Executive Summary

Over the past five years, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has been reduced in size through the transfer of the departments of Geography and Archaeology to the newly formed Faculty of Environment and the removal of the School for Contemporary Arts to the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology. Despite this, Arts and Social Sciences remains the largest of the Faculties within the University, proud of its international reputation for scholarly excellence and of its internal reputation for the quality of its teaching and community engagement. Home to large and powerful departments and schools such as Economics, Psychology, Criminology and English, the Faculty finds room for small, innovative and emerging programs in areas such as First Nations studies, Labour studies, and World Literature. Our scholarship is central to the University. Historically and ideologically, strong and vibrant offerings in the humanities and social sciences has been and remains central to the academic vision and mission of Simon Fraser University (SFU). With a faculty complement of a little more than 300, we are a large and diverse community of scholars and teachers, working in laboratories, libraries and archives, at conferences and in the community. Data collection and disciplines differ, but the fundamentals of scholarship bind us together in ways both simple and profound: a commitment to reading, writing and thinking, to the analysis of data and the testing of hypotheses, challenging sloppy thinking and mendacious claims, and communicating effectively with our students, peers and the wider community. Our success has long been recognised. No other Faculty at SFU has received more university awards for excellence in teaching and few Faculties across Canada can match our success rate in securing Social Sciences and Humanities Research Grants. SFU’s recent ranking among the top 50 Universities under 50 years clearly reflects the reputational strength of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The departure of Dean Lesley Cormack, less than 3 years into her first term and at a time of fiscal constraint, resulted in a sustained period of internal self reflection, that culminated in an external assessment of possible future directions for the Faculty written by Dr Ronald Bond (July 2011) and circulated to all chairs and directors. His specific recommendations will be discussed in meetings over the autumn semester. These developments have coincided with the University’s latest round of academic planning and with an administrative review of the Faculty. In short, there has been no shortage of reflection on possible directions and outcomes for the Faculty over the next five years. Plans have been received from all departments, schools and most of the programs and close consideration has been given to the draft five year academic plan written by the VPA. What follows is an attempt to summarise what has been learnt from these documents with some thoughts on the possible objectives for the Faculty as a whole in accordance with the planning template provided.
2. Faculty Core Activities (See Appendix for additional information)

The Faculty is home to 13 Departments, 3 Schools, 12 Programs and a variety of research institutes and centres. They are listed as follows:

2.1 DEPARTMENTS and SCHOOLS

- School of Criminology
- Department of Economics
- Department of English
- Department of First Nations Studies
- Department of French
- Department of Gerontology
- Department of History
- Department of Humanities
- School for International Studies
- Department of Linguistics
- Department of Philosophy
- Department of Political Science
- Department of Psychology
- School of Public Policy
- Department of Sociology and Anthropology
- Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies

2.2 PROGRAMS

- Asia-Canada Program
- Cognitive Science Program
- Explorations in Arts and Social Sciences Program
- French Cohort Program (BAFF/OFFA)
- Graduate Liberal Studies Program
- Hellenic Studies Program
- Integrated Studies Program (scheduled to be dissolved in August 2013)
- Labour Studies Program
- Latin American Studies Program
- Master of Arts for Teachers of English (MATE) Program
- Urban Studies Program
- World Literature Program

2.3 CENTRES AND INSTITUTES

- Bill Reid Centre for Northwest Coast Art Studies
- Centre d'études fancophone Québec-Pacifique
- Centre for Forensic Research
- Centre for Global Political Economy
3. Planning Assumptions

Beyond the obvious point that we have no privileged access to future events, this document has been written with a sober set of assumptions. It has assumed that there will be no increase in the provincial grant per student and that we will need to foot the bill for all faculty and staff pay and benefit increases. We are also assuming that enrollment, both domestic and international, will remain stable.

