Faculty of Health Sciences
Three Year Plan
2007/08-2009/10

Prepared by David MacLean, Irene Rodway, Manjeet Gill and Susann Camus

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1. Executive Summary

The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) serves as an innovative platform to support and develop integrated, multidisciplinary education and research in the broad area of health at Simon Fraser University. This is being accomplished by building new capacity in health research and education at the University while at the same time building and enhancing existing capacity in these areas in other faculties through collaborative activities.

FHS developed and implemented new graduate programs (in population and public health and global health) and undergraduate programs (BA in health sciences) in 2005\2006. A number of other graduate (3) and undergraduate programs (1) are under development and will be phased in over the next three years. These educational developments will allow FHS to meet its assigned enrollment targets for both domestic and international students.

To support this rapid educational development FHS will continue an aggressive faculty recruitment plan began in 2005 with the addition of 9 new faculty members in 2006\2007; 6 in 2007\2008 and 6 in 2008\2009.

Administrative and support personnel and additional space will be added to provide the necessary infrastructure and administrative support to these new programs and faculty members on a just in time basis. In addition, personnel will be hired to support instructional development, communications and marketing and fund raising. Faculty governance is being enhanced through the development of an FHS constitution with related committee structures and functions consistent with SFU’s policies relating to these matters.

Research infrastructure will be enhanced through the development of the FHS Data Warehouse.

2. Faculty Core Activities

The Faculty of Health Sciences focuses on health issues from a systems, policy, and population-level approach, resulting in an integrated approach to health, with the immediate factors that cause and/or prevent disease considered within the broader context of the underlying determinants of health, such as the biological, social, economic, cultural and physical environments in which people live.
Health Sciences at SFU has a focus on population and public health, with health promotion and disease prevention as critical components. As the first university in Canada to establish this focus as one of its central research and education areas, SFU is directly addressing a national mandate, recently pronounced through the creation of the Public Health Agency of Canada, to increase the country’s capacity in public health, including the need to increase capacity of public health research and training.

**Faculty Programs**

Programming in SFU’s Faculty of Health Sciences allows for integration and collaboration between science, policy and practice. New, innovative and integrated undergraduate and graduate programs are unique in Canada and differentiate SFU from the public health programs offered by universities with medical schools, which generally have a distinctive clinical and disease focus.

**Established Graduate Programs**

**Population & Public Health**

A Masters Degree program in Population and Public Health was launched in the fall of 2005. This program prepares both established professionals and recent graduates for positions of leadership in health research and in the allied health professions. The primary focus is on population and public health, policy and planning for health care delivery, health promotion and disease prevention.

**Global Health**

SFU is playing a crucial and timely role by developing Canada’s first Masters Degree in Global Health (MGH). There is increasing demand worldwide for personnel with training in population health and health system development to provide effective services to communities and to improve the health status of populations and communities by addressing key health determinants. With increased globalization has come increased recognition of the importance of addressing health inequalities globally. On a global scale, health status is increasingly affected by ecological, technological, economic, political and socio-cultural forces. Understanding these ‘upstream’ global forces and their impact on health is central to ensuring health for the world population.
The Masters in Global Health program at SFU is responding to this demand by equipping our students with the skills, experiences, and insights required to creatively respond to the challenges of an interconnected and globalized world.

Graduate Programs in Development

Infectious Disease
A Masters and PhD degree program in infectious disease with particular emphasis on immunology and vaccine development is in the planning stage. This program of education and research will be a joint program with SFU’s Faculty of Science. The Faculty of Health Sciences appointed an internationally known scientist in this field as a senior Canada Research Chair in 2004 and one of Canada’s leading infectious disease epidemiologists recruited in 2006. This program will respond to the ever growing threats from viral diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Avian Influenza.

Environmental Health and Toxicology
A Masters in Environmental Health and Toxicology is currently under development. This program of education and research will respond to the significant issues of environmental degradation and climate change. The latter issue is expected to pose increasing problems for Canada, particularly in Western Canada with the increasing likelihood of drought conditions.

Mental Health and Addictions
Programs of research and education are being developed both in adult and children’s mental health. These programs started in 2005 with the recruitment of three eminent Canadian researchers in this field. Mental health and addictions are very prevalent problems in Canada and beyond. Adult and children’s mental health is an area with many research and policy gaps. This program will emphasize a public health approach to mental health problems in Canada and attempt to address research and training in this field.

Aboriginal Health
The Aboriginal Health program is under development. Recruitment is underway for scholars whose primary research interests focus on health issues and/or outcomes among aboriginal populations relating to any of the thematic areas of development within FHS (social inequalities, environmental exposures, infectious diseases, mental health and addictions, health policy, globalization). This program will respond to continuing challenges in aboriginal communities in Canada and internationally.
**Undergraduate Programs**

SFU has developed a comprehensive undergraduate program in health sciences consisting of a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and a Bachelor of Sciences (BSc) degree in Health Sciences. The program is a highly interdisciplinary, integrative program with course offerings in population and public health and courses in the social sciences, epidemiology, biostatistics and economics, together with courses in health policy, health administration and the biological sciences. Students take a common core of material with electives in either social science or natural science leading to BA or BSc degrees respectively.

