

Minutes

FSU Special Members Meeting

October 30, 2025

SC 2013 and Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm with Gurmeet Singh Kalra as chairperson and Krista Fysh as secretary.

20 Members in attendance were noted. Quorum was confirmed.

Approval of Agenda

1.1 It was:

MOVED by Mitul Khristi, SECONDED by Vraj Modi and CARRIED to approve the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

1.2 It was:

MOVED by Mitul Khristi, SECONDED by Vraj Modi and CARRIED to approve the minutes from the Annual General Meeting on April 15, 2025.

Presentation of Financial Statements & Auditors Report

Scott McLachlan, FSU Controller, presented the 2024-2025 Financial Statements and the Auditors Report.

It was noted, for the record, that the members have received the 2024-2025 Financial Statements & Auditors report.

Fanshawe Student Union Impact Report

Executive Director, John Riddell, presented the FSU Impact Report, which included a brief overview of FSU Operations during the 2024-2025 fiscal year, and a look ahead to future plans. This presentation included an FSU Operational Breakdown (2024-2025), as well as some of the FSU achievements & announcements.

The floor was opened to questions.

A question was raised regarding the relationship between the Fanshawe Student Union (FSU) and Fanshawe College. John explained that while the FSU is closely affiliated with the College, it operates as a separately incorporated organization and is not a department of Fanshawe College. The FSU is governed and operated by its student members, with student leaders elected by the student body.

John further clarified that the FSU maintains a number of formal and informal agreements with the College. The two organizations collaborate on many initiatives; however, there are instances where they may agree or disagree on certain matters. He emphasized that the FSU's primary purpose is not solely to organize events, but to provide essential supports and services to its members.

It was also noted that the FSU was the first student association in Ontario to become independently incorporated, achieving this status in 1971. In response to a question about whether the FSU participated in a College strike, John confirmed that it did not. As FSU staff and leaders are not employees of Fanshawe College, the Union remained open and continued to support students throughout the strike period.

Another issue raised were concerns from a Student in the Architecture Technology Program, about the lack of site visits and field trips, explaining that many students in the program find it difficult to fully understand course material when it is taught only through slides or lectures. The student emphasized that hands-on experiences and visits to relevant sites would make the learning process more engaging and practical. In response, John acknowledged these concerns and outlined several ways for students to address them. Students can provide feedback through the college website, FSU Website, work with their class representatives, or reach out directly to the Student Executive or Student President. The Fanshawe Student Union (FSU) can also offer coaching and support in approaching Faculty, Program advisors, or Associate deans, and may advocate on behalf of students to encourage positive change. While not all requests can be implemented, the FSU committed to following up and keeping students informed about the progress and outcomes of their concerns. The facilitator encouraged students to connect with student leaders for further discussion and guidance.

The next topic raised concerned the affordability of food on campus. A student expressed frustration over high food prices, pointing out that many students already face significant financial strain and debt. The student questioned why food remains so expensive and suggested that pricing should be made more affordable for students. John acknowledged the issue and explained that the cost of both food and labor has risen, which directly affects campus pricing. John explained the FSU hospitality department operates on a cost-recovery basis, meaning it must cover its own expenses to prevent increased student fees. John clarified that the FSU's goal is not to generate profit; any surplus funds are reinvested into the Student Association and its services.

It was explained that to help alleviate student concerns, the FSU has introduced several initiatives, including daily meal deals, a food support program offering affordable meal options, and a food market pilot program that recently provided 300 bags of subsidized produce on campus. John reaffirmed that the FSU is committed to balancing food affordability with sustainable operations and welcomed further student feedback to guide future decisions. The FSU will continue exploring opportunities for more hands-on learning experiences and expanding affordable food initiatives across campus.

A student asked where the Fanshawe Student Union (FSU) receives its funding, noting that the organization appears to manage a substantial budget each year. The student questioned whether student fees alone could cover such costs and asked if any portion of FSU funding comes from the government.

In response, John explained that the FSU's funding comes primarily from students. The majority of revenue is generated through two main sources: student fees and the FSU's hospitality department, which operates as a business serving students and campus visitors. The hospitality department generates approximately \$3.5 million annually through its operations.

John further explained that when students receive their tuition invoice from Fanshawe College, it includes various charges such as tuition, program-related fees, and ancillary fees. The ancillary fee package consists of several smaller fees, some directed to the College and others to the FSU. Examples of these include Athletics, the student card (FanCard), Alumni fees, IT services, and for the FSU specifically: Club funding, student building operations, the Student health plan, and the London Transit bus pass. The bus pass and health plan are the largest components, while the remaining smaller fees are grouped together as the Student Activity Fee, which funds the majority of the FSU's services and programs.

It was noted that in the previous year, the Student Activity Fee totaled approximately \$91, with an additional \$23 Student Building Fee to help offset the cost of debt servicing for the FSU building. Excluding the health plan and bus pass, the total ancillary fees paid to both the College and the FSU amounted to around \$400 per term. Although this represents a significant expense for students, John emphasized that Fanshawe College maintains one of the lowest ancillary fee totals among publicly funded colleges in Ontario.

The student then expressed concern that if too much money were spent, the FSU might struggle to repay any financial shortfalls. John reassured that the organization maintains financial reserves, savings that have been set aside to cover any deficits or unexpected expenses. These reserves ensure that the FSU remains financially stable and able to continue operations responsibly even in years when costs exceed projections.

A member inquired about volunteering opportunities listed on the FSU website, noting that internal volunteer programs currently appear to be closed for new members. They also asked whether participating in external volunteering opportunities would offer the same benefits as internal programs.

It was clarified that internal programs such as the Class Rep Programs and Red Squad have specific intake periods each semester. Once volunteer screening and training begin, those intakes are closed. The next intake period is expected to open prior to the start of the winter semester.

Further clarification was provided regarding external volunteering opportunities. The external listings on the FSU website connect students with charities and organizations in London seeking Fanshawe student volunteers. These are valid options for those wishing to participate, and additional questions can be discussed offline.

Attendees were reminded that feedback can be submitted anytime through the FSU website's feedback button.

FSU Presidential Update

The FSU President began by highlighting the progress made this term, emphasizing the four strategic pillars of continuity, collaboration, communication, and community. Jerry noted that all activities this year, meetings, events, and decisions, align with the mission of delivering excellence in service and support to every student, empowering students, and enhancing the college experience. Policies have guided actions across policy advocacy and student engagement, ensuring proactive planning for student needs. Key priorities during his term included multi-faith inclusion, campus safety, affordability, scholarships, athletics, and leadership development.

A significant achievement this year was strengthening the FSU's connections with the City of London. The President met with Mayor Josh Morgan to discuss LTC transit affordability and student safety, resulting in a statement of collaboration to include student voices in future city decisions. Additional meetings with Ward Councillor Sam Torosso and David Ferreria addressed transit and infrastructure challenges and promoted the downtown plan survey to ensure student perspectives inform city planning. Participation in the Downtown London Summit further advanced student engagement and community safety initiatives.

At the provincial level, the FSU met with MPPs Peggy Sattler and Terrence Kernaghan to advocate for Bill 33 and highlight food insecurity as a component of Ontario's poverty reduction strategy. Support was also provided for Sexual Health and Wellness Week, emphasizing the importance of student well-being and access to resources. Nationally, the FSU engaged with student organizations including CASA and OSV, contributing to Federal priorities such as financial aid, employment, housing, international student issues, and food insecurity. The FSU's advocacy efforts also included tuition affordability, mental health, food insecurity, work-integrated learning, operating grants, and Bill 33 campaigns.

Internally, Governance and policies were improved, including updates to the elections policy to enhance fairness and transparency. Regional campus councils were established in Woodstock, Simcoe, and St. Thomas to increase student representation. Collaboration with the Athletics department at the College led to the launch of new recreational clubs, and the FSU plans to join OSV to further amplify advocacy efforts. Student well-being initiatives expanded, including the FSU Food Market, care cupboard enhancements in Indigenous and counseling centers, and partnerships to improve food security.

A notable challenge this year was the College's decision to discontinue the Ombuds Office due to budget constraints, alternative support options, and declining enrollment. The FSU strongly opposed this decision and has requested that the EDI Office ensure accountability through data sharing, policy updates, and the creation of a Policy and Procedural Fairness Committee. Other advocacy initiatives included menstrual product accessibility and the installation of additional sharps containers on campus.

Communication tools have been strengthened with the launch of a new advocacy tab on the website, weekly FSU Roundup news, a Discord platform for volunteers, and a student feedback page.

The FSU underwent departmental restructuring into two divisions: Student Experience, focusing on wellness, events, and inclusion; and Student Engagement, leading marketing, communication, and class representative initiatives. Event planning now follows a structured model incorporating student feedback from ideation through post-event review. Campus infrastructure improvements were prioritized through student voting, with updates planned for furniture and space enhancements.

Key achievements by the executive team were highlighted, including support for over 18 academic appeals, creation of a digital guide, and the launch of the Student Advocates Program. Engagement initiatives included expanding clubs to over 30, overseeing 48 active classrooms, hosting networking sessions, delivering financial literacy workshops, and recruiting 27 Red Squad volunteers. Volunteer pathways were diversified and strengthened, and events were planned and improved based on student feedback.

Looking forward, priorities include continuing Bill 33 advocacy, expanding awards and scholarships, creating a dedicated multi-faith space on the main campus, launching the Safe Work Program by Winter 2026, offering subsidized leadership certificates, and preparing for the 2025–26 President and Board of Directors elections. The President concluded by thanking staff, board members, and volunteers for their contributions, emphasizing that advocacy requires building relationships, influencing decisions, and uniting students to create change, and reminding students that their voices matter.

The floor was opened for questions.

A student asked what the next steps were once they signed up for the Class Rep Program. Jerry emphasized, they will receive an email with the next steps, including information on an orientation period.

A student raised a concern regarding volunteer opportunities such as the Red Squad, noting that many activities do not relate to their major. They expressed interest in gaining volunteer experience that would enhance their professional resume and better align with their career goals.

The FSU President responded that on-campus volunteer programs are designed to empower students and provide meaningful experiences for the job market. For students whose majors do not align with existing opportunities, external volunteering options can be explored. The FSU is open to partnering with organizations to bring relevant opportunities to campus and encouraged students to share information about their programs so that suitable volunteer options can be identified.

The student confirmed that they would follow up individually and submit any additional questions or concerns via the FSU feedback platform. The President emphasized the use of the feedback platform (fsu.ca/feedback) as a tool for students to share input and help bring new initiatives to campus.

Adjournment

1.3 It was:

MOVED by Vraj Modi, SECONDED by Shivani Sohoni and CARRIED to adjourn the meeting at 6:09pm.