4. Strategic Influences (specific to the Faculty)

4.1 Opportunities

1. Our programs are enormously popular. In spite of the present preoccupation at the provincial and federal levels with skills training, programs in the Arts and Social Sciences remain attractive options for thousands of students.
2. We punch above our weight in being able to attract superb faculty. This is almost entirely due to our location in the greater Vancouver area, but it also builds upon the quality and reputation that has been established over almost 50 years.
3. Many of our programs are adaptable, flexible, innovative and essentially interdisciplinary.
4. We have many talented teachers willing to share their knowledge with others.
5. We have research strengths that complement the work being done in all the other Faculties.
6. We have a success rate in winning research grants that we guard and are concerned to maintain.
7. We have an important presence on the Surrey and Vancouver campuses and are well poised to take advantage of new opportunities.
8. We have important partnership programs with local colleges, such as Douglas College, that might serve as models for partnerships with other BC colleges or new universities.

4.2 Threats

1. There is a perception, too often regrettably reinforced by statements from government, that degrees in the Humanities, in particular, are a worthless preparation for the world of work.
2. The proposed departure of the School of Criminology from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences into a newly created Faculty of Law, would, given the present funding model, pose a most serious threat to the financial health of the Faculty.
3. The transformation of many BC colleges into degree granting institutions has challenged the distinction that once held between the quality of the offerings in local colleges and the quality of our own programs. We need to demonstrate in a variety of ways that our programs are qualitatively superior to those offered by colleges and the newly minted universities such as Capilano and UFV.
4. The rapid growth in the number of international students, many of them without the requisite proficiencies in the English language, has put pressure on instructors and advisors looking to assist these students to succeed.
5. Encouraging students to explore a range of options in their first few semesters, without adequate checks and prompts, permits too many students to drift, placing a strain on advising resources and our ability to plan.
6. Difficulties with course access, especially in the most popular programs, has already, and will continue to result in deep student frustration with program completion.
7. A lack of sufficient base funding threatens our ability to renew and replace faculty.
8. The present internal funding model, based upon weighted AFTE figures, rather than actual AFTE figures, undermines the central principle (funding in accordance with revenue generated and students taught) the model was designed to embrace. A clear, transparent and equitable system is needed in order to establish trust between Faculties and Schools.

5. Self Assessment

5.1 Strengths:

1. We are home to programs of excellent quality and international reputation. The quality of our scholarship in the Social Sciences and Humanities has long been internationally recognised. The School of Criminology is one of the largest schools of criminology in the world with a reputation to match. According to the most recent external review, the Department of Economics is ranked fifth in Canada and in the top 100 departments worldwide. The departments of Psychology and English are both ranked between 150-200 in the most recent QS rankings and mid-sized departments such as History and Linguistics have obtained even higher QS rankings, between 50-100. We have historically been able to hire well and the quality of our faculty across all units is reflected in the quality of teaching and scholarship found in all units. In August 2012, a Higher Education Strategy Associates Report entitled “Measuring
Academic Research in Canada: Field-Normalized Academic Rankings 2012” ranked SFU in the top 10 Universities for social sciences and humanities bibliometric (H-index) scores across Canada, a score largely driven by research conducted in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

2. We have an enviable rate of success in securing external research funding. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences makes a significant contribution to the total research success of the University. Our success in securing SSHRC grants is now well known. Over the past 5 years, the Faculty has surpassed the national average success rates by an average of 18%. We have maintained our above-average success rate under SSHRC’s new program architecture with a 40% Faculty success rate in the first (2011-2012) Insight Grants competition (which had a 27% national success rate).

3. We are known internally for the quality of our instruction as well as for our commitment to teaching undergraduates and graduate students.

4. We are a remarkably efficient operation within the University. We deliver the most AFTEs with the least cost and we have the smallest staff to FTTE ratio in the University.

5. We are well positioned to raise external funds.

5.2. Weaknesses

1. With the loss of faculty, we have lost almost all of the strength we once had in Latin American Studies (LAS) and what little remains will be brought into the School for International Studies.

