Following is a message from Dr. John Waterhouse:

Dear Members of the University Community:

On behalf of the Faculty Structure Task Force I would like to thank those members of the University community who attended and engaged in a lively and constructive discussion at Monday’s Open Forum on the Task Force's discussion document - Sommes Nous Prêts?

Our document "Sommes Nous Prêts?" is intended to provide an overview of the environment in which the University currently finds itself, our history, and the directions we can imagine and move towards in the future. The document also identifies an analytical framework of academic structure - the tensions embedded within it, the elements that comprise it, and the ways in which it has been used or designed elsewhere. We have not engaged in a systematic evaluation of academic units at SFU, nor was that our mandate. We were charged with preparing a paper for discussion - a paper that would set the stage for members of the University community to come together and talk about our academic structure and collectively assess whether it is effectively supporting and enabling us to achieve our goals. Our paper identifies four areas to begin discussions - areas of strength, curricular initiatives, growth of academic units, and incubation of cross-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary innovation - and the identification of a series of principles that would govern the process for a more thorough assessment of alternatives. We know that as you think about the opportunities for the future of the University, your own research and teaching programs, your discipline(s), and the opportunities we create for students, that you may identify ways in which the University structure can better support our goals.

At Monday’s Open Forum there were several questions about the process going forward. Monday’s Forum was the first of four Open Forums (the others will occur on September 12, September 15, and September 19 - see below for times and locations). Through the Open Forums we hope to learn what the University community's views are on each of our four discussion items and on additional issues that arise from our report and reactions to it. The Task Force will then make a recommendation to Senate identifying those items that require further study and which could lead to changes to our structure and/or policies. Any process that follows the tabling of the report in Senate will naturally be dependent upon the items identified. As provided for in the Principles of our document, such a process will have to afford both thorough and thoughtful analysis and include meaningful collegial engagement and transparency throughout. The Faculty Structure Task Force firmly believes that in combination with leadership, imagining, designing and then creating the best University for the future is fundamentally a collaborative initiative.

I encourage all members of the University community to engage with us in this important discussion about Simon Fraser University's academic structure. We invite all members of the University community to join us at the three upcoming Open Forums in September and/or to provide us with your written comments on the discussion document and ideas for the future of the University.

Sincerely,

John Waterhouse, Vice President, Academic
Chair of the Faculty Structure Task Force