Sommes Nous Prêts?
A Discussion Document for the Simon Fraser University Community

Prepared by the Faculty Structure Task Force
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1. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate of the Task Force

In consideration of our current and future opportunities and challenges, Dr. John Waterhouse, Vice President, Academic, established the Faculty Structure Task Force (herein after referred to as Task Force)\(^1\) in October 2005. The mandate of the Task Force is to review Simon Fraser University’s academic structure and its strategic vision for the future, and answer the following key question:

*Is Simon Fraser University's current academic structure one that best reflects our qualities and strengths and one that will enable us to most effectively and visibly advance our strategic goals?*

The Task Force has considered this question through an examination of the evolution of the University’s academic structure, the changing environment in which the University exists, and the ways in which other universities in Canada and elsewhere have structured themselves. The Task Force has also explored the reasons why other institutions have engaged in restructuring exercises and the outcome of these initiatives.

In addition, the Task Force is required to develop a statement of the principles that would direct a realignment initiative should the final conclusion of the Task Force and the University Senate, after broad consultation with the University community, be to proceed with a second phase of this initiative.

B. Why Create a Task Force?

In 2005/2006 Simon Fraser University is celebrating its 40\(^{th}\) birthday. This milestone has provided the University community with an opportunity to reflect on the evolution of the University, to learn about our roots and past experiences, and to enable community members to develop a strong sense of pride at what has been accomplished.

As we enjoy this opportunity to look back, we must also look to the future. What will the University be like 10 years from now, 20 years from now, perhaps even 40 years from now? What will the present generation contribute to the University’s legacy of excellence? Will we be able to say, perhaps in 2025, that our motto “Nous sommes prêts!” (We are ready) still encapsulates so profoundly our achievements and mission as it does today?

\(^1\) The Faculty Structure Task Force (FSTF) include David Boal (Physics), Jim Cavers (Engineering Science), Jane Friesen (Economics), Derrick Harder (Student Society), Michel Joffres (Health Sciences), Ian McCarthy (Business Administration), Jack Martin (Education), Sue Roppel (Academic Relations), Lisa Shapiro (Philosophy), Michael St. Denis (Graduate Student, Archaeology, John Waterhouse (Vice President, Academic, Chair), and Alison Watt (University Secretariat).
The need to look forward and to ensure continued preparedness in changing circumstances is one reason for striking a Task Force at this time. There are others. These include a consideration of:

i. the changing internal and external social, political, demographic, fiscal and intellectual context;

ii. the presence of Simon Fraser University now in three different cities – Burnaby, Vancouver and Surrey – with additional programming in Kamloops;

iii. the presence of programs that crosscut existing departmental and/or Faculty boundaries;

iv. the emergence of several significant academic areas that might be better profiled to further develop these strengths, profile them externally, and more visibly define the character of Simon Fraser University;

v. the differential and unprecedented growth of some Schools and some Faculties;

vi. the creation of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the initial moratorium on academic unit realignment until after the Faculty had established its own research and program areas;

vii. the tripling of the number of academic Departments and Schools since Simon Fraser University first opened and the increasing number of small new independent programs, all of which share the same administrative and academic structure; and,

viii. the overall visibility of Simon Fraser University and the way in which its academic structure communicates effectively or ineffectively, our values, academic strengths and priorities as we move to an increasingly competitive and demand-driven model for student recruitment and retention.

One of the key contexts that did not influence the creation of the Task Force was crisis. In the vast majority of significant university restructuring exercises internationally, there has been a context of crisis: whether fiscal crisis, crisis of reputation, or crisis of vision. None of these are in play for Simon Fraser University. We are financially sound, well-respected, and guided by a strong and coherent sense of purpose, and so we are undertaking this process of review from a position of strength. However, significant changes in the social and educational environment in which Simon Fraser University operates are likely to occur over the next few decades. The process, therefore, of reviewing our structure is motivated by a desire to pursue the opportunities that lay before us while simultaneously ensuring that we preserve the legacy and the raison d’être of the University as well as its intellectual autonomy. Equally, the University must reach out to our communities and respond to the changing social, political, fiscal, demographic and intellectual context in which we are situated. If we have effective academic structures which ensure both stability and adaptability, we will avoid the crisis that otherwise could potentially accompany further shifts in our environment and we will secure for SFU a legacy appropriate to the University’s illustrious beginnings in a time of significant transformation — a transformation that SFU was able to imagine not as crisis but as opportunity.