This new approach will produce graduates with a much broader understanding of health and science who are much more likely to feel comfortable working in a multidisciplinary environment. This will qualify students for graduate work and, ultimately, careers working as members of cross disciplinary teams and units, a critically important need for the future research in this province and Canada generally.

**Research**

The research activities of FHS span the spectrum from applied community and health services to fundamental research carried out at the bench, with specific focus aligned with the program areas identified above. Research programs in mental health and addictions, population health, global health, health promotion and disease prevention, environmental health and infectious disease have been established. Access to a variety of health data is essential to this research enterprise and as such, FHS has established a ‘data warehouse’ as a resource to support research not only as a resource for FHS faculty but as a resource to the health research community of SFU.

**Planning Assumptions**

- The Faculty of Health Sciences will support research and develop undergraduate and graduate teaching programs in health sciences that bridge science, policy and practice. Each program area both in graduate and undergraduate education will be defined by a set of shared features: the integration of science with health outcomes, analysis, and policy; the cross-sectoral nature of the research questions and programs; and the adoption of multiple perspectives, modes of inquiry and levels of analysis. This requires a multidisciplinary faculty
complement which is not yet fully established at SFU and necessitates further recruitment in both the social and natural science areas.

- FHS will offer undergraduate and graduate programs in health sciences which integrate the biological sciences with social sciences and population and public health science. In addition to a number of graduate programs at the masters and PhD level, these new programs include a BA degree (2006) and BSc (2007) degree in health sciences. The program began rolling out in September 2005 and will reach steady state in 2011. Enrolment targets start at 192 FTE in 2006/2007 rising to 1254 in 2011. These targets include 230 FTE located at the Surrey campus with the establishment of the School of Optometry.

- FHS will meet its enrolment targets.

- Population and public health research relies on sources of information such as primary and secondary survey data, administrative databases, longitudinal data sets, qualitative data such as in-depth interviews, and experimental data. Access to these data sources is essential to the research agenda of FHS and will be accomplished by the establishment and growth of the FHS data warehouse.

- FHS will see the continued maturation of its administrative structure in keeping with the growth and development of its academic and research activities. This includes the development of infrastructure to support enrolment planning, communication and marketing and fund raising for capital projects, student and research support.

- The new FHS building ASSC2 will be completed and ready for occupancy in January 2008. Funding for the fit up of the building is not part of the financial project of this plan.

**Strategic Influences**

**Opportunities**

- At provincial and national levels, activities are underway to increase the country’s capacity in public health, particularly to increase the capacity of public health research and training.
• There is growing recognition in Canada and beyond of the need for expertise in research and training with respect to critical issues affecting global health.

• There is an increasing awareness of the need to develop capacity for multidisciplinary, integrated approaches to health research and education both within the academic community of SFU and beyond.

• In British Columbia and beyond there is a growing recognition and realization that SFU is becoming the premier academic institution with a demonstrated commitment to population and public health research and education and a rapidly growing capacity in these important areas.

Threats

• Deterioration in the University’s financial position is resulting in a reduction of investment available for FHS to realize its academic and research potential/plans over the next 2 to 3 years.

• Establishment of major public health research and education infrastructure at other British Columbian academic institutions is planned or underway.

Self Assessment

Strengths

• A compelling vision for an integrated, multidisciplinary university platform in support of innovative education and research in health unencumbered by the medical paradigm.

• A strong record of recruitment of excellent faculty.

• A faculty with a common vision, a strong sense of purpose and a collegial work ethic.

• A global perspective on health as a key contextual frame for education and research programs.

• Interdisciplinarity as a key value underlying FHS education and research programs.

Weaknesses

• Rapid growth and development with relatively limited human resources.

• Lack of infrastructure to support communications and marketing of faculty programs and research capabilities.

• Low visibility with the media and the public at large.

• Lack of a track record as a Faculty unit in education and research.
Faculty Objectives

Goals and Strategic Objectives

The overarching goal of the Faculty of Health Sciences is to develop innovative health-related research and education programs at Simon Fraser University through the development of trans-disciplinary collaborations and partnerships that bridge the biomedical, clinical and social science sectors. Strategic goals and initiatives provide a framework for advancing existing health research and education programming and ensuring the success of programs under development.

Objective 1: To situate health-related research and education as one of SFU's core academic foci

Activities

- Recruit and retain world-class researchers and educators in health sciences.
- Increase provincial, national and international reputation of FHS by sponsoring (where possible, cost sharing) forums, conferences and talks on topical issues on health-related research and programming, including representatives from key stakeholders’ groups (government, public health organizations, community organizations, aboriginal representatives, addiction and mental health specialists) and publicizing these initiatives.
- Actively engage faculty and students as part of a worldwide learning community.
- Work closely with recruitment professionals in Student Services, become active in career fairs and engage parents and high-school counselors to increase the profile of health-related education.