2. Many of our smaller programs are deeply vulnerable to the loss of even one faculty member. The size of many programs places a burden of service upon the faculty members in these units.

3. Our specialty fee, or premium fee graduate programs are charging fees that, in some cases, are actually less than the regular student fee, making a mockery of the concept of a ‘premium fee’ and placing an undue strain on the funding of these programs.

4. Insufficient base funding has constrained our ability to replace faculty who have retired or resigned and this has created significant and sustained losses in research expertise in a number of our departments and schools. These losses threaten the quality of our undergraduate programs, our graduate programs and our international reputation.

5. The Faculty has been largely ineffective in communicating its success and needs to develop an effective communication strategy with clear goals for success.

6. Inadequate liaison and communication with Student Services has resulted in errors and frustration for students and advisors.

7. Although there is a steady stream of colleagues willing to take their turn, serving as chair or director of their department or school, the same cannot be said for the critical roles of Associate Deans within the Faculty. There is a strong need for a robust succession plan in the Dean’s office.

8. We are heavily reliant upon sessional instructors.
6. Efficiencies

The question of the possible amalgamation of areas and research and teaching was a central question posed by Ronald Bond in his recent examination of the Faculty. He made a series of recommendations in his report, which has yet to be discussed within the Faculty. Placing on one side his more comprehensive recommendation for a series of divisions within the Faculty, he advocated the creation of three schools as the chart below makes clear. This has yet to be discussed, but the release of the Bond report has generated at least one other recommendation, namely that a School of World Literatures, Languages and Cultures, be created incorporating the Language Training Institute, the Department of Humanities, Hellenic Studies and World Literature. The case for structural change within the Faculty will be pursued with widespread consultation over the next six months.

An Overview of Selective Re-Alignments in FASS as advocated by the Bond Report

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<tr>
<th>SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND POLITICAL STUDIES</th>
<th>SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LITERATURE AND INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Political Science</td>
<td>School of International Studies</td>
<td>Department of World Literature</td>
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<td>School of Public Policy</td>
<td>Urban Studies</td>
<td>Language Training Institute (Japanese, Spanish, German, Chinese, Portuguese etc.)</td>
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<td>Latin American Studies</td>
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<td>Centre for Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures</td>
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7. Faculty Objectives

7.1 Engaging Students: To equip students with the knowledge, skills and experiences that prepare them for life in an ever-changing and challenging world.

A. Enhance teaching

Innovations. We intend to pursue innovations in pedagogy. Specifically, we will encourage all departments and schools to work closely with Dr. Erin Aspenlieder, our Faculty educational consultant in the Teaching and Learning Centre, as well as with our Faculty Teaching Fellows to explore opportunities for faculty members to innovate and/or improve teaching methods.
Learning outcomes. Subject to Senate approval, we anticipate the introduction of learning outcomes for all courses. Learning outcomes are currently being added to all new FASS courses. We anticipate that over the next few years, all existing courses will possess specific learning outcomes and that departments will begin work on program-level outcomes. We anticipate that the adoption of learning outcomes will clarify what we do and help avoid duplication of offerings both within and amongst different programs of study.

Graduate programs. We intend to pursue a policy of cooperative collaboration as a way of enhancing and supporting the smaller graduate programs within the Faculty.

B. Improve support for students

Student choice and effective advice. We are convinced that students make best progress when they know what it is they want to study and how they can succeed. To this end, we will work with all departments to determine the most appropriate balance between time to explore options and declaration of a major or two minors. A realistic goal is to set the required time to declare between the completion of 45 and 60 credits. Students who have not declared after the completion of 60 credits of work will not be allowed to register until this has been completed. Provision will be made for transfer students. This will clarify the role of advisors in departments and in Student services and should result in greater clarity about responsibilities and accountability. We are committed to working with Student Services and to improving liaison and and communication between the two units.