The Task Force recognizes that over the past five years Simon Fraser University has been involved in a period of significant change and the community’s appetite for further change is not unlimited. Further change must not impede the great success of those areas of the University that are currently well served within the existing academic structures.
II. INHERENT TENSIONS

The values and goals of the University are not without some inherent tensions. The Task Force has identified six primary tensions at play within the University setting:

i. the tension between stability and adaptability,
ii. the tension between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity,
iii. the tension between multiple campus diversity and a cohesive identity,
iv. the tension between regional responsiveness and international presence,
v. the tension between learning and curricular flexibility and streamlined programming, and
vi. the tension between knowledge conceived within a framework of inquiry, explanation, and discovery of phenomenon and knowledge conceived in a framework of its application, adoption, and potential for commercialization.

These tensions can be productive and lead to innovation, or they can be obstructive and ultimately inhibiting. The goal of the University’s academic structure is not to eliminate inherent tensions but to seek a balance in some cases, to optimize the productive and innovative character of others, and to minimize if not alleviate those tensions that are inhibiting intellectual initiative or effective institutional functioning.

i. The tension between stability and adaptability

The traditional and stabilizing forces of core disciplines have historically buttressed the University against external forces and interests that might otherwise challenge the intellectual autonomy of the University. We must preserve this fundamental underpinning of the University for it is what ensures academic excellence. We must also embrace the critical importance of having the capacity to respond to the emerging frontiers of knowledge both inside and outside of traditional disciplines. And we must recognize the need to engage and respond to a changing intellectual environment with shifting demands from contemporary society. Simon Fraser University has been highly adept in achieving both pursuits. The significant growth in applied and professional programming in the past decade has occurred with the simultaneous preservation, enhancement and commitment to core disciplinary inquiry in the liberal arts and sciences. This balance has importantly been retained in the vision for the new Surrey campus which will see significant representation by all Faculties.

The tension between stability and adaptability is also manifest in the identity of the institution. Universities are, by nature, historical, contemporary and future-directed. Our academic structure communicates in powerful ways our academic strengths, the areas of knowledge in which we excel and the nature of programming we have to offer. The way in which we are structured today leads to perceptions of our strengths, values and qualities for many future generations. As such, it is imperative that the way in which we define ourselves through structure will have intelligibility in the future and will embody a quality of permanence. At the same time, we must also be recognized as an institution that is engaged and fluent with the contemporary context. Our relevance must be apparent to future students and researchers. We must be engaged in emerging areas of knowledge and contribute to understanding. Our academic structure, its major categorizations, and cognate clustering, each contribute in important ways to addressing both dimensions of this tension.
ii. The tension between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity

Both disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry serves the goals of innovation and expansion of the bounds of knowledge. We expand knowledge in a number of ways: through in-depth exploration of problems conceived from within one's discipline; from looking at old questions through new lenses afforded by interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, modes of inquiry and conceptual frameworks; and simply out of necessity when problems emerge that clearly exceed a given discipline’s existing methods and conceptual resources for apprehending the world. Institutional structures can, and should, influence the success of both disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry.

Although interdisciplinarity has been articulated as a core value from the founding of Simon Fraser University, implicit in our self-definition and our core values is an equally fundamental and core commitment to disciplinarity. The disciplines are the repositories of long-established knowledge, the incubators of thought, and the pedagogical frameworks within which students not only acquire knowledge of the world but also enter into the intellectual traditions that unite Simon Fraser University with other universities of the world. Disciplinary work also provides models for the assessment of scholarship in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs. We interpret the University’s repeated statement of a core commitment to the liberal arts and sciences, as well as to professional and applied programming as an expression of the way in which Simon Fraser University has chosen to acknowledge the primacy of disciplinarity at Simon Fraser University and to maintain these traditions.

Simon Fraser University is, however, also explicitly committed to interdisciplinary inquiry. By ‘interdisciplinarity’ we include inquiry that is straightforwardly interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinarity. What constitutes interdisciplinary work varies tremendously with the research involved. In some cases, interdisciplinary work is well-established and stable. In other cases, interdisciplinary work is more nascent. A fruitful line of discipline-driven research sometimes leads to questions for which answers are not easily found within the original discipline itself. In these cases a researcher may well look to other disciplines for insight. A degree of competence in these other disciplines will be required, but this researcher need not undertake research in these cognate fields herself. Interdisciplinary work of this sort can result in multidisciplinary research groups in which individuals working on related questions from different disciplinary perspectives share their expertise with one another. Discussions within such groups might well lead to further development of interdisciplinary effort. At this point, questions are formulated which cannot be addressed or answered within the framework of any one discipline itself and the disciplines become effectively intertwined and, within this area of inquiry, expertise might come to be conceived differently – as having appropriate breadth across an array of disciplines. At least these three stages of interdisciplinary work exist and thrive at Simon Fraser University.

Excellent interdisciplinary work is not independent of excellent disciplinary work. Excellent interdisciplinary work depends on excellent disciplinary foundations. Insofar as interdisciplinary inquiry helps us to realize our goal of expanding our knowledge, we should value it. Through interdisciplinary activity researchers are able to develop innovative solutions to research problems, solutions that might well have important applications. Equally, interdisciplinary activity can help in uncovering new sorts of answers and approaches to long-standing questions. Moreover, interdisciplinary work can in turn open up new lines of research, affording new perspectives which in turn promote further growth in our knowledge and understanding of the world around us. In many cases, interdisciplinary work can propel forward discipline-based work.
Designing structures that overcome the tension between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity is a challenging task. Different strategies are likely to be appropriate in different contexts. One critical contextual feature to bear in mind is the transience or permanence of the interdisciplinary project, educational program or collaboration. Researchers may engage in interdisciplinary projects only occasionally, may engage with different groups of researchers in different disciplines at different points in time for long or short periods, or may engage frequently with a specific set of colleagues over a long period of time. Those initiatives of a more permanent or programmatic nature may be best facilitated and assessed within multidisciplinary schools or departments, clusters of cognate disciplines, or non-departmentalized Faculties. Researchers who engage in more transient or intermittent interdisciplinary collaborations or who collaborate for the purpose of specialized multi-disciplinary courses may wish to remain within their discipline-based units. It is likely that a combination of strategies, both of a policy and structural nature will be required to foster, support and recognize the equally important contributions of both disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity at Simon Fraser University in the future. Moreover, the University needs to be able to recognize the differential extent to which these kinds of initiatives have temporal contingencies or issues of durability. Unlike disciplinary undertakings, some interdisciplinary work may need to be undertaken on a term basis, or with a recurring evaluation structure, and with the capacity to terminate itself if it has satisfied its goals.

iii. The tension between multiple campus diversity and a cohesive identity

Our multi-campus initiatives (now at Burnaby, Vancouver, Surrey, and Great Northern Way) with their strategically planned distinctiveness (in terms of programming, research activity, student experience and focus population) provide opportunities to uniquely meet the needs of the communities in which they are situated. We must ensure that while we create adaptive and responsive campuses, we simultaneously provide coherence, integration, shared standards, equity and a single identity for Simon Fraser University. In this regard, we need to think how our current academic structure will facilitate our campus development strategy and balance the need for campus distinctiveness in the context of a cohesive identity for Simon Fraser University. As programming and academic unit development occurs at these campuses we must make efforts to ensure that they are integrated and engaged with other disciplines within a Faculty structure, particularly if not all constituent units are on the same campus. Equally important is the imperative that each of our campuses be oriented by the core values, commitments and strategic goals of Simon Fraser University as a cohesive and unified institution. Whether this integration occurs through shared policy and management, electronic linkages, the circulation of faculty and students, the integration of infrastructure - including laboratories, libraries and other resources - or other means will have to be determined.

iv. The tension between regional responsiveness and international presence

Simon Fraser University has been highly successful in responding to its local region. We are regional in terms of the nature of students we have sought to recruit and in terms of the geographical positioning of our campuses and the communities we aim to serve. At the same time that Simon Fraser University remains committed to serving the lower mainland we have also been developing an increasingly international profile, both in terms of our research activities and our educational programming activities.

There is a continuing need to situate ourselves within our local communities so as to meet the programming needs of our constituents, and to provide knowledge and applications that will directly
influence their lives. However, this responsiveness to the local milieu cannot lead to insularity nor be permitted to obstruct our sensitivity to the changing nature of that milieu. A tension arises due to the fact that, while Simon Fraser University has been relatively narrow in its catchment and focus, the world has become an increasingly global arena where political, environmental, social, economic, and other contexts are interwoven and interdependent. We must emerge as a University serving these larger contexts.

Our academic structure must therefore be recognizable and responsive to our local communities but must increasingly be understood and supportive of knowledge creation and transmission within an increasingly international sphere. Our research and teaching must draw students, staff and faculty into the world in a larger way. To this extent, it must either share an institutional vocabulary with other universities in the world, or it must develop strategies for communicating how and why it is structured as it is, to offer students and faculty elsewhere in the world unique opportunities to learn and to think.

v. The tension between learning and curricular flexibility and streamlined programming

One of the foundations of Simon Fraser University's educational experience is the flexibility it affords to students. Exploration of the full range of disciplines is not only encouraged but entrenched in our structures: students cannot graduate until having satisfied breadth requirements and in many disciplines major concentrations of study are still not declared until after 60 credits of study have been accumulated. Learning flexibility is also supported through a wide variety of learning modes, trimester course offerings, part-time study, and distance education opportunities. The ability to customize learning uniquely suited to the individual is not only a hallmark of SFU but also is a critically important structural approach to modern society which provides for increasing levels of life-long learning, multiple and diverse career experiences for individuals, and the desire for part-time employment while engaging in post-secondary experiences. We must also recognize that educational programs in the future might incorporate new modes of learning that will further enhance our flexibility.

Such flexibility, however, has created tensions in terms of the ability of our resources to support it. Degree completion timeframes are disheartening students. A large number of students report that they are unable to enroll in some of the courses in which they have interest or, in some instances, in the core courses they require for graduation. The University has made significant efforts to redress these critical issues. While these problems could be further reduced with block programming and structured course offerings and degree requirements, this would significantly alter one of Simon Fraser University’s most appreciated aspects of the educational experience—namely flexibility of programming.

While the alignment of academic units is not likely to solve this critical area, we must ensure that one of the guiding principles be the prevention of any exacerbation of this critical access problem.

vi. The tension between knowledge conceived within a framework of inquiry, explanation, and discovery of phenomenon and knowledge conceived in a framework of its application, adoption, and potential for commercialization

Simon Fraser University and universities worldwide have struggled with the tension between a view of post-secondary education that is defined by a pursuit of knowledge defined by inquiry, explanation and discovery of phenomena and a view of knowledge that is framed by considerations of its application, adoption and potential for commercialization. Within the context of a comprehensive university such as Simon Fraser University, this tension can manifest itself in the hardening of disciplinary boundaries, protectionist strategies among and between departments or schools, accusations of irrelevance or
intellectual instrumentalism, and fierce resource competition. This is not evident in large degree at Simon Fraser University at this time, though opportunities and challenges that will emerge in the future could well exacerbate this tension.

Recent research demonstrates that broad, humanistic education helps students to develop analytical skills that can be differentially developed as the basis of particular technical expertise. In many ways, this broad foundational training helps individuals to resist the possibility of their obsolescence as science and technology progress over time. Globalization produces increased and increasingly intense relations among people of different traditions and histories. One sees this in the changing demographics of cities, but also in the changing populations of students and faculty at campuses, such as Simon Fraser University. Analytic skills that promote the capacity to accommodate difference are essential for diverse populations, and these are acquired in a curriculum that promotes breadth as well as in-depth learning. In contexts where these are absent, diversity is more likely to produce tension and resentment, and the capacity to resolve differences is substantially impaired. Moreover, the development of skills that are necessary to sustain the institutions of a democratic society, namely those of critical reading, analysis, and judgment, remain a crucial function of the University, especially in the case of Simon Fraser University —where social justice has always been a value and a calling.

An equally strong case can be made for the imperative of the more modern tradition in post-secondary institutions that call for the adaptability of knowledge in an increasingly complex, technologically sophisticated, and globally interactive world. Engagement in this world requires a level of specialization that not only provides for maneuverability and responsiveness to the unprecedented rates of change but which also provide in-time technological solutions to the world's problems. Simon Fraser University therefore remains committed to a strategy that combines these two approaches to learning and training. In this case, tension has been our strongest asset, and we believe that it will continue to play this role.

Within disciplines there is a further element of this tension that appears between curiosity driven programming and professional programming. The former is critical for the continued prosperity of the discipline and for deep understanding of the field in which students study. The latter, provides an opportunity for transferring the knowledge of the discipline into applied contexts.

The academic structure of the University has the potential to influence each of the six tensions identified above. We must therefore be mindful of the influence of structure, including its differential impact on these tensions and component academic units, and ensure that the ultimate academic structure of the University will lead to positive reinforcement of productive tensions and will minimize those tensions that are inhibiting to our progress and counter to our values.

III. STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS AND ISSUES

Simon Fraser University’s structure must be able to support effective and stimulating inter-collegial engagement, program clarity and innovation. It must also nurture communities of scholarship in a way that clusters cognate areas so as to foster the cross-fertilization of ideas and lead to innovative research and educational opportunities. It is also necessary to preserve traditional modes of knowledge inquiry, discovery and creation while embracing new approaches to knowledge application, commercialization and adaptation, both within existing disciplinary divisions and across these divisions.
As a Task Force devoted to the analysis of structure we feel it critical to briefly discuss the typical elements of structure and the ways in which they have been used both within Simon Fraser University and beyond.

A. Structural Elements

The Academic Structure is understood by the Task Force to consist broadly of the formal arrangement of elements that structure our relationships and activities and which group individuals for the purposes of research, education, and governance. Academic structures may be hierarchical or lateral; may be functional or relational; may be lattice and integrative, or compartmentalized and distinguishing. In most respects, the structures of academic organization share aspects of all these features.

We have identified six core structural elements that can be used to shape the academic activities of the University: Academic Program, Department, School, Faculty, College, and Institute or Centre.

(i) Academic Program

Academic Programs are most commonly used as a way of organizing the educational programs of the unit. However, while Academic Programs are the route by which disciplines are taught and learned. The Academic Program is generally the smallest of academic structural elements. Generally, multiple programs exist within a single Department, School or non-departmentalized Faculty.

When conceived as independent intellectual areas, Academic Programs are typically employed as one of the principal entities of responsiveness in the university organization. Their independence gives them a degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the more traditional departments and provides them with the ability to hire their own faculty, have independent budgetary responsibility and grant academic qualifications. Over time these areas generally evolve into School or Departmental structures. This structural element has grown in use at Simon Fraser University over the past decade.

