FIVE-YEAR ACADEMIC PLAN
(2013 – 2018)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
# FIVE-YEAR PLAN (2013 – 2018)

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INTRODUCTION

Our goal in establishing the Five-Year Plan for the Faculty of Education (FoE) was to articulate a broad set of strategic directions that would serve to guide our activities and the allocation of our resources for the next five years. The development of the plan was based on a process of consultations with faculty members (in small group lunch meetings throughout the Spring of 2012), consultations with staff (during the same time period), input from Program Committees and a Faculty retreat (held June 16, 2012). In addition, faculty response to a draft of this Plan was solicited in August, and we held a Faculty Forum on September 17th to discuss a penultimate draft. At the September 24th Faculty Council Meeting, the Plan was ratified by the Faculty.

This document represents our current plans for the Faculty. We intend to use the Plan in decision-making, keeping in mind three principles:

1. The Five-Year Plan sets a direction for the Faculty based on current information and forecasts.

2. The Faculty will be responsive to changes in the environment over the course of the next five years and as such, we regard the Plan as a “living” document.

3. A detailed description of the mechanisms and plans for achieving our objectives is beyond the scope of this document. As such, the “Plan” forms a foundation for strategic directions, each of which will require Faculty input and subsequent action planning and action taking.

We have also chosen to frame our broad directions in a manner parallel to the SFU Strategic Vision (2012) document. While we speak of discrete activities and goals for engaging students, engaging research and engaging community, we believe that these activities are inter-related, and that activities in one domain are influenced by, and often predicated on, activities in the others. Given the fluid nature of these interactions, and the rapidly changing environment we work in, the document may be described as a strategy for a continuous form of engagement for faculty members.
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Engaging Students By 2018, we will have:

1. Designed, implemented and conducted research on a variety of innovative teaching programs, including:
   a) Interdisciplinary cohort-based programs centred around particular themes or problems identified in our research or articulated by our diverse communities.
   b) Provided a variety of pathways for the education of variously placed educators. Such programs will make research-supported use of current technologies.
2. Developed broad learning objectives for our programs.
3. Re-thought our graduate programs offerings and, where possible, encouraged improvements in program delivery.
4. Increased enrolment of Indigenous students in Faculty courses and programs, and enhanced recruitment and support for Indigenous students on campus.
5. Provided coordinated, research-based support for EAL students at all levels.
6. Increased funding for graduate students within research-focused programs.

Engaging Research By 2018 we will have:

1. Broad recognition of SFU Faculty of Education’s leadership in educational research.
2. Become more knowledgeable about the educational research of our colleagues, and engaged in discussions about providing enhanced support to promising research clusters and individuals.
3. Directed resources to track the knowledge mobilization and social impact of our research and teaching programs.
4. Extended, refined and clearly communicated statements of scholarly expectations to aid faculty members with respect to preparing for tenure, promotion and biennial review processes.
5. Increased the amounts and sources of research support.

Engaging Community By 2018 we will have:

1. Increased faculty knowledge and research about Indigenous communities, history, contemporary situations and resources.
2. Maintained and expanded existing partnerships with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Advanced Education, school districts, other Faculties of the University, and other institutions to conduct research, and to keep our programs responsive to community-identified needs.
3. Increased faculty knowledge and research about International education history, contemporary situations and resources, with support for instructors in the Faculty about diverse means to engage International and other multilingual learners.
4. Cooperated closely with our professional and scholarly communities in designing courses, programs, research or other activities that relate to community issues and problems.
2. FACULTY CORE ACTIVITIES

The Faculty of Education’s longstanding conceptualization of its core activities as pedagogy, scholarship and community engagement are aligned with SFU’s current articulation of its goals as engaging students, engaging research and engaging community. The creation of knowledge, the transmission of knowledge (or re-creation of knowledge with students) and the enactment of knowledge occur within each core activity and each core activity is informed, shaped and constrained by the others.