Access to courses. Access to courses remains a challenge and a problem in some high-demand programs. We are persuaded that there is no simple solution to this problem, and welcome the University’s determination to examine the problem closely. We will continue to encourage our departments and schools to respond to the problem of course access in a variety of ways, from the use of class reserves and continuance requirements to the streamlining of program requirements, most effective use of scheduling and innovations in teaching.

Experiential education. Too many students realise too late the benefit of Co-op programs and of international exchange. We are committed to giving Arts Co-op advisors greater visibility on campus and this has prompted a significant renovation of space on the third floor of the AQ where our Co-op advisors will be relocated. The renovated space will include space for our faculty advisors, providing students with a single site where they can access both faculty and Co-op advisors.

7.2 Engaging Research: To be a world leader in knowledge mobilization, building on a strong foundation of fundamental research.

A. Maintain our success.

As we have already stated, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences makes a significant contribution in terms of overall research achievements at SFU. In August 2012 a Higher Education Strategy Associates Report entitled “Measuring Academic Research in Canada: Field-Normalized Academic Rankings 2012” ranked SFU in the top 10 for social sciences and
humanities bibliometric (H-index) scores across Canada, a score largely driven by research conducted in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. For SSHRC research grants, the Faculty surpassed national average success rates for the last 5 years by an average of 18%. We have maintained our above-average success rate under SSHRC’s new program architecture with a 40% Faculty success rate in the first (2011-2012) Insight Grants competition (which had a 27% national success rate). The Faculty plans to add a continuing 0.5 Research Grants Facilitator position as of April 2013 to build on our research excellence. Specifically, we plan to encourage our 300+ faculty members to apply for more grants at the same time as we ensure the continued high quality of FASS applications. We also seek to provide — for the first time — Faculty-level support for graduate students grant/funding applications.

In anticipation of the end of several Canada Research Chair terms (which include no option for further renewals), the Faculty has submitted a formal proposal to the Vice-President, Research requesting consideration of several cost-effective options for managing Canada Research Chair appointments. Our intent is to maintain excellence in research in strategic areas, and to ensure faculty renewal via internal Canada Research Chair appointments.

We recently established, and intend to maintain, a research fund specifically for retired colleagues to continue or complete research projects with relatively small sums of money. This has proved an enormous success with numerous and competitive applications and gratifying results.

7.3 Engaging Communities: To be Canada’s most community-engaged university

A. Enhancing Community engagement.

Faculty and students in Arts and Social Sciences have long been at work in a variety of communities in the Lower Mainland, western Canada and around the world. From Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside to heritage language classes in First Nations communities across the province and the popular Philosophers’ Cafe, colleagues in FASS have been and will continue to work with a range of communities.

The Faculty is deeply aware of the role it has played, and continues to play, in the preservation and revitalization of First Nations Languages throughout the interior of British Columbia and Yukon. We intend to develop plans for the recently established Centre for First Nations ogram is tied to the recently established First Nations Language Centre.

We intend to maintain funding for two initiatives, both of which are intended to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement. A Visiting Speakers Fund requires faculty from different departments to work together to bring scholars to SFU for presentations on mutually interesting topics to the SFU community and the larger community. A second fund known as The Rapid Response Fund provides funding for groups of faculty to create roundtable discussions on subjects of current and public interest.
8. Possible Long Term Growth Scenarios

We are exploring the possibilities for growth in professional Masters programs, specifically with the School of Criminology in the field of Corrections, along lines similar to those that brought the Applied Legal Studies certificate into being. We are also exploring how we might permit our current premium fee programs in both Public Policy and Urban studies to increase their tuition fees.

A sensible strategy for expansion of the Surrey program would involve using the School of Criminology as an anchor tenant of expanded programming with an increase in lower level offerings from across the Faculty.

9. Communication

The plan will be shared with the members of the Dean’s Advisory Council.

10. Supporting Financial Data for New/Growth initiatives

None.

John Craig
Dean
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences