

Report | August 10, 2020

SFU Athletics & Recreation:

Report on the Use of the Clan Team Name



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Wiseblood would like to acknowledge that we live, work, and play on the traditional ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm Musqueam, Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh Tsleil-Waututh, Skwxwú7mesh Squamish, kʷikʷəʷəm Kwikwetlem Semiahmoo First Nations.

Executive Summary

In January 2020, SFU Athletics and Recreation commissioned Wiseblood Consultancy to gather existing research, conduct new research and facilitate a stakeholder engagement process to examine current perceptions of SFU Athletics' use of the varsity team name Clan. The research and engagement process began that month, and concluded in July 2020, with engagement that included one-on-one interviews, group discovery sessions, and an online survey.

Wiseblood conducted landscape research to document the history of the team name at SFU, as well as the broader issue of controversial team names in university and professional sports. Online survey findings, interviews, and discovery session transcripts were analyzed and coded to uncover themes and findings that speak to the project's research questions. The majority of findings are qualitative in nature. We have also sought to provide quantitative data where possible; to do this we relied on information provided by SFU (including past surveys and letters received) and poll data from outside sources, including news organizations, and online petitions.

This report was produced with SFU Athletics and Recreation and Student Services leadership to inform the President in making a decision regarding the use of the team name. We have identified a number of themes from our research and engagement process that represent the consistent issues raised across stakeholder groups relating to the use of the Clan team name.

Two pieces of research presented here are key to understanding the issue: the first being the survey data showing clear preference to change the team name, and secondly, the engagement feedback on the theme of student safety. These two pieces of information best represent the most consistent and compelling opinions of stakeholders.

The most consistent and compelling opinions shared by stakeholders:

- 1. The majority of stakeholders surveyed have negative perceptions of the Clan team name.**
- 2. SFU's use of the team name and its association with the "Ku Klux Klan" causes harm to student athletes.**

Additional themes raised by stakeholders:

Robust discussion among stakeholders highlighted additional issues that were organized under eight themes. Summarized in the overview, they provide insight into the individual and collective reckoning with the team name discussion as it relates to university mission and values, community and global engagement, accountability and reconciliation.

- The team name is inappropriate in the context of the NCAA.
- By continuing to use the team name, SFU is missing an opportunity to inspire pride and inclusion.
- The team name requires the burden of explanation by student athletes, coaches, and staff.
- The team name is rarely, if ever, used by student athletes, coaches, and staff; nor is it used in Athletics communication, events, and marketing.
- Most recognize the Scottish meaning of Clan positively, but still believe a change is necessary.
- Issues of settler colonialism present in the team name are at odds with the university's efforts toward reconciliation.
- Institutional response to the team name, calls for change, and the process have not met community expectations, and have negatively impacted the institution's reputation.
- A new team name and the process to create it could be a step in rebuilding trust and uniting the community.

Methodology

In January 2020, SFU Athletics and Recreation commissioned Wiseblood to conduct research and facilitate an engagement process to examine current stakeholder perceptions of SFU Athletics and Recreation's use of the team name the Clan.

According to SFU Athletics and Recreation the guiding factors include¹:

1. The importance of the experiences and perspectives of our student-athletes and coaches, who represent SFU every day in the colours, logo and name under which they compete
2. A commitment to engaging our community in decisions
3. That team names should reflect shared values

To examine current stakeholder perceptions of SFU Athletics and Recreation's use of the team name, we facilitated a process of research and engagement beginning in January 2020, and concluding in July 2020.

The research portion included an audit of background materials supplied by the university, including feedback and input submitted by students, staff and alumni and informal survey data, followed by an investigation of team name and mascot controversies in collegiate and professional sports, and the ensuing name change processes.

SFU Athletics and Recreation selected stakeholder groups for engagement in discovery sessions, one-on-one interviews, and an online survey. The first round of one-on-one interviews was completed in February 2020. Group discovery sessions were in planning when restrictions due to COVID-19 limited our ability to meet in person, causing delays to our original timeline.

Engagement resumed in July 2020 with a series of discovery sessions adapted to the teleconference format. We facilitated discussion with small groups ranging from two to 10 student athletes, alumni athletes, coaching staff and faculty members. We also developed an online survey, which was distributed electronically via the SFU Athletics website and made accessible to the general public. The survey received 631 responses over a seven-day period in July.

Interview and discovery sessions were transcribed and analyzed along with responses from the online survey. Using the qualitative methods of content and narrative analysis, we identified dominant themes, patterns and common responses. We then developed a framework to code and organize those responses in relation to the research questions identified above.

Situation Analysis

Origin of the Clan Team Name

The Clansmen team name was implemented in 1965, the year of the University's founding. It was later shortened to the Clan, presumably in acknowledgment that the *-men* suffix excluded women athletes. According to institutional history, the team name was a nod to the Scottish heritage of SFU namesake, Loyalist explorer and fur trader Simon Fraser.

