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MEDIA RELEASE

SFU prepares to celebrate Diwali

October 25, 2012

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Simon Fraser University is once again preparing to celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights, at a gala at Surrey's Crown Palace Banquet Hall on Thursday, November 8.

More than 300 business and community leaders, along with SFU students, faculty, staff and alumni are expected to attend the fifth annual event.

The evening, featuring South Asian performances and cuisine, includes a reception (5:30 p.m.) and dinner (7 p.m.)

"SFU's Diwali event is one of the many ways in which the university celebrates Indian culture and connects with the South Asian community," says SFU President Andrew Petter, who will be the evening's host.

The event will feature entertainment by Shiamak Davar International as well as an array of prominent speakers. During last year's gala the audience heard from SFU alumna Ish Jhaj, who established soccer camps for girls in Punjab and is continuing to work on the project.

"Diwali is a perfect opportunity to celebrate diversity, and our support for this traditional festival of lights is one of the ways we hope to keep enriching the communities in which we live and work," says Steven Mo, District Vice President, **TD Business Banking**, the event's title sponsor.

"We're delighted to once again be a part of SFU's Diwali, an annual event that we believe, not only respects and supports cultural differences, but one that fosters a true spirit of inclusiveness in this community."

Funds raised from the event go toward SFU student scholarships to support opportunities for students to work, study and volunteer in the cities and villages of India, through the university's mobility initiative.

Joanne Curry, SFU Surrey executive director and associate V-P external relations, says the cultural and business-networking event, supported by the SFU-India Advisory Council, provides an opportunity for the community to learn more about SFU's India initiatives, including the university's India Strategy, and meet council members as well as students who are current and former recipients of the India mobility initiative funding.

The 2012 gala will be sponsored by an unprecedented list of prominent individuals and organizations, notes Curry.

They include: TD Canada Trust, PwC, Tien Sher Group, Varshney Capital Corp, Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR), City of Surrey, A.S. Bubber & Associates Inc., BC Council for International Education, CGA Canada, United Realty (Jagmohan Singh), The Surrey Board of Trade, The Canada India Business Council, TiE Vancouver, Canada India Network Society (CINS), The Canada India Foundation (CIF), The Canada India Education Society (CIES), The Surrey Leader, Darpan Magazine and RJ1200AM.

Simon Fraser University is Canada's top-ranked comprehensive university and one of the top 50 universities in the world under 50 years old. With campuses in Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey, B.C., SFU engages actively with the community in its research and teaching, delivers almost 150 programs to more than 30,000 students, and has more than 120,000 alumni in 130 countries.

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