Dear Friends:

Simon Fraser University continues to make progress regarding the implementation of its re-named Aboriginal Strategic Plan (formerly First Nations University-Wide Strategic Plan). The Office for Aboriginal Peoples was created to work with on and off-campus partners in this purpose. The resulting teamwork approach has resulted in significant progress being made in many areas. The following is a report compilation of campus-wide, multi-unit Aboriginal initiatives occurring at SFU as of 2011-12.

- The eight original major components of the 2007 Aboriginal Strategic Plan continue to be implemented. They are: (1) Academic program development (2) Research development (3) Student recruitment, retention, and support (4) Liaison and outreach to the Aboriginal community (5) International engagement (6) Indigenous knowledge development (7) Infrastructure and facilities development, and (8) Aboriginal integration and leadership development.

- The Aboriginal Strategic Plan for SFU is currently undergoing a process of revision, as the original plan is now four years old. Under this process, two new major components will be added to the original eight listed above. These two new major initiatives will deal with (1) Enhancing government and NGO relationships, and (2) Developing an effective communications strategy. These and other additions/changes will be made to the Aboriginal Strategic Plan during the course of 2011-12.

- An Aboriginal Community Initiatives Steering Committee provides direction to the Office for Aboriginal Peoples regarding priorities in the Aboriginal Strategic Plan. Originally composed of university students, staff, faculty, and some senior administration (including the Vice President, Academic and Provost), the committee has been joined by the President, Vice President-External, Associate Vice President-Students, and invited members of the public (Aboriginal leadership or those in positions of authority in Aboriginal organizations).

- As a means of communication, the Office for Aboriginal Peoples has created and continued to expand its office webpage (http://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples/). This centralized website comprehensively lists or connects to existing websites listing Aboriginal programs, services, and contact people at SFU.
• For 2009-10 there were 496 self-identified Aboriginal students attending SFU. Complete numbers for 2011-12 will be available in the spring of 2012.

• Simon Fraser University currently has eleven self-identified Aboriginal faculty members who are located in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science’s First Nations Studies Program (five), the Faculty of Education (five), and the Department of Mathematics (one).

• The First Nations Studies Program (now a program major) plus Indigenous programming in the Faculty of Education and in Lifelong Learning continue to be strengths at SFU. As well, the Faculty of Business continues to offer its Industry Council for Aboriginal Business Leadership Exchange Program and is currently planning to offer an Aboriginal Executive MBA Program in 2012-13.

• Student Services applied for and received University Priority Funds totaling $150,000 for support for Indigenous students (specific details below).

Student Services has allocated $100,000 for Indigenous student awards. These funds are allotted for entrance scholarships to support recruitment of new students, for academic awards to encourage success, and for bursaries to support students in high financial need.

Student Services has also designated $50,000 for “success” programming. These funds have been assigned to various projects to enhance support and develop resources for Indigenous students:

- Enhance advising and transition support
- Facilitate peer mentorship programming
- Develop career resources
- Support learning difficulties
- Improve access to disabilities services
- Assist residence enrolment
- Provide Indigenous Cultural Competency Training for staff

The target initiative is to support recruitment and retention of Indigenous students. The long term goal is to incorporate these developed project resources into regular program objectives.

• The Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) continues to work for and with Indigenous students — First Nations, Métis, and Inuit — to offer information and support services to enhance academic success in culturally respectful, relevant, reciprocal, and responsible ways. These include Peer Educator, Peer Mentor, and Peer Advising Programs; a Welcoming BBQ for new and returning students; and the Indigenous Honoring Feast for graduates. The ISC partners with Student Services units, the First Nations Student Association, the Office for Aboriginal Peoples, the SFU Library and Student Learning Commons, and local First Nations to build a strong ISC foundation that provides learning opportunities for all SFU students. The ISC works closely with the SFU Indigenous Recruitment Coordinator to ensure a smooth transition from the admissions process to successful semesters and, eventually, graduation.
The Indigenous Student Centre communication strategy includes a regularly updated website at http://students.sfu.ca/indigenous/, as well as, a weekly electronic newsletter called Tuz. This newsletter is sent by e-mail to enrolled Indigenous students and alumni, faculty and staff, and to “Friends of ISC” contacts within the SFU system. Tuz has the buzz on the latest ISC programming, Indigenous scholarship/bursary/fellowship information, job opportunities, special event information, special announcements, and items of special interest.