¹ <https://athletics.sfu.ca/news/2020/7/3/general-athletics-athletics-review-of-sfu-clan-nickname.aspx>

The word Clan is derived from a Gaelic word and describes a close-knit group of relatives. Other Scottish traditions, such as the pipe band that opens Convocation and other key events, are also part of university culture.

For many years in the SFU Athletics and Recreation community, the Clan symbolized a kinship among athletes, and is described as representing the concept of “family.”

The Issue

Clan (spelled with a C) is a homophone for Klan (spelled with a K), a term commonly used in reference to the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), whose members are known as Klansmen. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) identifies the Ku Klux Klan as the “oldest and most infamous of American hate groups...Black Americans have typically been the Klan’s primary target, [and] it also has attacked Jews, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ community and, until recently, Catholics.”²

The dual Clan/Klan meaning is potentially problematic as SFU Athletics varsity teams compete principally within the United States. From 1969–2001 SFU was a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and, in 2010, and joined the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Division 2. SFU is currently the only non-American member of the NCAA.

Over the decades, student athletes and coaches have reported numerous testimonials of shock, shame, misunderstanding, and even racist taunts and threats in connection to the Clan team name. A Black former football player active from 1979–1982 described the name as “negative baggage,” noting that he took the brunt of questions and negative comments about it when competing in the U.S. At a game in Idaho, local fans made a connection between the Ku Klux Klan and his racial identity, yelling racist slurs and demanding he leave the field.³

In 2017, SFU associate professor Holly Andersen launched a petition to retire the Clan team name out of respect for SFU’s American peers. She argued that the similarity to the [Ku Klux] Klan generates negative perceptions, citing their sustained program of anti-Black racism motivating historic and recent acts of terror. Andersen maintains that, in the American context, there is no way to save the word “Clan” from its association with the Ku Klux Klan and the ideas that group represents.

They already own that word, and they owned [it] for more than 50 years before SFU ever decided to pick that name. Within the U.S. context, there is no way for it to ever mean anything other than what it means. There’s no reclaiming it from them. The Black student athletes that we play against are the people that we’re actually punishing by sticking to that name.⁴

In 2020 SFU former basketball Captain Othniel Spence and student Marie Haddad created a change.org petition entitled “The Clan’: Simon Fraser University Needs a New Name.” It includes a bulleted document, “Extended History on the SFU Team Name; ‘Clansmen’ (And Variations of),” which loosely compiles, “[t]wo most impactful Connections/Connotations and name association to Clansman.” The document references Thomas Dixon, Jr.’s 1905 novel, *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, and the controversial 1915 film it inspired, D.W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation*, arguing:

We cannot encompass the connotation and implementation of the word “clansman” in a historical context if we simply focus on the definition in itself - which SFU is doing (Or just simply focusing on the

² <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/ku-klux-klan>

³ <https://www.burnabynow.com/news/should-sfu-ditch-the-clan-nickname-1.22910851>

⁴ <https://www.burnabynow.com/news/should-sfu-ditch-the-clan-nickname-1.22910851>

Scottish heritage behind the name). We also cannot further consider the struggles and pressure it puts on our SFU Students, Staff and Athletes if we do not consider the history in the U.S. regarding the impact of the book *The Clansman* to the social and political atmosphere in the United States and how it still affects the Black community.⁵

A number of participants and online survey respondents suggested that the KKK and its brand of anti-Black racism and dehumanization is solely a U.S. phenomenon, and the Clan/Klan association is therefore irrelevant to Canada. History proves otherwise. A 2017 *Maclean's* article titled, "The KKK has a history in Canada. And it can return," noted that the KKK first appeared in Canada in 1921, and was formally organized in 1924, "by two American wizards and Toronto resident James L. Cowan, who rented an office on Toronto Street near Adelaide Street, and set about recruiting."⁶

Author Christine Sismondo reports that white supremacy is continuous vein of thought and action in Canada, and the KKK's recruitment efforts are ongoing, including recent drives in proximity to SFU's campuses:

[In 2016], dozens of homes in Chilliwack, B.C., received flyers from the "loyal white knights of the Ku Klux Klan" that encouraged white people to rise up, be proud, and to "secure a future for white children." Similar literature has been distributed door-to-door in nearby towns in Mission and Abbotsford.⁷

Calls for Change

Many session participants expressed that the name has long been a problem for SFU Athletics and Recreation, and referenced a number of attempts by administrators and consultants in recent years to discuss the issue. Below is a brief summary of calls to address the team name over the past four years.

In a 2016 op-ed, "SFU Clan should pick a new name?" published in *The Peak*, author Nathan Ross argued, "It is time for our school to look into picking a new name for its sports teams." Ross acknowledged the original intent in referencing Simon Fraser's Scottish heritage, but argues that the association with the Klan makes it problematic for continued use. He writes:

On top of its dubious historical connections, we should recognize the effect that even the word "clan" can have on our Southern neighbours. With SFU primarily playing in the USA as the sole Canadian team in the National Collegiate Athletic Association, changing the name to something with less questionable connotations would also be a sign of respect to those whose lives and heritage have been dramatically affected by the Klan.⁸

In 2017, a change.org petition calling for the retirement of the Clan name started by Holly Andersen garnered 431 signatures. It also had the broader effect of reigniting dialogue among the SFU community, including its athletes.

