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## MEDIA RELEASE

# Summer in Surrey a winning experience for students

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**Photos:** <http://at.sfu.ca/thrsKb>

A team of co-op students from Simon Fraser University has spent the summer raising the profile of downtown Surrey and helping businesses to better connect.

The eight students, carrying out a wide range of jobs for the [Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association \(DSBIA\)](#), have been immersed in everything from promoting events and branding to carrying out surveys addressing crime prevention and other issues shared by local businesses.

While the DSBIA often turns to SFU for co-op students to help further its reach over the busy summer season, good budgeting and a little foresight by the DSBIA made a “team approach” possible, says coordinator Bonnie Burnside.

The students are from a diversity of fields—from interactive arts and communications to psychology and geography— and took on a variety of roles aimed at promoting the city centre and building greater community awareness—using their skills and learning others along the way.

“As a small office, we can accomplish so much more with the help of these students, especially when they bring such enthusiasm and a willingness to learn,” says Burnside, who is also an SFU alumna. “Rather than giving them ways to assist us they’ve taken on these projects and really embraced the responsibility. It’s a huge benefit to us to have these young people out in the community doing the hands-on work.”

Tasks included developing materials to promote key events such as Fusion Fest and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Movies Under the Stars. Students brought their graphic design expertise to help create promotional materials, wrote a daily blog, took on photography roles and launched an Instagram account.

Students also helped to brainstorm branding and developed Business Connect, a tool to make businesses safer. Distributed to date to more than 70 businesses, it offers a variety of checklists as well as an email alert system to help ward off crime.

A study on panhandling led to a brochure on how to handle the activity in the area, while a project addressing improved sustainability in the region and the annual safety audit rounded out the students’ work.

“We have been able to use the skills we’ve learned in the classroom and apply them to the real world, which has been hugely beneficial for us,” says fourth-year communications student Janilaine Tsui, who is back at the DSBIA for her second term.

In all 1,139 SFU students were placed in co-op positions this summer, 85 of them in Surrey. The program has more than 8,600 active co-op students.

For background on the students and their roles see the DSBIA New View newsletter (July

issue): <http://downtownsurreybia.com/news-media/news-archive/new-view-2014/>

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