An Indigenous Recruitment Coordinator continues to successfully work with community to encourage Aboriginal people to attend SFU. Many of these applicants are now applying under the recent Aboriginal Undergraduate Admission Policy, first implemented in 2010-11.

Contact people for Aboriginal people, including applicants and current students, have been established in Academic Advising, Career Services, Graduate Studies, Awards and Financial Aid, and in the Community Education Program (Lifelong Learning).

SFU continues to have a well organized, well funded, and well supported First Nations Student Association (FNSA) to assist in Aboriginal student activities. Two members of FNSA are invited to sit on the SFU Aboriginal Community Initiatives Steering Committee.

The two Aboriginal Pre-University Bridging Programs – General and Health streams – continue to run and are receiving direct support funding from the SFU University Priorities Fund for this and the next two years.

An Aboriginal Elders Program has been established. Two elders will work on the SFU Burnaby campus — in the Indigenous Student Centre and in the Office for Aboriginal Peoples — with another elder working with the Aboriginal Pre-University Bridging Programs at SFU Surrey. These elders will serve in many capacities as they work with students, staff, faculty, and community.

A Coast Salish Drumming and Singing Initiative has started on the SFU campus in an effort to bring more Aboriginal culture to the campus. To be held every two weeks in the year ahead, it is open to beginners and experts, men and women, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Courses and programs that are Aboriginal-oriented in their approach and methodology are either ongoing or have been started in different faculties and units on the campus and in the community. Too numerous to list here, they are available for perusal on the Office for Aboriginal Peoples website.

A pan-university Indigenous Research Institute is being established at SFU in 2011-12. It is designed to bring together faculty and students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who are doing research in Indigenous areas. They will look for areas to collaborate, mentor, listen to cutting-edge guest speakers, present and share research, and work with community.
• A Centre for First Nations Languages and concomitant First Nations language programming continues to offer and expand on programming and expertise in the community.

• *Simon Fraser University News* will continue to offer an *Aboriginal Peoples Supplement* in an annual insert. This recruitment and information tool containing information regarding Aboriginal stories, people, and initiatives from around the campus will be offered each fall.

• An Aboriginal alumni e-mail list is maintained at SFU. Information about SFU events and news is supplied to these alumni through the *Tuz* e-mail newsletter supplied out of the Indigenous Student Centre. A copy of the *Simon Fraser University News, Aboriginal Peoples Supplement* is also sent to Aboriginal alumni through the established list serve.

• SFU is establishing measures to strengthen and increase services for Aboriginal graduate students. This includes better information regarding specific services, more support for the *Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Program* (SAGE), and planned workshops for faculty and staff regarding Aboriginal cultural sensitivities.

• The Office for Aboriginal Peoples (OAP) has been working with university partners to establish connections to the local Aboriginal community. The OAP has arranged for the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MOU’s) between SFU and the Native Education College, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and the Métis Nation BC. Discussions regarding such partnerships are also underway with local First Nations.

• An Indigenous Exchange Agreement — to involve students, staff, faculty, and elders — was signed in September 2011 between Simon Fraser University and Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. As well, although not technically related to this specific agreement, SFU hosted a group of visiting Queensland-Australia Aborigine university students to British Columbia for ten days in September-October 2011 (as they toured and experienced SFU, other institutions, First Nations and Métis communities, and other parts of the province).

• The Office for Aboriginal Peoples continues to work with other SFU staff and faculty — from the Indigenous Student Centre and the First Nations Studies Program — to educate international students at Fraser International College about Aboriginal culture, history, and current events. This is done through regular guest lectures. The rationale is to educate future international leaders in government and business on First Nations issues in Canada, as they may one day be doing business together.

• A *First Peoples House* (longhouse) on the SFU Burnaby campus is currently in the very beginning planning stages. Regarding this: (1) a proposal has been developed (2) an ad hoc committee for the project has been established (3) an Advancement Office fundraiser is devoted to the project, and (4) a feasibility study is currently in development as of 2011-12. This project is, of course, a long range initiative but the initial steps have been taken.

For further information about the above, including a more expanded *Report Copy* of Aboriginal Strategic Plan initiatives, please visit the Office for Aboriginal Peoples website at [http://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples/](http://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples/)