In a *Peak* editorial published in 2017, author Aliocha Perriard-Abdoh, a student athlete, reasserted the problems outlined in Andersen's survey, and added that a name change process would require a "strong consensus [...] as it will be the name that SFU's sports teams rally behind."⁹

⁵ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yE5tZA47JlwiTz1F2bQ0394YRbLMNZ96noYVCqLTD8/edit>

⁶ <https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/the-kkk-has-a-history-in-canada-and-it-can-return>

⁷ <https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/the-kkk-has-a-history-in-canada-and-it-can-return/>

⁸ <https://the-peak.ca/2016/10/sfu-clan-should-pick-a-new-name/>

⁹ <https://the-peak.ca/2017/09/sfu-needs-to-decide-who-we-are-and-what-we-stand-for/>

In the spring 2019, Student Athletes Advisory Committee (SAAC) conducted a survey in which 77 percent of student athletes voted to initiate a team name change process.

On June 24, 2020, the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) Council voted in support of the team name change, and passed a motion for the Chair to issue a letter directed to President Andrew Petter, Joy Johnson (Vice-President Research and International and president designate), and Rummana Khan Hemani (Vice-Provost & Associate Vice President, Students & International). The SFSS Board of Directors also passed a motion to write a letter and endorse the efforts in their June 26 meeting.¹⁰

Black Lives Matter and the killing of George Floyd

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, is a "global organization in the U.S., U.K., and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes."¹¹ One of the movement's priorities is to raise awareness of the disparity in killings of Black people and people of colour by police forces. The number of police killings in the U.S. disproportionately affects African Americans.

On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis, Minnesota civilian, George Floyd, died in police custody while an officer knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes. Floyd's death galvanized #BlackLivesMatter protests across North America, Canada, and the world. In their wake, a number of notable businesses, institutions, and professional sports leagues and teams publicly condemned anti-Black racism and supported Black Lives Matter.

Moved by the killings of Floyd and Ahmaud Arbrury, SFU basketball player Othniel Spence published an editorial/personal essay in the June 29, 2020 *Park Journal* titled, "I Am Not Your Clansman." Spence describes the difficulties of the "Clan" name, as well as his experiences of "racism, microaggressions [...]" and "[...] the fetishization of Black male athletes." Spence writes:

I think a lot of people have an understanding of the name, and I know some may find it offensive to change the name. It's not about being politically correct or having a misunderstanding of the origin or intention. I think people need to understand how the word can be weaponized, especially when most of our sporting events take place in the United States – where racial tensions have always existed. This word is traumatizing.¹²

In June 2020 Spence and his colleagues created a change.org petition titled, "The Clan': Simon Fraser University Needs a New Name," which by August 2, 2020, had 13,012 signatures. A series of media stories followed the publication of Spence's article and petition, and in early July student athletes began sharing images of themselves on social media with the hashtag #IAmNotYourClansman.

A number of SFU athletes, coaches, and stakeholders expressed disappointment with the SFU Athletics and Recreation department, the resulting show of support for Black Lives Matter, and the lack of a decision on the team name in the wake of these controversies. SFU Athletics and Recreation organized a virtual town hall on July 2, 2020 to address their support for Black Lives Matter, their opposition to anti-Black racism, and to provide an update on the name process. At the conclusion of the meeting, 97 percent of participants voted in favour of replacing the Clan team name.

¹⁰ <https://the-peak.ca/2020/07/student-organizers-lead-demand-for-changing-sfus-sports-team-name/>

¹¹ <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>

¹² <https://www.theparkjournal.com/features/i-am-not-your-clansman>

Controversy has continued to surround the institutional response. Questions about the team name raised at the July 2020 SFU Senate Meeting prompted a letter writing campaign by Spence and others urging administration to change the team name.

Team name changes of other university teams

McGill “Redmen” Name Change (2019)

For nearly a century, McGill University’s varsity men’s teams used the "Redmen" team name. It was implemented in the 1920s as a reference to the colour of its team jerseys, but it later took on connotations to Indigenous people. At one point the University even adopted a logo depicting a stereotypical native person wearing a headdress. In 1992 that logo was retired, though the “Redmen” team name remained in use. Ongoing concerns over the name led Principal and Vice Chancellor Suzanne Fortier to conduct a study that concluded in the decision to retire the name.