(ii) Department

The academic Department often serves as the fundamental academic unit at a university. These divisions represent a branch of knowledge or discipline that can be formally taught and which can be represented, recognized and differentiated from other subject areas. Typically, they are associated with single disciplines, a methodological core, and a set of loosely defined epistemological principles. While academic Departments can comprise a group of related disciplines, this is not typically the case at Simon Fraser University.

Universities differ widely in the extent to which they organize themselves along Departmental and disciplinary lines. These structural elements may be highly descriptive of the attributes of a particular university's current values and interests, or they may reflect a more traditional way of representing and evoking the legacies of their disciplines. For example, some universities have a large number of Departments organized around the study of identity formations—race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so forth. Other universities incorporate the study of these objects in more conventional disciplines, such as Literature, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science and so forth. Still other universities bundle the new programs together under a single rubric, such as Cultural Studies. Comparable developments can also be
discerned in the sciences, where the creation of environmental or earth studies programs may be undertaken in relation to fixed departmental structures of Biology, Geology, and so forth, or through the creation of new entities, such as Departments of Environment and Ecology.

(iii) School

As an independent structural element, a School can serve either as an intermediary structural element existing between the Department and Faculty levels of organizational structure or as a parallel entity to a Department with distinct differences. When used as a parallel element, the School consists of cognate or related subject disciplines. There are a number of potential variations on the internal organization of a School. In some cases, a School might contain one or more small academic programs as well as one or more larger Departments or some combination of both. They provide increased opportunities for synergistic interaction between the cognate disciplines while still providing potentially increased ability for adaptation and preservation of otherwise vulnerable units that might be adversely affected by changing environmental contexts or budgetary fluctuations. Because of their typically larger size than most academic Departments, Schools can create a higher profile than might be possible for independent units and they can provide critical masses to deliver more diverse and more integrative programming.

Schools have been used in some universities to denote an applied or professional educational emphasis to the discipline. In this case, such as with Schools of Law, Business, or Engineering Science, the structure is also conceived in relation to professional recruitment for students, and professional demands on the curriculum.

(iv) Faculty

The University Act of British Columbia explicitly requires universities within the Province to have Faculties. The powers and duties of Faculties under the Act are as follows:

“(a) to make rules governing its proceedings, including the determining of the quorum necessary for the transaction of business;
(b) to provide for student representation in the meetings and proceedings of the faculty;
(c) subject to this Act and to the approval of the senate, to make rules for the government, direction and management of the faculty and its affairs and business;
(d) to determine, subject to the approval of the senate, the courses of instruction in the faculty;
(e) subject to an order of the president to the contrary, to prohibit lecturing and teaching in the faculty by persons other than appointed members of the teaching staff of the faculty and persons authorized by the faculty, and to prevent lecturing or teaching so prohibited;
(f) subject to the approval of the senate, to appoint for the examinations in each faculty examiners, who, subject to an appeal to the senate, must conduct examinations and determine the results;
(g) to deal with and, subject to an appeal to the senate, to decide on all applications and memorials by students and others in connection with their respective faculties;
(h) generally, to deal with all matters assigned to it by the board or the senate”. (Section 40)

The University College Dublin describes the Faculty as "the strategic umbrella body binding together a group of cognate and related schools, assuring the quality of their educational and research programs,
facilitating their good management and strategic planning, and leading strategic initiatives.\textsuperscript{2} This provides a fairly pragmatic view of the role of a Faculty. There is a more conceptual understanding of the use of the term “Faculty” dating back to medieval times. Space constraints of this paper do not, however, permit the detailing of this history, nor did the Task Force believe that such a historical review would prove significant to its evaluation of structure at Simon Fraser University.

Many universities have employed the notion of a Faculty (or in some cases College) of Graduate Studies. While some universities have employed Faculties of Graduate Studies for administrative reasons, many others have employed this strategy also as a means of certifying the right to confer graduate degrees, coinciding perhaps with a more elitist view of graduate education.

Simon Fraser University has both departmentalized and non-departmentalized Faculty structures. This has implications for the way in which we conceive the academic organization of the university and for the conclusions we derive when assessing the functionality of this structural element.

