THREE YEAR ACADEMIC PLAN
2007- 2010

March 20, 2007
1. INTRODUCTION

SFU’s Values & Commitments together with The President’s Agenda 2005 – 2009 – SFU: Recreating Canada’s Most Exciting University provides direction and priorities for the selection of academic goals and objectives for the Academic Plan.

These Values & Commitments are that:

- We are an open, inclusive university whose foundation is intellectual and academic freedom.
- Our scholarship unites teaching and research: we celebrate discovery, diversity and dialogue.
- Our students and communities can expect teaching that is personal and learning opportunities that are life long.
- We champion the liberal arts and sciences and pioneering interdisciplinary and professional programmes.
- We are a university where risks can be taken and bold initiatives embraced.

The President’s Agenda highlights priorities regarding the enhancement of academic quality, the enhancement of the student experience at SFU and the increased integration of the university with the society that it serves. In general he identifies three objectives, namely;

- the best liberal arts and science education in Canada
- the most innovative interdisciplinary and professional programmes
- the most responsive engagement with the broader community

In order to achieve these objectives the President has proposed three more specific objectives relating to academic quality enhancement, greater attention to and recognition of the quality of student life, and an improved public profile.

Academic Quality Enhancement

Four dimensions have been identified to enhance academic quality:

Graduate Student Enrolment: The importance of graduate enrolment relates very much to the research mission of the university and to its competitive position in the distribution of funding for research. The President proposes that SFU aim to increase the proportion of our total enrolment in graduate programmes to 25% of total enrolment. To achieve this objective, government funding of graduate student enrolment must be obtained.
Programme Diversification: Increasing the number of professional and quasi-professional programmes, as well as creating new interdisciplinary specializations is a priority.

Undergraduate Curriculum Revisions: In order to assure higher quality undergraduate programmes across the board the successful completion of the implementation of the curricula revisions which provide for improved written communications, quantitative reasoning and breadth requirements in the undergraduate curricula is imperative.

International Enrolment and Programmes: International enrolment targets (graduate and undergraduate) should move from 10% to 15% of total enrolment. The pursuance of joint degree programmes with other front-ranking institutions is encouraged.

Quality of Student Life

To enhance the quality of the SFU experience for students four areas have been identified for improvement:

Undergraduate Course Availability: Course accessibility has been a concern. Undergraduate students must be able to complete their degrees in a timely fashion.

Internationalization: Richer contact between domestic and international students is encouraged as is the inclusion of an international experience such as international field schools.

Quality of Student Services: The capacity for serving students needs to be optimized through the optimization of the new student services information system as well as improved counseling and general support for students.

Extra-Curricula Programmes: SFU must become a destination for members of the community interested in the performing arts and in public affairs dialogue and debate, as well as providing our students with a stimulating on-campus life outside the classroom. Athletics and recreation facilities need to be improved and more varied programming in the visual arts should be developed.

Public Profile

Three areas have been identified for improvement here:

Media Profile: Improvements in SFU’s media profile through the development of a visual identity programme, the cultivation of media contacts and the use of ‘expert consultants’ are planned.

Alumni: To develop an effective feedback and communication channel from alumni to assist SFU achieve its objectives regarding advancement, government relations, academic and community outreach.

Private Fundraising: Significant progress has been made in private fundraising and this capacity needs to be further developed.
2. THE ACADEMIC PLANNING PROCESS

One of the objectives of this planning cycle is to align the academic planning activity with other planning processes within SFU. This is to ensure that a logical sequence of planning activities is followed, each of which feed into one another and includes all relevant inputs and outputs at each stage. In this way the academic plans and priorities are able to inform the University’s budgets.

The academic planning process began with an Academic Planning Retreat in April 2006 to assess the progress that had been achieved by the various areas within the Vice President Academic’s portfolio in implementing their plans for the period 2004 – 2007. A document summarizing the highlights for each of the previous goals is attached as an appendix (Appendix 1). This Retreat also provided an opportunity to consider and determine a number of strategic priorities which would be used in the drawing up of academic plans for Departments, Faculties and other VP Academic areas for the next planning cycle.

