprehensive category have a significant amount of research activity and a wide range of programs at the undergraduate and graduate level, including professional degrees.
- SFU punches above its weight in research, consistently ranking among Canada’s top 15 research universities, and is noted for its high rate of medical science research grants and research citations.
- Our research income has nearly doubled over the past decade and surpassed $100 million in 2013.
- We host the pan-Canadian Compute Canada data centre site: Cedar—the most powerful academic supercomputer in Canada and among the top 100 supercomputers in the world.
- SFU has received significant provincial and federal government funding in recent years. In 2016, the federal and B.C. governments pledged $90 million to fund the Energy Systems and Environmental Program (the first of its kind in Western Canada) at SFU’s Surrey campus. In 2014, the B.C. government awarded nearly $13 million to SFU for research projects.

We connect innovation and entrepreneurship.

- SFU is one of just 40 global institutions to receive Ashoka U Changemaker Campus status for its commitment to, and record of, social innovation.
- Since its launch in 2015, SFU Innovates has supported 80 social innovation ventures, witnessed more than 75 SFU spin-off companies, and contributed more than $1 billion to B.C.’s economy.
BRAND DNA
TARGET AUDIENCES AND HOW TO USE THE BRAND DNA

TARGET AUDIENCES (SFU COMMUNITY)
→ Students, faculty, staff and alumni
→ Government officials
→ Policy makers
→ Donors
→ Community partners
→ Prospective students and their parents

HOW TO USE THE BRAND DNA AND MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

The brand DNA is a tool that informs all internal stakeholders about our organization’s branding and positioning.

This document provides everyone with a strategic message framework that defines what makes the organization unique and competitive; and should help guide all brand applications.

The brand DNA is a useful tool to orient communicators, new employees, faculty, volunteers, board members and other key internal stakeholders.

The messages are the heart of the brand DNA. These messages are for use by all “ambassadors” of the organization: the Communications & Marketing team; those in leadership positions (often through presentations and in-person communications); and human resources (the team that recruits new employees) — as well as staffers, board members, leaders, volunteers and faculty.

The messages can inform all formal and informal communications including:
→ marketing collateral and advertising
→ websites and digital communication
→ speeches, talks and PowerPoint presentations
→ government relations, grant applications, recruitment and educational materials
→ annual reports, campaigns and outreach programs