Figure 1: Core activities of the Faculty of Education

The diagram above does not convey the enormous complexity of all these activities, or even the extent to which these activities are interrelated. Furthermore, we believe that our scholarship is the essential foundation upon which our pedagogy and community engagement are built.
3. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

The key assumptions in developing this plan are:

- The Faculty is not currently targeted for enrolment growth over the next five years, but small increases in enrolment have been approved in two areas\(^1\);
- The University budget model will be in place for the next five years;
- Discussions around University expansion in Surrey are ongoing and we assume that the Faculty of Education would have a significant role in that growth;
- Teacher preparation occupies a central role for the faculty (but see 4.2 Threats below);
- We remain committed to offering a breadth of educational programs that reflect the diversity and complexity of our scholarship and that concomitantly meet the needs of our educational communities;
- Demand for programs will remain robust but the nature of the demand may shift, implying a need for continuing shifts on our part to meet that demand;
- There will be continuation of the agreement with the Vice-President Academic (VPA) with regard to the offering and funding of Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL) courses;
- Funding from the Federal and Provincial governments to the Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs (OFFA) will be renewed to maintain, consolidate and enrich current programs in response to the continued demand for qualified French educators in the province;
- School districts will continue to request specific professional development programs (premium fee), which will generate external funding for graduate, undergraduate and diploma programs; and
- There will be continuing demand for international activities across a range of programs and it will continue to provide a source of external funding to the Faculty.

\(^1\) Those areas are: Bachelor of General Studies and premium fee Educational Leadership programs at the MEd level. The latter MEd programs have been allocated funding by the Ministry of Advanced Education and further ongoing funding is expected.
4. STRATEGIC INFLUENCES

4.1 Opportunities

• There are increasing needs for educators across the life span from early childhood to adult programs.
• Our three campuses are located in or near large and growing school districts creating demand for in-service and graduate teacher education.
• Debate over the professional development of BC teachers is ongoing. Government is exerting pressure on the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation and the Teacher Regulation Branch to develop more stringent guidelines, expectations and accountability for in-service professional development. Should this happen, there is the potential for increased demand for in-service, specialized (e.g., post-graduate diplomas) and graduate offerings from universities.
• The demand for preparation of leaders at all levels of public and private education will not diminish in the next five years. While some of this demand will be satisfied by graduate (MEd and EdD) Educational Leadership programs, leaders in curriculum and other fields are also required.
• We have capacity to respond to burgeoning needs for highly specialized programs.
• There is wide interest in the province in having SFU’s Faculty of Education take leadership in the public debate about education.
• The relationships we have developed over the years, including with graduate alumni, place us in a unique position to lead such discourse.
• The Faculty’s interdisciplinarity and our proven success record with traditional research funding sources (SSHRC), afford us an opportunity to pursue nontraditional sources of funding. Because our research focuses on important public institutions and has pragmatic and practical implications, there are alternative sources we could tap into.
• The Bachelor of General Studies offers opportunities for us to include research in courses for undergraduates as well as to offer unique education-based undergraduate programming.

A value that underlies all Faculty initiatives is responsiveness to the needs of students and the educational community, and we have always believed that our responses should be guided by gathering and considering relevant data. We also believe that our structures should shift if broad educational goals (ours and our communities’) change. An example might be that we shift FTE allocation (a finite resource under this budget model) to new activities that we think will better serve our students and community. This might mean, therefore, that programs and courses that no longer well serve our constituents will be removed from the calendar to accommodate the introduction of new programs and courses.
4.2 Threats

- The Ministry of Education has expressed concern about a possible oversupply of teachers. The Ministry might enforce cross-the-board cuts in programs (an example of how we might need to shift FTEs).

- The preparation of classroom teachers is and must be an essential activity of the Faculty but the demand for classroom teachers has softened in the last few years. Future demand projections are contradictory: the demographics of the current population of BC teachers show an aging workforce, suggesting that the need to replace retiring teachers will increase in the next 10 years. However, three factors may mitigate that demand: funding constraints may make it difficult for school districts to replace teachers who retire; there is a “backlog” of trained teachers who do not currently hold permanent positions, especially in the Lower Mainland area; and shifts in expectations regarding the nature of teacher preparation may impact the demand for newly-trained teachers.

- Our Burnaby-based facilities are deteriorating rapidly, and we are told that costs to repair the building to current codes will cost nearly as much as tearing the building down and building another. We have faculty who are unable for health reasons to be in the building, there is vermin resident in many locations, there are leaks and we have lost at least one Asian client for short-term, non-credit programs because they feel our facilities are so sub-standard. Nevertheless, we need to continue to hold classes, and provide space for staff, faculty and students to do their work. We also must strive to provide an environment that is conducive to Faculty morale and productivity.

- The enrolment caps on activities that allow us to generate revenue do not allow us to cover inflationary costs (including PTR) that in turn erode our budget. The fact that our high demand “service courses” FTEs are counted as regular FTEs, affect our ability to mount new courses and programs. These caps also make program innovation inherently risky.

