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## MEDIA RELEASE

## Advisory: SFU celebrates 10th Diwali Gala on Oct. 17

October 16, 2017

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Simon Fraser University is hosting its **10<sup>th</sup> annual Diwali Gala** at the Aria Banquet Hall in Surrey on Tuesday, Oct. 17. The event celebrates the festival of Diwali along with the University's initiatives in India and engagement with B.C.'s South Asian diaspora.

Diwali, the festival of lights, is celebrated in India and around the world. More than 350 business and community leaders, along with SFU students, faculty, staff and alumni are expected to attend the gala, which will feature South Asian cuisine and performances by the Mohamed Assani Trio and Shiamak Dance Team of Vancouver. Special features this year include a Street Fair-style reception at 5:30 p.m.

The event will be emceed by Wally Oppal, former B.C. Attorney-General and co-chair of the SFU-India Advisory Council. City of Surrey Mayor Linda Hepner and a number of city councilors are also among those expected to join the celebration.

Daivik Mehta, a PhD student from India, will talk about his experiences as a one of the first graduate students accepted into the SFU-Indian Oil PhD program. The program was created when SFU and Indian Oil signed an agreement in 2014 to further fuel and cell technology research. Mehta is in his third year as a PhD student in SFU's School of Mechatronic Engineering.

The event also recognizes the work of the SFU-India Advisory Council, which was created a decade ago and has been integral to the University's success in engaging with India, and in furthering relationships within B.C.'s South Asian community.

**WHY IT MATTERS:**

- Funds raised from the event go toward SFU student awards to support opportunities for students to work, study and volunteer in the cities and villages of India, through the university's mobility initiative. Over the years more than 140 students have benefited from their experiences in India.
- The event aims to celebrate culture and recognize the importance of Diwali within the South Asian community.

**WHAT:** SFU'S Diwali Gala Celebration

**WHEN:** Tuesday, Oct. 17, 5:30 p.m. (Street Fair reception) until 8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Surrey's Aria Banquet Hall, 12350 Pattullo Place, Surrey B.C.

SFU's Diwali Gala sponsors include: *title sponsor* - TD Canada Trust; *gold sponsors* - City of Surrey A.S. Bubber & Associates, Sandhurst Group, Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, Tien Sher; *silver sponsors* - Ansatel, BCCIE Binary Stream, Sikka Foundation; *media sponsors* - Darpan Magazine, The Surrey NOW-Leader, Spice Radio, the Indo-Canadian Voice, RED-FM, The Link Newspaper, Desibuzzbc, Drishti Magazine, The Asian Star, and South Asian Woman.

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