Based on these discussions Planning Guidelines, including the identified Planning Priorities were issued by the Vice President Academic to Faculties. The Faculties then tasked their Departments to develop three year plans. The Departments submitted their plans to their Faculty and the Faculties then developed Faculty plans for submission to the Vice President in October, 2006.

A second Academic Planning Retreat was held on November 2006 where Deans and other unit heads formally presented their plans to the Vice President, Academic. Their plans were discussed and these discussions led to the agreement of some six focus areas which are the foundation of this University Academic Plan. This plan was then developed and endorsed by each of the Deans and presented to the Senate Committee for University Priorities and to Senate in April 2007 by the Vice President Academic.

Progress in implementing this plan will be reviewed annually and adjustments may be made as required.

3. PLANNING CONTEXT 2007 - 2010

A number of dynamics in both the external environment and in SFU’s internal situation will have a significant impact on its operations over this three year planning horizon. While these issues, and the associated challenges and risks they create, are recognized and taken into account in the development of this Plan, SFU has the strength and commitment to adapt to the environmental changes and succeed in achieving the goals.

3.1 External Environmental Issues

SFU is operating within a changing environment with a number of major issues impacting operations. Two of these major issues are: student enrolment, which is changing from being ‘supply constrained’ to ‘demand driven’ and the continuing trend of limited financial resources. The attainment of SFU’s growing enrolment targets will be severely challenged by these factors.
‘Demand Constrained’ Enrolment

Demographics: SFU draws its student body primarily from the Lower Mainland. Some 42% of new students are newly graduated BC 12 students while a further 35% come from the BC colleges as transfer students and BC associate degree graduates. The remainder (22%) come from other sources.

Nearly 75% of new students registering at SFU are aged between 18 and 24, increasing from 70% in 2000. Of the new students only 8% are aged between 25 and 29 and only 6% are aged between 30 and 44. This indicates an extremely high reliance on local sources for students belonging to the 18-24 age cohort. The population of BC is expected to grow dramatically over the next number of years, however the growth will take place mainly in the cohorts older than 24 years. The 18 – 24 cohort will in fact decline from over 420,000 currently, to about 375,000 in 2020.

SFU continues to meet the rising demand for a new generation of highly qualified individuals to fill important educational, research and administrative positions in the public and private sectors by developing innovative research-intensive and professional graduate programmes and this change in demographics creates a growing need for continuing studies and professional programmes for the growing older cohort.

Economics: The current good economic climate in BC negatively impacts the perceived need for post secondary education among the population and it is anticipated that the attraction of good students is going to be much more of a challenge than it has been in the past.

Competition: The increased capacity for higher education being built in China and the aggressive competitiveness of the UK, Australia and the USA in attracting international students is also being felt by Canadian universities.

The impact of these influences have already been felt with 3.7% fewer applications being made to SFU in Fall 2006 than in 2005 and a 11.3% decline in BC College applications. Other BC universities have had similar experiences.

These issues will create an extremely competitive environment and SFU will meet the challenge by proactively ensuring the student’s university experience is optimized, the courses and programmes are innovative, relevant and enjoyable and that all services provided to students are efficient and effective.

SFU has developed an enrolment plan which includes the SFU contribution of 3000 student places towards the Provincial Governments targeted growth of 25,000 spaces by 2010/11. The Enrolment Plan sets enrolment targets for each Faculty for the next three years as well as by categories of graduate and undergraduate students and domestic and International students. SFU also continues its rapid expansion of the SFU Surrey campus and the enrolment level of 2,500 FTE will be achieved on the Surrey campus by 09/10. This target includes a goal of graduate students representing 20 percent of the student population and all six SFU Faculties offering programmes at SFU Surrey.