Resource Implications

- Need for financial resources and human resources within FHS and in Student Services, LIDC, Media and Government Relations to recruit and retain world-class researchers and educators, personnel for instructional development, communications and marketing and fund raising.

Performance Measures

- Successful hiring and retention of 21 faculty members and specialized administrative personnel.
Objective 2: To provide a focal point from which health-related research and programming across the University can be supported, stimulated, integrated and expanded.

Activities

- Provide opportunities for faculty members across SFU to engage with FHS in debate on health-related research and programming.
- Provide opportunities for other faculties to offer input and advice for faculty recruitment to maximize University-wide benefits.
- Organize and sponsor/co-sponsor multidisciplinary talks, conferences and symposia on health-related research and planning.
- Explore areas of mutual interest such as joint initiatives in health sciences with the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Business Administration, Faculty of Science, School of Continuing Studies, and others.
- Create a dynamic website that fully represents the scope of FHS health-related research and planning, and links to health-related research and planning activities and initiatives elsewhere in the University and externally.
- Build health sciences data warehouse as a resource for the health research community of SFU.

Resource Implications

- Need for ongoing rapprochement with other faculties, need for human resources to provide administrative and communications support, need for continuing IT database design and development, need to take steps to ensure integrity of information and protection of privacy of information.

Performance Measures

- Recognition and support from University Executives, faculties and faculty members for interdisciplinary health-related research and programming.
- Obtain security clearances for key database managers and administrators.

Objective 3: To develop a higher profile and more concerted effort to realize a presence for SFU in health related research and education in Canada and beyond.

Activities

- Develop and implement a communications strategy using SFU-branded multimedia approaches (live, web, print, radio, television) to publicize key messages and recruit faculty and students in alignment with University-wide communication strategies.
- Develop integrated internal and external communication vehicles to highlight faculty members’ research, presentation of talks and posters at conferences, funding awards, and students’ in-field practicums in Canada and internationally.
• Build an extensive ‘experts’ list by subject matter, linguistic capabilities, and target local, regional, ethnic, national and international communities and stakeholders.

**Resource Implications**

• Need for human and technical resources to build communications expertise.

**Performance Measures**

By 2008, make FHS a key source of health-related research for local, regional and national media, including ethnic media.

**Objective 4: To situate a unique, cross disciplinary, multi-perspective graduate and undergraduate health programming within an interdisciplinary academic context that is distinguished from existing Faculty foci.**

**Activities**

• Ensure ongoing strong Executive support for FHS interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate health programming by developing surveys and holding focus groups to identify, clearly articulate and address key stakeholders’ (Faculties, Administrative service providers, students) concerns regarding FHS graduate and undergraduate programming.

• Organize one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders and town halls to understand and be responsive to internal stakeholders’ needs to ensure FHS graduate and undergraduate health programming is distinct from existing Faculty foci.

• Conduct FHS faculty retreats to share information on unique interdisciplinary programming in health sciences under development in the world.

**Resource Implications**

• Allocation of human academic, professional and administrative resources to develop supporting materials, facilitate town halls and share information.

**Performance Measures**

• Articulation of and agreement on measurable substantive differences between existing Faculty foci and desired graduate and undergraduate multidisciplinary programming.

• Meet undergraduate enrolment targets primarily through students’ declaration of FHS as their preferred area of study on entry into SFU.

**Objective 5: To measure and meet student interest nationally and internationally for cross disciplinary multi-perspective graduate and undergraduate health education.**
Activities
- Work closely with other Faculties and Services to organize internal and external events (e.g. SFU’s first health sciences career fair) specifically targeted at students with an interest in health education.
- Develop an external experts’ advisory committee to identify prospective students’ particular interests in cross-disciplinary multi-perspective graduate and undergraduate health education.
- Poll students enrolled in and graduating from FHS programs to measure programming effectiveness. Develop initiatives to ensure graduating students became program ambassadors.

Resource Implications
- Allocation of financial, human resources, academic, professional and administrative resources to develop supporting materials and initiatives.

Performance Measures
- Identify and address gap between FHS/SFU Administration’s assessment of programming success and students’ assessment of programming success.

Objective 6: To position SFU to attract a greater share of health research funding.

Activities
- Increase FHS engagement with local community groups and credible health activists to secure their demonstrated and vocal public support for SFU as an invaluable source of health research on environmental degradation and climate change, the spread of viral diseases, mental health and addictions, and other pressing issues of concern to government representatives, international, national and provincial health agencies and organizations, and the public at large.
- Demonstrate importance of health-related research and education for current and emerging population and public health issues by emphasizing the ability of FHS graduates to work as members of interdisciplinary health research teams operating on the local, provincial, national and international stage.

Resource Implications
- Allocation of financial, human resources, academic, professional and administrative resources to conduct outreach activities, publicize research initiatives and findings, and position SFU as the premier Canadian institution for health education and research.
Performance Measures

- Sustained strong provincial support for FHS among health organizations
- FHS faculty members invited to provide health research and education advice to provincial and federal political leaders in health, environmental and related portfolios.

(3-Year Financial Plan is attached as a separate document)