- Funding structures for research are less predictable than formerly. The Faculty is highly dependent on a single source of external research funding, namely SSHRC. This exposes our research to the risk of decreased funding, if and when conditions and criteria for SSHRC programs change and/or diminish.

- A long-term and more global threat to the sustainability of all of our programs and activities is the perceived value of university scholarship in the wider community, due to broader access to information in the public sphere. Clarifying the role of universities in such an environment is an important future task.
5. SELF ASSESSMENT

5.1 Strengths
The list of accomplishments and core strengths is impressive, and we intend to maintain these traditions through the next five-year period.

5.1.1 Engaging Students
• The SFU professional programs for pre- and in-service teachers are highly respected. In addition, we offer a wide range of teacher education possibilities, including Indigenous Teacher Preparation, in-service education, International Education and French Education. In response to expressed need and assessed opportunities, we offer two unique-in-Canada programs, one for BC certification of internationally-educated teachers, and another for BC certification of teacher assistants, notably in Indigenous communities in northern BC.
• Our programs for teachers/administrators of French immersion schools and for French as a second language are excellent and supported by the OFFA and by the active research programs of faculty members in this area.
• We offer a breadth of programming opportunities for mature and professional learners, and also several forms of engagement in programs (e.g., capstones of academic theses or applied projects).
• Our longstanding practice of organizing students in cohort-based programs (undergraduate, in-service and graduate) increases their sense of community, leading to high completion rates. We have also kept class sizes low, increasing the potential for both student engagement and achievement.
• Our student satisfaction ratings (as expressed in course evaluations) in undergraduate and graduate courses are high.
• We have low forced turn-away rates (students can find and register in the courses they need).
• Several members of the Faculty are developing expertise in blended delivery (mixed mode and online) courses, and faculty members as a whole are enthusiastic about innovating in teaching and program design.
• The Faculty has been active in Indigenous education since the 1970s (preparing Indigenous K-12 teachers, preparing Aboriginal language teachers, preparing school support staff to become teachers, preparing non-Indigenous students to work in schools serving Indigenous children, and providing graduate education to Indigenous students). Some Faculty members have a great deal of experience and expertise in Indigenous education and have engaged in program design and delivery for students in Indigenous communities. We have recently increased our commitment to enhancing our services to Indigenous students and communities, with the establishment of an Office of Indigenous Education (and a newly hired Director), as well as an Advisory Committee on Indigenous Education.
• We have several colleagues in the Faculty expert in English as an Additional Language instruction and in developing Academic Literacies.
• We utilize diverse ways of engaging graduate students in scholarly discourse in education (mini-conferences, summer institutes, retreats, student-led conference presentations).
• There is a distinct, vibrant and supportive community culture at the Surrey campus that includes faculty and staff, and that we must work to sustain and even expand.
5.1.2 Engaging Research

• We have two Tier 1 Canada Research Chairs with vibrant research clusters.
• We recently appointed a Tier 2 CRC in Mathematics Education.
• The Faculty consistently has high research productivity. A recent “Comparator University Study” showed that SFU’s Faculty of Education faculty members were about three times above the median for annual funding received from Tri-Council sources among a group of 10 similarly sized Faculties of Education in Canada and 1 in Australia. In 2012, Faculty of Education scholars had a 60% success rate exceeding both the national average (27%) and the SFU average (40%) for SSHRC and also exceeded average size of award. The Chair of the 2012 FTPC reported the highest average scholarly production rate in several years in the 2012 merit assessment of faculty performance. Fifty-one faculty (tenured and tenure-track, adjunct and emeritus) have held competitively awarded research grants since April 1, 2009, including 52 SSHRC (Insight Grants, Insight Development Grants, Standard Research Grants, etc.), 3 CFI (Infrastructure Operating Funds, Leaders Opportunity Fund), 20 Other (NSERC, Spencer Foundation, etc.)\(^2\). The amount of new funding that was competitively awarded to our faculty between April 1, 2009 and July 17, 2012 was $6,546,095, with an average of $1,636,524 granted per fiscal year\(^3\) (average value of $82,862 per grant). For this same period, ongoing funding in each fiscal year regardless of the date of award was an average of $58,964 per grant holder.
• Many of the research projects undertaken in the Faculty entail strong collaborative relationships with teachers, students and schools. These projects require more time and effort than projects that are more university-based.
• The Faculty is home to more than a dozen active research groups, centres and institutes.

5.1.3 Engaging Communities

• We enjoy close collaboration and partnerships with local and provincial school districts, the Ministry of Education, the BC Teacher Regulation Branch, the BC Teachers Federation, other government and non-government agencies.
• We have strong ties internationally through international teacher education placements, through cohort graduate programs (and their alumni), and short-term intensive international teacher in-service education.
• Our in-service educational programs are planned in partnership with school district leaders.
• As noted above, many of our research projects entail close collaboration with off-campus partners.

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\(^2\) Internally Awarded:
- 38 SFU/SSHRC Institutional Grants (SSHRC Small)
- 14 SFU University Publications Fund Grants (Serial and Single Publications)
- 9 SFU Vice-President’s Research seed grants for preparation of Insight Grants, Standard Research Grants, and Discovery Grants.

\(^3\) 2 Other (SFU Endowed Research Fellowship).
5.1.4 Structural Flexibility in Program Delivery

- We utilize a differentiated staffing model providing an excellent blend of academic and practical perspectives for pre-service and in-service teacher education.
- There is a highly effective application of the differentiated staffing model to the EdD (Leadership) program, from both pedagogical and scholarly perspectives. Furthermore, the model has provided a template for the expansion of the EdD to other disciplinary areas (such as French Educational Leadership and Transformative Change).

5.2 Weaknesses

5.2.1 Engaging Students

- There is a need to review course and program offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate level to ensure we are effectively and efficiently meeting our students’ needs.
- It is widely recognized that participation and success rates of Indigenous children are far behind those of the non-Indigenous population. Like all Canadian universities and educational institutions, more effort is clearly required.
- Preparation of teachers (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to work in Indigenous schools is urgent and necessary. Our Indigenous enrolment in such programs is not high, and we do not specifically recruit Indigenous students. As well, there is little evidence on our campuses of Indigenous presence.
- Studies have shown that Aboriginal programs, student supports, and gathering space promote a sense of place and belonging that serve to increase Aboriginal learner participation, retention, and success. The Faculty has no such space now.
- Gaps remain in the Faculty’s complement of professors to address needs within the K-12 sector. The responsibility of preparing K-12 teachers entails the provision of instruction in areas specified by agencies outside universities (such as, in BC’s case, the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education). In particular, we have a clear need to broaden our capacity for research, scholarship and courses to address learners with special needs in the K-12 system.
- Although we have a longstanding history of engaging students in experiential learning, we have not taken advantage of programs such as co-op, internships and so on within our BGS degree programs. We are also not harnessing the potential for developing pathways to educational practice outside of the K-12 system.
- Graduate students in research-based programs are in many cases inadequately funded. Lack of graduate funding has a secondary impact, making it more difficult to recruit high-quality applicants for graduate programs.
5.2.2 Engaging Research

• The success of the Faculty in being awarded research funds and in research productivity is unfortunately a too-well-kept secret. We need to make our accomplishments and activities in this regard much better known.

• After unprecedented growth in the last decade or so (from 38 tenure-track faculty members in 1999 to 61 in 2012), many of our Assistant Professors have been promoted to Associate Professorships. The need for a process for career planning and exploration of ways individuals wish to shape their scholarly lives is still relevant.

• While we have mounted innovative programs in all areas, we have only sporadically (or not at all) collected data on the impacts of these programs. We need to engage in systematic research on our programs.

• Faculty members need to take full advantage of the opportunities to prepare research grant applications, and to receive constructive feedback to improve the quality of those applications.

• Although there are individuals and groups within the Faculty who maintain close collaborative ties with colleagues in other Faculties, we have not been as active throughout the Faculty in establishing interdisciplinary teaching and research programs as we might have been.

5.2.3 Engaging Community

• The Faculty has always been energetic in fostering relationships with our various local, provincial, national and international communities. We see opportunities for deepening these relationships in a number of areas, and we will continue our practice of negotiating with our external communities in planning initiatives. This responsiveness entails a degree of uncertainty for planning, but we see it as important to maintain and increase our stance of cooperatively defining future activities with our communities. Furthermore, effective community involvement comes at great cost, especially in terms of the time commitments needed to foster effective community collaborations.

• The Faculty has not availed itself of the benefits that might accrue from maintaining closer relationships with our alumni (the largest single group of alumni in the University).
6. EFFICIENCIES (amalgamations of research and teaching for greater effectiveness and focus)

6.1 The implementation of strategically engaged curriculum design may afford greater opportunity for the integration of teaching and research. Historically, faculty members have developed courses and/or embedded research related to their specialized knowledge, and we see this as continuing to be an important element of our pedagogy. However, we can also harness specialized programs in innovative ways. For example, we could dedicate cohorts of graduate students (e.g., in EdD and MEd/MA programs) to specific topics or current issues in educational practice. Under the leadership of faculty sponsors, research groups could be formed to explore and contribute knowledge to our understanding of the topic. This would provide a publication venue for faculty and students, and also elevate the profile of the Faculty as conceptual and practical leaders in emergent educational discussions.

