EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy applies to all Lower Mainland campuses of SFU. It establishes the authority and criteria for full or partial closure of the University, including cancelling classes and postponing exams, in situations where it is deemed unsafe for the university to remain open. This policy identifies the departments and services that may be required to provide critical services during a partial or full closure, establishes the role of senior administrators, and confirms the way employees will be compensated.

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1.0  PREAMBLE

1.1  From time to time, an unusual occurrence may make it necessary to cancel classes, postpone exams or close the University to ensure public safety.

2.0  PURPOSE

2.1  The purpose of this policy is to set out how and by whom decisions to cancel classes or close the University will be made and to establish what other conditions may pertain to staffing and compensation during cancellations and closures. Also addressed are procedures pertaining to the postponement of final examinations.

3.0  SCOPE AND JURISDICTION

3.1  This policy applies to all Lower Mainland campuses of Simon Fraser University.

4.0  DEFINITIONS

4.1  See Appendix A for the definitions of words used in this policy and its associated procedures.

5.0  POLICY

5.1  The University will continue to operate during all scheduled working hours unless a situation significantly increases the difficulty and/or risk to faculty, staff, or students from entering or remaining on University grounds or in University facilities.

5.2  The primary criteria in determining whether to cancel classes or close a part of the University will be the University's ability to continue safely to offer classes, tutorials and labs, and the ability of faculty, staff, and students to travel safely to and from the University. University Administrators may close the campus if it is deemed unsafe to remain open. In exceptional circumstances, the University will extend its normal hours of operation to provide food and shelter for people unable to leave. When an event requires a coordinated response, the EOC will be activated.

5.3  The decision to cancel classes or to close the University in relation to severe weather conditions, including snow, will be made by the President or their designate, after consulting with the designated Vice President or Executive Director at each campus. The decision to cancel classes or to close the University for any other reason will be made by the President after consulting with the designated Vice President or Executive Director at each campus.

5.4  Decisions to cancel classes, postpone examinations or close the University may be made separately and may affect each campus differently. During regular hours of operation the University will strive to remain open; however, classes and events may be cancelled to prevent students and others from travelling to campus.
5.5 Postponed examinations will be re-scheduled or alternative arrangements made.

5.6 Units responsible for organizing University events are responsible for assessing the risks and deciding whether an event should proceed or be cancelled, in consultation with the Chief Safety Officer, based on the safety of participants, the operation of utility services and life safety systems. They will also be responsible for communicating their decision to event participants, Safety and Risk Services, Facilities Services or Operations, and University Communications.

5.7 In some situations the University will need to keep certain facilities open even when classes and events are cancelled, examinations postponed, or the University closed. A list of departments and services that may be required to provide critical services appears in Schedule 1. It can be anticipated that some or all of the employees in such departments may be asked to remain at work or to report for work to provide emergency services. Under emergency conditions, particular attention may need to be paid to certain research operations, including Animal Care.

5.8 Senior administrators are expected to remain available during emergency situations. Supervisors who are away or unable to physically get to work should ensure that someone on-site is appointed to act with the authority and responsibility needed to provide direction for the employees they supervise. The supervisor should communicate the name of the person in the acting role to both the employees and his/her supervisor. Supervisors will give due consideration and provide accommodation for employees with legitimate needs.

5.9 University employees will be compensated as follows when a partial or full closure of the University is implemented under this policy:

5.9.1 Employees (continuing and temporary) scheduled for work at the University site and who would have been at work except for the closure will have their salary maintained. The time will be recorded as "T" on the Payroll Report, University Closure 530 for salaried employees and 285 for hourly employees. Release from attending the work-site under a notice of closure shall not be considered University holidays.

5.9.2 Employees scheduled to work at home or off-site will be expected to work the scheduled work hours and paid at their regular rate.

5.9.3 Employees who were not scheduled to be at work and who had instead scheduled vacation, sick leave, compensating time off for overtime, days off in lieu of statutory holidays, modified days off, normal days off or personal leave will have their time recorded as scheduled before the closure was announced.

5.9.4 Employees who are not covered by collective agreements and who are asked to report for their regularly scheduled hours of work to provide critical services shall be given the equivalent time off for all hours actually worked during a closure, with such time to be taken within the following calendar month.

5.9.5 Employees who are covered by collective agreements shall be governed by the provisions in their agreements.
5.9.6 Where a supervisor has accommodated an employee with special needs by allowing them to leave prior to a University closure, scheduling of make-up time must be approved by the supervisor.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The President, or their designate, is responsible for cancellation of classes, postponement of exams and/or closing one or more campuses in relation to severe weather conditions.

6.2 The President is responsible for cancellation of classes, postponement of exams and/or closing one or more campuses in the event of any other safety concern and/or risk to faculty, staff, or students from entering or remaining on University grounds or in University facilities.

6.3 In event of severe weather conditions or any other safety concern and/or risk to faculty, staff, or students from entering or remaining on University grounds or in University facilities, the Chief Safety Officer may make a recommendation to close a campus to the President or to their designate.

6.4 The Executive Director, University Communications and Marketing, or their designate is responsible for coordination and distribution of campus closure information to the University Community.

7.0 REPORTING

The Chief Safety Officer is responsible for filing an annual summary report to the Vice President, Finance & Administration on unscheduled cancellations of classes.

8.0 RELATED LEGAL, POLICY AUTHORITIES AND AGREEMENTS

8.1 The legal and other University Policy authorities and agreements that may bear on the administration of this policy and may be consulted as needed include but are not limited to:

8.1.1 University Health and Safety (GP 17)

8.1.2 Emergency Management (GP 31)

8.1.3 Use of University Space (GP 36)

8.1.4 CUPE 3338, Poly Party, TSSU, and SFUFA Collective Agreements

8.1.5 APSA Employment Policies.

9.0 RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

9.1 The information and records made, stored, and received to administer this policy are subject to the access to information and protection of privacy provisions of British Columbia’s Freedom of
Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the University’s Information Policy series. To the extent possible, the information and records will be treated in a confidential manner, in compliance with the Act and with applicable University policies.

10.0 POLICY REVIEW

10.1 The Vice President Finance & Administration will undertake a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating this policy and its associated procedures and practices to ensure that they are responsive to evolving needs and the evolving environment. This includes but is not limited to reviewing this policy at least once every three years.

11.0 POLICY AUTHORITY

11.1 This policy is administered under the authority of the Vice President, Finance & Administration.

12.0 INTERPRETATION

12.1 Questions of interpretation and application of this policy shall be referred to the Vice President, Finance & Administration who will make a decision, which will be final.

13.0 PROCEDURES AND OTHER ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

13.1 Schedule 1 contains the service units that may be called upon to provide critical services.

13.2 Appendix A contains the definitions applicable to this policy and its associated procedures.