In a letter addressed to the campus community, Fortier wrote of the decision:

McGill did not adopt the Redmen name as a reference to North American Indigenous peoples, (but) today, 'Redmen' is widely acknowledged as an offensive term for Indigenous peoples, as evidenced by major English dictionaries. While this derogatory meaning of the word does not reflect the beliefs of generations of McGill athletes who have proudly competed wearing the University’s colours, we cannot ignore this contemporary understanding. Intention, however benign, does not negate prejudicial effect. Inclusion and respect are at the core of our University’s principles and values; pejoratives run contrary to who we are as a community. For these reasons, the Redmen name is not one that our community would choose today, and it is not one that McGill should carry forward into our third century.¹³

An online survey participant drew parallels between McGill’s team name issue, actions and statement, and those of the SFU:

It has offensive connotations and should be changed—for all the same reasons McGill dropped the name Redmen from their sports teams. Take (the) statement by McGill's Principle and Vice-Chancellor, substitute "Clan" for "Redmen" and you've got everything you need to know to change SFU's name.¹⁴

NCAA

The NCAA has developed a policy for potentially offensive team names and imagery. According to a wikipedia entry:

In 2005 the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) distributed a "self-evaluation" to its member institutions for teams to examine the use of potentially offensive imagery with their mascot choice. This examination was done in accordance with NCAA policy that requires each member institution to maintain an "atmosphere of respect for and sensitivity to the dignity of every person." [1] Fourteen schools either removed all references to Native American culture or were deemed not to have references to Native American culture as part of their athletics programs. [2] Subsequently, 19 teams were cited as having potentially "hostile or abusive" names, mascots, or images, that would be banned from displaying them during post-season play, and prohibited from hosting tournaments.

¹³ <https://mcgill.ca/principal/communications/statements/decision-about-redmen-name>

¹⁴ SFU Athletics and Recreation Nickname Online Input Survey

Survey Data

Results from the 2020 research process with SFU Athletics and Recreation stakeholders provide evidence of strong support for retiring the name and finding a replacement.

Additionally, data from polls, surveys and online petitions conducted from 2017 to 2020 reveals a significant increase in support for retiring the Clan name (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).

1. In July 2020 Wiseblood conducted an independent online survey of SFU students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community-at-large. The majority of survey participants reported negative perceptions of the team name, the Clan.

Figure 1: Current perceptions of the team's nickname, the Clan

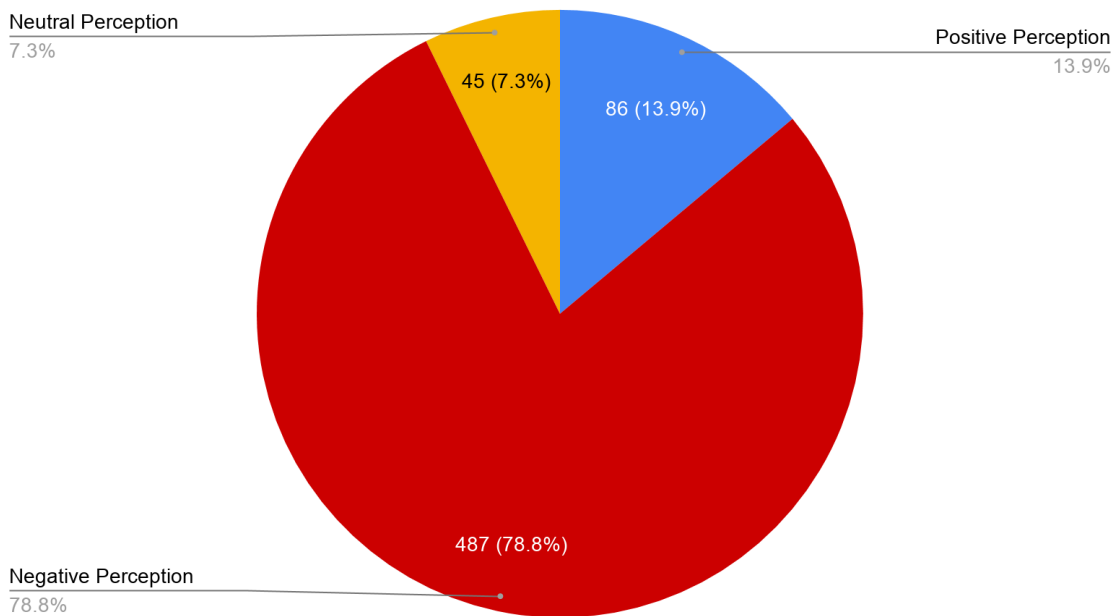
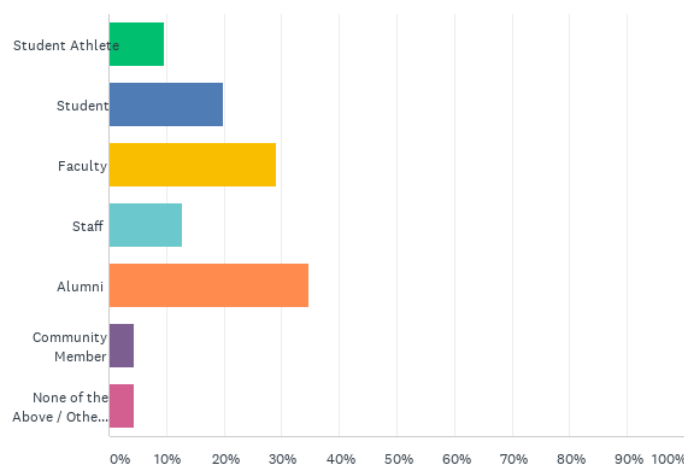