6.2 We might investigate the affordances of creating a “Centre of Centres” that would bring together research groups, centres, institutes and so on to share equipment and personnel costs. If such collaboration is feasible, it may make more funding available for research activities (e.g., funding research assistants).
7. FACULTY OBJECTIVES

As already mentioned, the Faculty of Education’s previous Three-Year Plan was organized around roughly the same core themes recently articulated by the President and the Vice-President, Academic. In this Plan, we organize our objectives around the University’s statement of themes, with the addition of plans for structural changes to meet our objectives, and of internally focused objectives. We stress our commitment to integrating the three core themes, as we are firmly of the opinion that our professional lives will be more nearly sustainable and more suited to our lives as educational teachers, researchers and citizens, with such integration.

The themes arising from the lunch meetings held in the spring of 2012 with small groups of faculty and staff members were many and varied. One important aspiration that was articulated in all of the meetings was:

**We want to become better known for innovation and excellence in pedagogy, scholarship and community engagement.**

Some put this as needing to change structures that have constrained our ability to respond to changes in our educational, social, cultural and technological environments, and that “structures shouldn’t drive pedagogy.” Still others believe our resources might be more usefully targeted to particular research programs. However, there was consensus around two goals:

1. Our practices as educators must have conceptual and research integrity, and
2. We need to create time and space for activities we know are important.

There have been many changes in educational theories, pedagogical activities, and research, and in universities, societies and technologies over the past several decades, and our conversations about directions for the next five years show we collectively feel ready to re-imagine our work with students, our scholarly communities, and our provincial, national and international communities. A sizable proportion of faculty members see education as collaborative knowledge construction among ‘teachers’ and ‘students’. Such knowledge construction is based on research activities that include rigorous consideration of theoretical frameworks developed by others, sustained interaction with the work of previous knowledge creators, and activity to collect, analyze and understand new data. Such re-imagining is already underway in the Professional Development Program and in Field Programs, and is increasingly being discussed in undergraduate and graduate education as well.

The details of where we will go with innovations are difficult to predict, but our commitments will include:

- Comprehensive curriculum review at all levels in the Faculty, with the goal of moving from a view of education as transmission of ‘disciplinary’ encyclopedic knowledge to one that takes into account new economic, technological and cultural formations, including the increasing availability of interdisciplinary information;
• Experimentation with modes of engaging in knowledge creation with our students at all levels;
• Possible reductions in customary “teaching load” for faculty members so as to provide time for sustainable experimentation and research activities;
• Development of “pathways” for educators in diverse milieu;
• Sustained research on our innovations in structure; and
• Sustained support for development of research excellence in individuals and Centres within the Faculty.

The objectives to follow are direct products of these commitments. However, it is important to note that the commitments supersede the objectives. In other words, if during the course of our engagement over the next five years we discover or invent more effective ways of reaching our commitments, the objectives may change.

7.1 With respect to Engaging Students, we propose to:

7.1.1 Maintain and/or support initiatives for innovative pedagogical activities based on increased community engagement, research evidence and recognition of the changes that new technologies offer to pedagogy. The Faculty has a history of innovative programming, from the design of professional programs to the provision of coordinated in-service education for practicing teachers, to provision of community programming in graduate programs. Our comprehensive curriculum review and possible reductions in teaching load will create space, time and a culture that will encourage faculty members to experiment with innovative and effective teaching methods. We will also encourage partnerships in teaching with other institutions where feasible and we will become leaders in critically informed uses of educational technologies in university teaching. By 2018, we intend to have developed research-supported technology-rich programs and courses in all our program areas, which respond to community needs.

7.1.2 Maintain and/or support initiatives to integrate community-engaged research at all levels of professional education. The Faculty will support individuals and groups of colleagues to design courses and programs in line with these ideas. We intend by 2018 that we will have designed and implemented interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs centred around particular themes or problems identified in our research, or articulated by our various communities as needing attention.