The Draft Enrolment Plan is attached as Appendix 2.
Funding Shortfalls
There are very significant inflationary and growth pressures that have not been addressed in the provincial grant. The inflation rate applicable to higher education could be as much as three times the national inflation rate. The result is that costs are outstripping revenues and annual deficits in the operating budget have to be funded through the use of ‘one-time’ money and ‘across-the-board’ budget cuts.

The Provincial Government has not funded a general access programme for graduate students since 1990 and general tuition increases have been held at 2% for two years running.

SFU has had to implement a 2.5% cut across all VP portfolios and support units for the 2007/08 budget year as a way of managing a projected deficit. This projected deficit is expected to grow exponentially in the future should the provincial funding levels not be reviewed or the limit to 2% tuition increases not be relaxed.

SFU however does continue to work toward increasing "non-traditional" sources of funds and to become less reliant on the Province. These funding sources include: federal CFI, CRC and IDC funding, as well as growth of endowments, "cost recovery" programs and activities.

Government Focus on First Nations
The Government of British Columbia is forging a new relationship with Aboriginal people based on reconciliation, recognition and respect. This relationship is intended to reshape the social and economic landscape and create a more inclusive and prosperous future for all British Columbians. This initiative includes a vision to ensure that “Aboriginal post-secondary education outcomes are comparable with those of non-Aboriginals and that institutions play appropriate roles and are supported by the combined resources of the federal and provincial governments”. Two goals have been set to achieve this vision.

➢ Close the educational gap for Aboriginal learners.
  o Increase the access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners.
  o Increase the reactivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programmes for Aboriginal learners.
  o Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education.

➢ Effective and accountable programmes and services implementation and delivery.
  o Ensure effective measurement and progress monitoring.

SFU must take this opportunity to play a major role in First Nations post-secondary education.

3.2 Internal Issues

Faculty and Academic Administrators
In addition to growth required to address increasing enrolment mandates, the University continues to experience significant turnover due primarily to regularly scheduled retirements. Since 2001/02 97 faculty have retired from SFU. In the next five years 113 faculty are scheduled to retire and over the next decade a total of 241 faculty will retire. The impact of these planned retirements on the university may be diminished to some degree should the Province end mandatory retirement in the near future. The Faculty Renewal Plan is attached as Appendix 3.
Over the past four years SFU has employed a high number of new faculty (65 in 03/04, 77 in 04/05, 86 in 05/06 and a planned 55 for 06/07). The introduction of this large number of new faculty has reduced the average age of the faculty and reduced the tenured professoriate ranks very significantly. The planned replacement for the retiring faculty will exacerbate this even further.

In order for SFU to meet the research and teaching challenges of the future it is imperative that the new cadre is assimilated into the SFU culture, developed rapidly as necessary and supported wherever possible.

This high degree of faculty turnover and faculty growth creates additional stresses on the Faculties to meet their objectives including the filling of various administrative roles by faculty.

In this planning period SFU will also lose a number of senior academic administrators including Deans and Department Chairs. Currently three Deans searches are under way (Arts & Social Sciences, Health Sciences and Business Administration) and a further four Deans will complete their terms in 2008 (Graduate Studies, Applied Sciences, Science and Education).

The international shortage of good faculty and the difficulty in attracting them to Vancouver, where the cost of living is very high, intensifies the recruitment difficulties including the meeting of salary expectations particularly while under conditions of stringent financial restraint.

Faculty Structure
SFU is a very different institution from what it was in 1965 in terms of its size, differentiation, breadth of programming, diversity of research, and engagement with its community. Within the last decade alone, student enrolment at Simon Fraser University has increased by 31%.

SFU now has five different campuses spread across four cities and while the academic structure provides an integrating framework for the university, it also has an embedded flexibility that enables the five campuses to develop in accordance with their unique mandates and distinct communities.

To continue to make certain that our academic structure supports our strategy and that SFU is poised for the challenges ahead the Vice President, Academic, established the Faculty Structure Task Force in October 2005. Its mandate was to review Simon Fraser University’s academic structure and its strategic vision for the future.

After nearly a year of deliberations and community consultations, the Faculty Structure Task Force has concluded in Phase 1 that there are opportunities for the University to advance its strategic goals more effectively and visibly by creating a new structure.

In December of 2006 Senate agreed that there are opportunities for strengthening and better positioning the University for the future and that this process should continue. The objective being to seek an academic structure that better suits our environment and the opportunities envisage and the Phase 2 Task Force has been mandated to:

- Consider and evaluate proposals from the University community as well as those developed by the Phase 2 Task Force itself, and following exploration and consultation with the University community, recommend to Senate an overall academic unit configuration for Simon Fraser University;
Consider and evaluate the coherence, roles, responsibilities, functions, administrative requirements, costs, and terminology of the structural building blocks employed at Simon Fraser University (i.e. programs, schools, departments, centres, and institutes) and, following exploration and consultation with the University community, recommend to Senate a strategy that will provide definitional clarity, administrative effectiveness, and appropriate differentiation among these structures; and,

Consider and evaluate the University’s effectiveness in incubating, facilitating, and supporting interdisciplinary research and programming and, following exploration and consultation with the University community, recommend structural and/or policy changes that will enhance interdisciplinary innovation in the future.

The options and proposals, for consideration by Senate and the Board of Governors, are expected by the end of 2007 and implementation will, in all probability, be concluded within the 2007-2010 planning period. The development of the proposals and the implementation of the agreed structure is expected to take up a significant amount of time and effort.

**Surrey Campus Development**

The challenges of establishing the new campus continues and with much of the planned space now occupied, the initial programmes in place and all Faculties participating, the focus will be on further course development and the meeting of the student enrolment targets, which are expected to build to 5000 students in 2016.

As soon as the facilities at the Surrey campus can accommodate wet labs the Faculty of Science will begin offering programmes that include laboratory content.

**Space Shortage**

Both teaching and research space remain an issue for SFU. On completion of the current capital projects SFU will still be at only 87% of the BC space planning standards. The anticipated student enrolment growth and the increase in research projects being undertaken will also intensify the issue for Faculties. It may be possible to relieve this tension by extending the university day into the evenings and holding lectures on the weekends to maximize the use of facilities.

**IT Systems Development**

The life of PeopleSoft has been extended and the anticipated migration to Oracle Fusion is to be delayed until Oracle’s plans and products become clearer. The student information system (SIMS) has been upgraded to Campus Solutions - Version 8.9. The challenge now is to make good use of the systems to enhance processes and deliver improved services to students, faculty and staff.

The SAKAI open source initiative for an online collaboration and learning environment is continually being monitored and the WebCT Vista version is being implemented to support greater clustering to satisfy user load. A number of initiatives are underway to explore, and where appropriate, provide services such as blogs, wikis and podcasting.
4. ACADEMIC GOALS

The goals and objectives as well as the associated indicators have been developed by reaffirming our basic values and responsibilities to our students, to society and our immediate community. This process began with academic plans developed by Departments, followed by Faculties producing their academic plans, and outputs from these plans then culminated in the development of this Academic Plan. The result of this process was the identification of the following six goals:

1. **Student Service and Success**
   
   To provide an outstanding student learning experience and support for students to realize their objectives.

2. **Research Innovation & Quality**
   
   To support and pursue internationally competitive research initiatives.

3. **Academic Innovation & Quality**
   
   To ensure that all programmes and courses offered are of the highest quality, remain current and relevant to the students and society SFU serves.

4. **Succession Planning**
   
   To continue to renew and support SFU faculty to meet the teaching, research and administrative challenges of the future.

5. **First Nations**
   
   To support and pursue opportunities to provide educational opportunities for First Nations.

6. **Financial Sustainability**
   
   To ensure our resource levels are sufficient and well managed.

7. **Community outreach and partnership**
   
   To enhance and apply our academic resources by contributing to our communities and developing significant links with a range of partners.

By achieving these goals SFU will be in an advantaged position to recruit and retain outstanding faculty and to continue to provide a challenging and rewarding learning environment and experience for its students and faculty.

Wherever possible performance measures and or indicators have been identified which reflect progress or performance in achieving the goals. Not every objective has a measure associated with it and in determining performance in these cases subjective assessments will be made. The indicators identified are not ‘cast in stone’ and will be reviewed and
perhaps modified over time. The performance indicators identified to date are attached in Appendix 4.

GOAL 1 - STUDENT SERVICE & SUCCESS

To provide an outstanding student learning experience with adequate support for them to realize their objectives.

Objectives

1.1 Deliver a high level of service to all students and potential students.

1.2 Ensure that Student Services has skilled and experienced leadership that embraces best practice.

1.3 Develop mechanisms to integrate and coordinate SFU recruitment activities with the Faculty initiatives for recruitment.

1.4 Ensure the generation of applicants and the required conversion rate of the number of ‘admissible applications’ to the number of ‘registrations’ are sufficient to meet targets.

1.5 Ensure the scheduling of space and time are done optimally.

1.6 Investigate the introduction of a ‘Pre-registration Process’ to assist in improved enrolment planning.

1.7 Ensure Faculties are productively engaged in student recruitment and consider direct programme admissions where possible.

1.8 Ensure Faculties are attentive to the impact and consequences of student retention.

1.9 Increase the proportion of senior faculty who teach first and second year courses.

1.10 Fix the course accessibility challenge.

1.11 Provide a rich student community life experience including learning support as well as recreation and athletics.

1.12 Attract and retain excellent graduate and undergraduate students to meet our student enrolment targets for the next three years with regard to;
   - Domestic Undergraduate Students
   - International Students
   - Graduate Students
GOAL 2 - RESEARCH INNOVATION & QUALITY

To support and pursue internationally competitive research initiatives.

Objectives

2.1 Support the SFU Research Strategic Plan.

2.2 Support the development of internationally recognized research.

2.3 Identify and support major multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research opportunities, including the development of applications to the Community Trust Endowment Fund.

2.4 Encourage multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and teaching, particularly between the sciences/applied sciences on the one hand and the social sciences/humanities on the other.

GOAL 3 - ACADEMIC INNOVATION & QUALITY

To ensure that all programmes and courses offered are of the highest quality and remain current and relevant to the society SFU serves.

Objectives

3.1 Develop programmes including professional programmes and continuing studies options to meet the changing demographics of the lower mainland.

3.2 Develop new programmes for the Surrey campus and launch them as planned.

3.3 Develop and launch new Health Sciences programmes as planned.

3.4 Support interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary programmes.
GOAL 4 - SUCCESSION PLANNING

To continue to renew and support SFU faculty to meet the teaching, research and administrative challenges of the future.

Objectives

4.1 Recruit high caliber faculty to meet the approved Faculty Renewal Plan/s.

4.2 Encourage the mentoring of new and mid-career faculty in the full range of professional responsibilities, including administrative roles such as chairs and directors.

4.3 Ensure that new faculty realize their potential.

4.4 Provide high quality development opportunities for faculty to enhance their teaching and research skills.

4.5 Support the retention and enhancement of support staff.

GOAL 5 - FIRST NATIONS

To support and pursue opportunities to provide educational opportunities for First Nations

Objectives

5.1 Implement the Strategic Plan to support First Nations research and education.

5.2 Attract resources to support First Nations initiatives from the public and private sector, and from agencies and organizations supporting research innovation.

5.3 Facilitate the integration of innovative First Nations culturally relevant content into the curriculum and assist academic departments or units in the development of courses and programs that include a First Nations perspective.