Figure 2: July 2020 online survey participants by category



2. Support for a name change has grown over the last three years.

Figure 3: Support for SFU the Clan name change in various polls 2017-2020

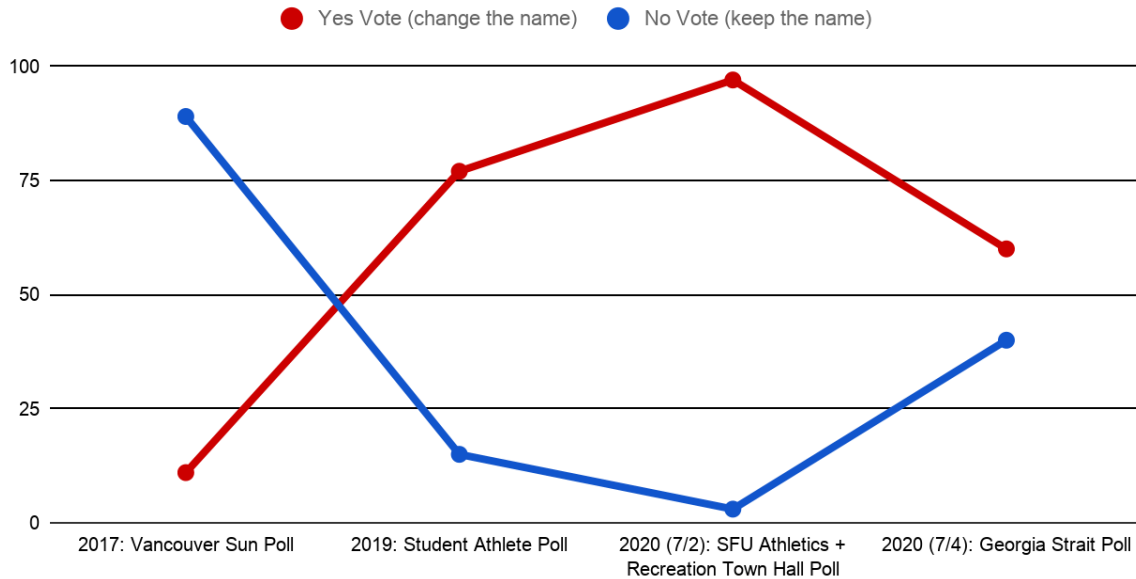


Figure 3 is compiled from the following sources:

Source	Date	Yes to change	No to change	Total Number
Vancouver Sun, "Weekend Poll Should SFU's sports teams change the Clan team name" ¹⁵	September 23, 2017	11.24%	88.76%	n=1,912
SFU Student Athlete Poll ¹⁶	June, 2019	77%	15% (8% abstained)	n=163
SFU Athletics + Recreation Town Hall Poll ¹⁷	July 2, 2020	97%	3%	n=133
Georgia Strait, "SFU Athletics responds to rising chorus of criticism over call its sports teams clan" ¹⁸	July 4, 2020	60%	40%	n=313

¹⁵ <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/weekend-poll-should-sfus-sports-teams-change-the-clan-team-name>

¹⁶ Information supplied by SFU Athletics and Recreation

¹⁷ Information supplied by SFU Athletics and Recreation

¹⁸ <https://www.straight.com/education/sfu-athletics-responds-to-rising-chorus-of-criticism-over-calling-its-sports-teams-clan>

- Supporters of petitions calling for a name change have increased almost 30x in three years, from 441 in 2017 to 13,012 in 2020.