7.1.3 Design and implement a variety of pathways (programs) for students to pursue education-related careers. We will make use of the flexibility of the BGS structure to design pathways for, for example, grade school teachers but also adult educators, post-secondary institution instructors, instructors working in business or technical training, instructors working in community agencies (e.g., museums, community centres and so on). The flexibility of the BGS also enables us to provide a broad range of undergraduate learning experiences, such as co-op terms, “semester in dialogue” experiences, focused or specialized practica, international experiences, and so on. We will see such initiatives underway throughout the period 2013-2018.
7.1.4 Seek to develop additional scholarly capacity to address gaps in and/or demand for programs. In particular, we need to increase our capacity for special education and meeting the educational needs of special needs learners. We also have strong market potential and current market leadership for furthering our work in all forms of educational leadership.

7.1.5 Re-think our graduate programs offerings and, where possible, encourage improvements in program delivery. Decisions about new programs and renewal of programs will be based on proposals from faculty and continuously gathered data.

7.1.6 Explore niche educational markets, and design collaborative and innovative programming/delivery mechanisms for serving such markets. We anticipate this to mean development of new distance education initiatives, and/or partnerships with other institutions to collaboratively provide programming.

7.1.7 Articulate learning objectives for our programs in accordance with the University mandate. Despite widely varying perspectives on the value of articulating “learning objectives” within our professoriate, we will by 2018 have developed broad learning objectives for programs that will have wide acceptance.

7.1.8 Provide Indigenous students enhanced opportunities to succeed in higher education. By 2018, we will have increased enrolment of Indigenous students in Faculty courses and programs, and we will see broader commitment to the importance of enhancing those students’ experience while in the Faculty on the part of faculty members and staff.

7.1.9 Provide International students enhanced opportunities to succeed at our English-speaking and North American University. We intend to continue providing our highly successful cohort programs and will explore international in-country programs at all levels (undergraduate, practicing teacher, and graduate). We will also support research that examines the particularly facilitative features of our current International MEd program that has seen very high retention rates, rigourous programs of study and high levels of satisfaction among students and professors.

7.1.10 Become a model for the University in providing coordinated, research-based support for multilingual students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and support for instructors in the Faculty about diverse means to engage multilingual learners. Faculty with particular expertise and research interests in multilingualism, international education and language and literacy education generally, will assist the Faculty in developing effective pedagogies for instructors and students.

7.1.11 Develop a process for making decisions about new faculty hires. This process should be responsive to needs within the K-12 sector, but also to emerging needs within the education sector as a whole. While this has been a contentious issue within the Faculty, we need to find ways to build consensus about priorities and long-term hiring plans. Hiring decisions will be made on the basis of perceived future needs/potential and will not be done simply to replace an existing position/area.
7.1.12 Increase the proportion of funded graduate students within research-focused programs. This will mean that we must increase faculty research funds to even higher levels than they are now, and that we must seek alternative sources of funding from those we have traditionally used.

7.2 With respect to Engaging Research, we propose to:

7.2.1 Become much more active in communicating and celebrating the research achievements of our scholars. With research funding success rates higher than many other much larger Canadian Faculties of Education, our Faculty has much to be proud of in this regard. We have recently launched a micro-site explaining faculty research. Our Faculty in 2018 will be characterized by increased presence in the public imagination with regard to SFU’s Faculty of Education being a leader in educational research.

7.2.2 Become more knowledgeable about the educational research of our colleagues, and that discussions about providing enhanced support to promising research clusters and individuals occur. We have several ideas about how this might be accomplished, including 7.5.1 below.

7.2.3 Increase the amounts and sources of research support in the Faculty. This will mean increased effort to identify new sources of funding, and to improve research proposals from faculty members.

7.2.4 Support ‘in-house’ impact research. We will make certain that all faculty members have opportunities to apply their research disciplinary lenses to educational activities engaged in the Faculty. We will direct resources to track the knowledge mobilization and social impacts of our innovative programs and pathways. Such research will inform our scholarly and professional communities about such initiatives. Faculty resources will be assigned to support such research.

7.2.5 Extend, refine and clearly communicate scholarly expectations to aid faculty members with respect to preparing for tenure, promotion and biennial review processes. The Faculty will develop individualized coaching and/or feedback on these matters. This objective suggests we need to pay additional attention to supporting and/or mentoring more junior colleagues in shaping their work in the Faculty.

7.3 With respect to Engaging Community, we propose to:

7.3.1 Increase faculty knowledge and research about Indigenous communities, history, contemporary situations and resources. We have recently appointed a Director for the Office of Indigenous Education in the Faculty, and as well, an Advisory Committee on Indigenous Education. This group has produced a Vision for Indigenous Education in the Faculty and increasing faculty knowledge, research and commitment is an important pillar in that Vision.
7.3.2 Provide appropriate space in the Faculty for gathering, meeting, and research activities.