5.4 Improve the recruitment, retention and successful participation of First Nations students by increasing First Nations undergraduate enrolment by a minimum of 50% and First Nations graduate enrolment by a minimum of 25% by the year 2012.
GOAL 6 - FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

To continue to ensure our resource levels are sufficient and well managed.

Objectives

6.1 Ensure that informative financial reporting and forecasting is in place to assist Faculties and Support Units with financial management.

6.2 Ensure that annual budgets are realistic and that incremental budget allocations relate to enrolment growth, agreed strategic initiatives and inflation pressures.

6.3 Develop, where possible, ‘cost recovery’ options for services and programmes.

6.4 Improve connections and communications with alumni and to optimize every opportunity for private fundraising.

GOAL 7 - COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIP

To enhance and apply our academic resources by contributing to our communities and developing significant links with a range of partners.

Objectives

7.1 Develop new credit undergraduate and graduate programmes for adult and non-traditional learners including on-line credit and non-credit professional programmes.

7.2 Develop and implement the weekend university.

7.3 Develop stronger linkages with Colleges and University Colleges to promote student mobility and mutually beneficial teaching, research and community outreach programs.

7.4 Engage critically in discussions of important public issues, utilizing the Centre for Dialogue where ever appropriate.
5. **FINANCIAL PLAN**

The 2007/2008 budget for the Vice President Academic and Provost's portfolio has been set at $246,168,000. A total of 95% of this budget is spent directly in providing teaching and services for students. Over 72% of the budget is spent by the six Faculties with a further 23% being spent by Continuing Studies, Graduate Studies, Student Services and on scholarships and bursaries. The remaining 5% is spent on support for faculty and students in areas such as LIDC, the Office of Analytical Studies and the Surrey Campus.

Expenditures are normally directly linked to enrolment growth. Therefore it is expected that as the student enrolment targets are reached the expenditure will grow at a similar rate. It is also expected that the relationship between the expenditure of Faculties, the expenditure of supporting units and the expenditure on administration will remain constant.

As shown in the table below total expenditure is expected to grow by 3.5% in 2008/09 and 2.4% in 2009/10 to correspond with FTE enrolment growth.

**Vice President, Academic & Provost Expenditure & FTE Enrolment Growth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget 2007/08</th>
<th>Forecast 2008/09</th>
<th>Forecast 2009/10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice President Academic &amp; Provost Expenditure</td>
<td>$234.6 '000,000</td>
<td>$242.8 '000,000</td>
<td>$248.6 '000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual % Increase: 3.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual % Increase: 2.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Student Enrolment (FTE)*</td>
<td>21,726 FTE</td>
<td>22,490 FTE</td>
<td>23,030 FTE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual % Increase: 3.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual % Increase: 2.4%</td>
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* Source: Draft SFU Enrollment Plan 2007/08 – 2009/10

6. **IN CONCLUSION**

During the next three-year period SFU will continue to concentrate on delivery, execution and completion of the projects and initiatives of the last number of years and ensure that all opportunities are acted upon.

By working towards the goals of this plan SFU will continue to provide:

- the best teaching and research in the liberal arts and sciences;
- the most innovative interdisciplinary and professional programs;
- the most creative community outreach and partnership; and
- innovative basic research that expands the foundations of knowledge.
The achievement of these academic goals will directly support the attainment of the ideals set out in the President’s Agenda of *Enhanced Academic Quality, Improved Quality of Student Life* and a raised *Public Profile*.

This plan should be seen as a living document that may be altered from time to time to suit SFU’s dynamic environment. The plan will be reviewed at least annually as progress in achieving these goals and objectives is assessed and reported to the university constituents.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Achievements in the last planning period (2004 – 2006)  
Appendix 3 – Draft Faculty Renewal Plan (Abridged Version) 2007/08  
Appendix 4 – Performance Indicators for 2007 – 2010