Figure 4: Change.org petition supporters 2017, 2020

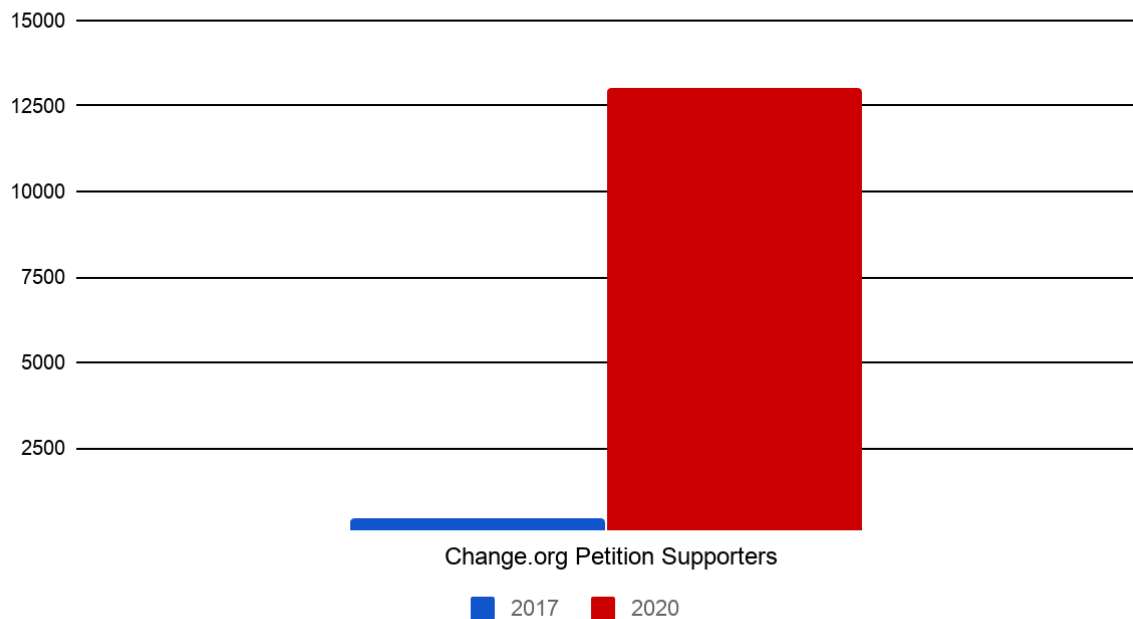


Figure 4 is compiled from the following sources:
"The Clan, Simon Fraser University's sports team, needs a new name," 2017 (<https://www.change.org/p/president-andrew-petter-simon-fraser-university-s-the-clan-needs-a-new-name>). "The Clan" Simon Fraser University Needs a New Name," 2020 (<https://www.change.org/p/president-andrew-petter-the-clan-simon-fraser-university-needs-a-new-name>).

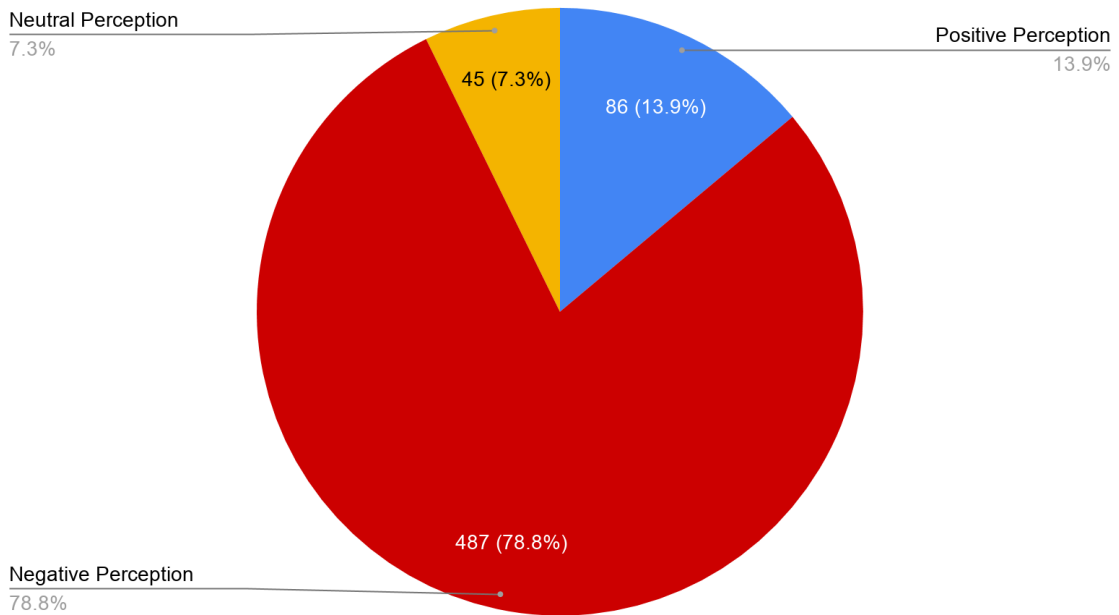
Stakeholder Feedback Themes

Most Consistent and Compelling Themes of Stakeholder Feedback

1. The majority of stakeholders surveyed have negative perceptions of the team name.

An online survey conducted by Wiseblood in July 2020 shows that the majority (78.8%) of online survey participants (represented in Figure 1) reported negative perceptions of the team name, the Clan, and called for it to be changed.

Figure 1: Current perceptions of the team's nickname, the Clan



Association with the “Klan” and the negative impact of its racist platform and the resulting negative impact on athletes and SFU’s BIPOC community was most commonly identified as the reason to change the Clan team name.

Survey respondents who reported overall positive perceptions of the Clan team name (13.9%) described strong affiliations with Simon Fraser’s Scottish heritage, and appreciation for the image of family or kinship it represented. A number of these respondents wrote in opposition to a name change, citing objections that include: the over-reaches of political correctness, catering to Americans, responding to pressure from “social justice warriors,” and anti-Scottish discrimination.

In group discovery sessions there was universal support for a name change. This venue, with a group of peers, may have prevented some people from sharing dissenting opinions. All participants were encouraged to email, or take the online survey if they were more comfortable sharing their thoughts individually, or anonymously.