7.3.3 Maintain and expand existing partnerships with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Advanced Education, school districts, other Faculties of the University, and other institutions to conduct research, and to keep our programs responsive to community-identified needs.

7.3.4 In keeping with Objective 7.1.1, Cooperate closely with our professional and scholarly communities in designing courses and programs that relate to community issues and problems. This will mean strengthening relationships across the University to engage in interdisciplinary programming.

7.3.5 Increase faculty knowledge and research about International education history, contemporary situations and resources and highlight the presence of International students on our campuses. An Advisory Committee to the Office of International Education in the Faculty has recently been struck. Their statement of aims includes finding ways to increase faculty knowledge and research about international education.

7.4 With respect to Providing Structural Support, we propose to:

7.4.1 Streamline and simplify curriculum for undergraduate and graduate programs, so that we can make time available for faculty members to engage in innovative program and course design, and to engage in impact research on these initiatives. Another goal of this streamlining would be that we could continue to be agile in mounting programs responsive to emerging needs or aspirations. This might mean that we move away from assigning differential credits for courses, and that we attempt to modularize some components of courses and explore alternative delivery modes. The Faculty is prepared to support pilots of such innovation and will encourage professors to consider how their work with students can be thus enhanced.

7.4.2 Continue to make efforts to increase graduate student funding support.

7.4.3 Engage in several experiments with alternative space provisions for both faculty and staff to support innovations in teaching and research activities. This might mean the development of a “Centre of Centres” amalgamation so that efficiencies in support might be advantageous to all. We are also planning a pilot of shared office space for faculty to enhance teaching and research collaboration.

7.4.4 Seek efficiencies in our processes for curriculum review and approval. For example, the Program Committees could make course approvals; Program approvals still to be made at Faculty Council.
7.4.5 Explore innovations in administrative workflow management, and become leaders in the University in this regard. This might mean increased use and integration of data/information management.

7.4.6 Where supplementary or carry forward funding permits, to embark on a process of facilities renewal.

7.5 With respect to Building Community Internally (Faculty and University), the following objectives are proposed:

7.5.1 Provide formal and informal opportunities for academic and social engagement and celebration within the Faculty. As we have found in the past, these opportunities must be diverse and offered at various times so as to meet the needs of a highly diverse set of employees who will be attracted and able to participate in only some of the activities we sponsor. We will continue our monthly “Faculty Talks”, sponsor weekly “brown-bag” lunches for faculty members and staff to share ideas about pedagogical and research initiatives, and search for other means to intensify our interactions with one another. We intend to streamline our Faculty Council meetings so that they can become more than administrative, and allow faculty members to share research ideas, consider common issues and allow for cultural renewal. We intend to reverse the international trend of increasing isolation of faculty from the collective, and look to the Surrey campus in particular to provide ideas about how to build a supportive and vibrant community within the Faculty as a whole.

7.5.2 Seek collaborative ventures in teaching and learning initiatives with other units of the University and then do research on that work.

7.5.3 Articulate clearly expectations for faculty members’ presence at retreats, Faculty Council meetings, Committee meetings, and so on. These expectations should be incorporated into the metrics of the FTPC.

7.5.4 Institute means to support for goal setting and career planning for faculty and staff members.

7.5.5 Use a combination of innovative term positions (to initiate special projects) and permanent positions to provide continuity and stability where required.
8. POSSIBLE LONG-TERM GROWTH SCENARIOS

8.1 We have strong growth potential in the provision of premium fee programming for local, national and international audiences, particularly at the post-graduate level.

8.2 The Faculty of Education is a valued partner with the largest and fastest growing school district in BC. Should the agreement to fund an additional 2500 Undergraduate FTE’s at Surrey be honoured, we anticipate a strong and active role for the Faculty of Education. Harnessing the capital allotment of the funding increase in creative ways may also help the University to address our chronic building needs.
9. COMMUNICATION (how the plan will elicit participation throughout the Faculty)

This Plan has benefitted from wide consultation with the Faculty. We held a series of informal lunch sessions throughout the spring of 2012 that gathered together the Dean, Associate Deans and small groups of faculty and staff to discuss their hopes for the Faculty over the next five years. A daylong faculty retreat was held June 16, 2012, to discuss a draft of the Plan. In addition, faculty response to a draft of this Plan was solicited in August, and we held a Faculty Forum on September 17, 2012, to discuss a penultimate draft. At the September 24, 2012 Faculty Council meeting the Plan was finalized and officially approved by Council.

Faculty members are aware that a particular strength of the Faculty is our exceptionally high research productivity. They have expressed support for efforts to maintain and increase that productivity, and the objectives we have outlined in Section 7.2 for enhancing research activity have high buy-in. Many faculty members, who see their research and teaching activities as integrated, particularly welcome attention to such matters.

Faculty expressed concern for the student experience at SFU and articulated ideas for improving their experience. We have outlined ideas for developing streams or pathways within the BGS that will provide undergraduates with a cohort-like experience. We intend to further develop those communities within our undergraduate student population and address areas of concern for such students. We also intend to review our curriculum to make sure that 21st century technologies and our expressed commitment to socially just educational practices are strong features of our curriculum. Faculty are strongly in favour of such activity.

The Faculty expressed the hope that by 2018, our Faculty of Education will be known in North America for the best preparation of pre- and in-service teachers. Research is underway in both programs toward that goal and we intend to continue that activity. Faculty will be encouraged to make the excellence of our programs better known across wider constituencies.

A critical set of steps for Faculty engagement will be the processes associated with translating the broad commitments and objectives into concrete action plans. In the first few months of Plan enactment, the Faculty will be engaged with setting initial priorities from among the many possible objectives. Each identified priority will then lead to the identification of timelines, indicators of success and specific action planning. An annual review of priorities, actions to date, continued relevance of objectives and emergence of new issues will be conducted. In addition to serving as the primary academic legislative body, Faculty Council will also be the primary forum for these processes.
10. SUPPORTING FINANCIAL DATA FOR NEW/GROWTH INITIATIVES

We expect that the funding from the University and the AFTE allocations for the Faculty will remain consistent for the next five years, and we have used this assumption in our five-year plan. Historically the funding that we have received by means of base funding and tuition fees has allowed us to meet the budgeted commitments for the activities and programs in the Faculty.

Based on historical information, we can assume that for most years, we generally will have approximately three to five vacant or unfilled positions from faculty members taking unpaid leave for a variety of reasons. The result from these vacant positions is the generation of the carry-forward funding, that we use to support research, pilot projects, renovations and other one-time or short-term expenses. In our budget projections for the next five years, we will continue to anticipate these vacancies and we will continue to use the carry forward to fund high priority but term specific projects.

In the first two years of this plan, we believe that the current funding formula will be sufficient to support our current activities. However, as we face an annual increase in salary costs of approximately 2.5%, our expenses will quickly outstrip our funding and we will need to plan accordingly. In the past, the University often covered the cost of PTR through the retirement of faculty members at the top of the salary scale being replaced by new faculty hired at the bottom of the scale. With the loss of mandatory retirement, it is difficult to build turnover into our plans, because we cannot accurately predict when someone might retire.

One way to address the issue of the increase in salary costs is by the reallocation of AFTEs from more costly programs to programs that are less expensive, or that will give us a bigger income margin. We have discussed some of the opportunities and challenges around such possibilities in section 4, Strategic Influences.

Supporting Faculty Research and Scholarship:
The majority of the internal funding to support research in the Faculty (e.g., supporting lecture series, hiring research assistants to support infrastructure research, etc.) is taken from carry forward. This carry forward comes as a result of vacant or unfilled positions, as discussed above.

Supporting/Recruiting Graduate Students:
Over that last few years, we have started offering entrance scholarships to attract high-ranked PhD candidates. We allocate carry forward to cover a portion of the budget required for the two-year entrance scholarships, with the balance coming from teaching and research assistantships, instructor positions, and other University fellowships or scholarships. One of the priorities of the Advancement position in the Faculty is to find funding to support graduate scholarships, ideally in the form of an endowment. We expect to have the Director of Advancement for the Faculty of Education in place before the end of this calendar year.
Supporting Growth:
Growth may come in two forms. One could involve shifting of AFTEs from one area to another, and a second form could be to get an increase in our AFTEs through the University Enrolment Plan. We expect to shift AFTEs to cover new initiatives such as the expected increase in Indigenous students due to the opening of our new Office of Indigenous Education. As the number of Indigenous education students increase, we would look at a decrease in AFTEs in other areas that are no longer as strong a priority to the Faculty. Any actual increase in our allocation of AFTEs could only come from our share of the anticipated growth at the Surrey campus, or if the University received additional funding from the government to increase our FTEs.