2. The Clan team name and its association with the “Ku Klux Klan” causes harm to student athletes.

Our research shows that most participants recognize the distinction between the Clan with a “c” and the Klan with a “k,” yet they cannot disassociate the Clan (with a c) from the negative and harmful rhetoric, views, histories, and acts of the Ku Klux Klan. This association with the “Klan” creates tension and the potential for threats and physical harm when used in the context of competitive play in the United States. There were a number of stories from athletes and coaches describing hostile encounters between SFU athletes and opposing teams, their fans, and community members that put SFU athletes in harm’s way.

This association with the “Klan” also causes harm to SFU’s Black, Indigenous, people of colour (BIPOC) and Jewish community members (including students, student athletes and their families, faculty, staff, coaches, and alumni) by surfacing racist histories, speech, acts of violence, and trauma (including intergenerational trauma) experienced by individuals, their families, or other equity seeking groups.

Respondents also spoke to personal experience of racist dehumanization, exclusion, and underrepresentation. Many described how the Clan “family” image obscures their lived reality and deepens the sense of isolation, noting that their trauma is compounded every time it is raised in contentious situations stemming from the team name. Others expressed shame in wearing a name linked to an organization with a long history of racist acts of terror, both out of concern for the greater SFU community and their American peers in the NCAA.

Members of the coaching staff echoed the fear that they are eroding their players’ trust when attempting to soothe or downplay legitimate fears and experiences.

The majority of survey participants agreed that ensuring SFU athletes’ safety was a top priority, and a key reason for considering a name change.

Other themes in engagement discussions

The name is inappropriate in the context of the NCAA.

The vast majority of participants noted SFU’s status in the NCAA-Division II as a unique achievement among Canadian universities, one that benefits the university community and its students, whose athletic and academic performance must meet high standards. Numerous participants also noted that SFU’s NCAA participation helps extend its commitment to engagement, by enabling student athletes, staff and coaches to represent a Canadian university in communities across the United States.

In the United States, the majority understanding of the word “clan” is that of the Ku Klux Klan. Athletes and coaching staff have for decades reported disbelief, confusion, hurt and anger stemming from the team name. They have been taunted, harassed, and threatened by opponents and their fans. This is at odds with the pride felt by athletes and coaches at being the NCAA’s only Canadian team, and the experience of representing Canada.

Some respondents argued that any perceived problem with the name is exclusively an “American problem” rooted in ignorance of the Scottish clan. Several suggested that the issue would be resolved if SFU were to leave the NCAA and only compete against other Canadian schools.

By continuing to use the name, SFU is missing an opportunity to inspire pride and inclusion.

The majority of discovery session and online survey participants feel that the team name is exclusionary, both stemming from its dual Clan/Klan meanings, and because it is little used in the campus community. As one student said, “if you have to explain that it means family, it’s not really working.” Additionally, a number of respondents expressed concern that promoting the legacy of a Scottish explorer is particularly problematic and exclusionary in the context of Reconciliation.

Student athletes described their longing for an instantly recognizable team name and logo of the sort that they have observed among other schools in NCAA competition, one that would capture the University’s values and clarify “what we’re playing *for*,” in competition.”

Athletics reports a long-running sense of isolation from academics and the campus as a whole, while underscoring the desire to present a more service-oriented position. Coaching staff described their need for a unifying name would express the department’s commitment to community wellbeing and the development of engaged citizens.

The name requires the burden of explanation by student athletes, coaches, and staff.

Athletes and coaching staff report being continuously questioned about the Clan team name, from visitors (including potential recruits and their families) to on-campus training facilities, airport travellers, and peer athletes and audience members in competitions across the United States. In many cases, the questioner is hurt and sometimes even angry, wondering why the University would use a team name associated with a racist organization.

Many reported feelings of shame over the name, and resent the burden to explain that the original intent was to reference a Scottish ideal of family and community. As one student noted, it feels terrible to try and explain to someone who is angry and hurt that there's an alternative definition for the word "Klan." Athletes described that an emboldened sense of self developed in representing Canada was undermined by the burden to explain "who we really are."

The name is rarely, if ever, used by student athletes, coaches, and staff; nor in Athletics and Recreation communication, events, and marketing.

Athletes, staff, coaches and alumni expressed discomfort, shame, and embarrassment by the use of the name. Many noted that there was a long history of complaints and problems stemming from the name throughout the decades—football alumni from the late 1960s through the 1990s; a women's basketball competition in Knoxville, Tennessee; a women's softball tournament in Alabama; and men's soccer matches in Georgia, to name a few.

These incidents and issues led to what some described as an "unspoken" rule to avoid use of the name. Athletes and coaches do not cheer, "Go Clan!" or encourage its use. As a result, many staff members, coaches, and athletes feel no connection to the name at this point and strongly express their desire to step away from it.

The name has created difficulties in event experience, communication and marketing. Athletics and Recreation ceased using "the Clan" at student orientations several years ago, because they felt it was inappropriate and problematic. With staff members and athletes feeling that SFU is not promoting and engaging as it should, or like competitors, because of our embarrassment by the name. The name presents problems for event cheers, event announcements, broadcast and media coverage, as well as SFU's social media, merchandise, and marketing efforts.

Most recognize the Scottish meaning of clan positively, but still believe a change is necessary.

The majority of survey participants acknowledged the Scottish meaning of clan positively, and appreciated the original intent in selecting it as the SFU team name. Respondents described shared values of service, community, and loyalty, noting that in competition it is essential to rally around an image, to know "what we're fighting for." It is noteworthy that the overwhelming number of respondents calling for a name change, spoke positively about the Scottish meaning of clan.

The majority described problems with the name as an unfortunate result of associations with the Klan homonym. They were careful to specify that the Scottish clan is distinct, and expressed sadness and regret that it has been eclipsed by the racist Klan.

Some participants questioned how visible and meaningful Scottish heritage is in the university's present-day culture. They noted that the Clan does not feature in either casual discussions on school identity or strategic messaging around the university's commitment to community engagement and impact.

A minority were opposed to changing the name, citing the importance of history and tradition.

Several argued that it would be senseless to change the name due to lack of understanding, suggesting that the university should instead focus on education and discussion of the Scottish clan in context. In a number of online survey comments and letters submitted to President Petter's office, respondents voiced concern that the conversation was disrespectful and even intolerant of Scottish identity and culture, that the legacy of Scottish contributions to world history would be rewritten and thus erased, and that Clan values would be forgotten. A few suggested that a name change would constitute anti-Scottish and Gaelic intolerance, arguing that it would mimic the Ku Klux Klan's program of race-based exclusion.

Some characterized it as an "American problem," stemming from "American ignorance." Several respondents suggested that the issue would be resolved by SFU's withdrawal from the NCAA.

Issues of colonialism present in the name are at odds with the university's efforts toward reconciliation.

A number of respondents voiced concern that the Clan team name is a legacy of settler colonialism. Students were particularly heartfelt in articulating how team names and other legacy symbols function to normalize European values so that they are accepted as inevitable and superior, while marginalizing all other lives, cultures, and histories. Many shared the conviction that, for these reasons, the team name is an obstacle to the university's reconciliation commitments.

Institutional response to the team name, calls for change, and the process have not met community expectations, and have negatively impacted the institution's reputation.

A significant number of alumni, coaches, athletes, and staff expressed exasperation, dismay and frustration with the institution's inability to respond appropriately to the team name issue, with many reporting that they have repeatedly voiced concerns throughout their SFU careers. The team name contributes to overall misunderstanding of SFU's mission and values as Canada's engaged university.

The Athletics community spoke to a divide from the University as a whole, and sense that their concerns are dismissed by executives who don't understand what they describe as an impossible position created by the team name. Coaching staff are concerned that inaction has forced the student athletes to put themselves on the line. The lack of decisive action has eroded trust in Athletics coaches and staff members.

A new name and the process to create it could be a step in rebuilding trust and uniting the community.

A majority of participants stated that the team name should inspire unity, and contribute to a sense of identity for all SFU students, staff, faculty and alumni, not just athletics.

Many members called for the naming process (if initiated) to be urgently undertaken, transparent, to closely involve those most affected by the name (athletes and coaches), to be inclusive of the SFU community, and to consider exploring other ways to honour the Scottish heritage.

Athletics students, coaches and staff noted a long-running sense of isolation or being siloed from the university community. For many, the name contributes to that feeling, as well as misperceptions of student athletes. Student athletes and others want a closer sense of camaraderie and connection with the rest of the university--something they feel the naming process and new name can help.

Many also noted a unique moment and momentum for SFU Athletics and Recreation given the new visual identity, uniform designs, the Nike deal, and the arrival of the new stadium, adding that the new name would help solidify engagement and marketing efforts.

Some spoke to a greater pride in athletics (and the new stadium) benefiting SFU's student experience efforts. Student athletes and coaches noted that while competing in the NCAA, they have seen what is possible for universities that are proud of their name, mascot, and traditions, and would like to create a similar experience for SFU.

Conclusion

This research and engagement process provides evidence of support among SFU Athletics and Recreation stakeholders for retiring the Clan team name and seeking a replacement.

Issues of student athlete safety, the association with the racism of the Ku Klux Klan, and the barriers to inclusivity presented by the name were consistent in discovery sessions and interviews, in online survey comments, and in letters to the President.

There were marked increases in awareness and support for a team name change in various polls and surveys, and online petitions from 2017 to 2020 (see Figure 3, and Figure 4). This is likely the result of greater awareness, dialogue and demand for accountability for businesses and institutions to support decolonization, reconciliation, and dismantle systemic racism. Those who support the name, and who are opposed to a change, represent a minority opinion. The poll data (see Figure 3) also shows a decline in support from 2017 to 2020. The most common defences of the name include the Scottish definition of clan, the Scottish heritage of both Simon Fraser and the Fraser Clan (two distinct references in the university's name), and a disregard for capitulating to American audiences, or the forces of "cancel culture."