\textit{(v)} \textbf{College}

Colleges have been used both as independent institutional descriptors (in place of the term University in some countries) or as part of a post-secondary educational system that uses both Colleges and Universities to distinguish the primarily educational institutions from those with a research mandate. The English system and its colonial offshoots are somewhat different; that is, the University has several colleges within itself, and they all perform both research and pedagogical functions. They are, rather, known for certain specializations and, perhaps more importantly in England, for the history of membership—which may be limited to women, religious orientations, levels of class differentiation, and so forth. The College structure has also become increasingly used within a University structure in Canada, to represent differing geographical presences (i.e. multiple campus environments), to identify a category of residential affiliation experience such as a Catholic College or Women's College or to organize and differentiate undergraduate and graduate education.

The College structure has been envisioned for use through the Burnaby Mountain College initiative which seeks to develop a residential college\textsuperscript{3}. The Task Force has not entertained an expansion of this concept through the creation of a “super-layer” on top of our current academic structure.

\textit{(vi) Institutes and Centres}

Institutes and Centres are the primary cross-latticing structural elements used most frequently by universities. At the time of writing this report, there are currently 47 Centres and Institutes in operation at Simon Fraser University. By policy (R40.01) the terms Centre and Institute is used structurally interchangeably. They are defined as:

\begin{quote}
“non-departmentalized academic or administrative units which are established for special purposes, of an ongoing nature, related to the goals of the University. … [Further, their purpose is] “to encompass but not be limited to, [the] facilitation of collaborative research, especially
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{2} Source: University College Dublin, Strategic Plan 2005-2008.

\textsuperscript{3} Details can be found at the following website: http://www.sfu.ca/college/.
Within Simon Fraser University, Centres and Institutes are almost exclusively defined within the goal of advancing the research mandate of the University. The Centres and Institutes have been highly successful for the purpose of research collaboration and for drawing faculty members together from across disciplines. They have emerged primarily on the strength of leadership by an individual champion or champions. With very little centralized support or structure, each Centre and Institute generally must prosper by the efforts of its members. The new Community Trust Endowment Fund established in 2005 as part of the Strategic Research Plan for Simon Fraser University may well lead to the creation of new research Centres and Institutes as new multi-disciplinary research projects in the five core thematic areas of the Plan are pursued.

Elsewhere, Institutes have been employed in a directed fashion to more broadly differentiate graduate and undergraduate programming, to incubate innovation at the frontiers of traditional disciplines and to support and provide opportunity or temporally defined full participation by faculty and students. The notion of a cross-cutting Institute that will incubate thematic study at the cross-section of established disciplines is institutionalized in a number of prestigious American and European Universities.

B. Is there an Ideal Department or Faculty Size?

While size is typically related to hierarchical arrangement within a Faculty, there is no agreement on the optimal size of Departments, Schools or Faculties. Programs, Departments and Schools, as primary units of disciplinary organization draw together researchers and students, and should be of sufficient size to provide for meaningful engagement with colleagues working in similar areas of inquiry, provide for sufficient quality and quantity of academic programming, and be able to enable the unit to contribute to the overall progress of the discipline. The large size of a structural unit can confound patterns of communication, governance, opportunities for inter-collegial engagement, program clarity and identity, strategic planning and collegial and disciplinary identity. Conversely, the small size of a structural element can confound its viability as an independent entity. For small units there are additional issues of lack of complement resources to offer the appropriate range of curricular offerings, to develop a meaningful core research agenda and to contribute in meaningful ways to knowledge development in the discipline.

We recognize that there is no single answer to what constitutes the ideal Department or Faculty size. Department and Faculty size is intrinsically related to the overall size of a University, its combinations of disciplines, its strategic objectives, its pedagogical and research orientations and its defining characteristics. Conversely, size can influence and/or determine core aspects of our abilities to meet our core objectives or to realize our strategic direction. There are differential advantages and disadvantages associated with the size of structural elements, the way in which they are structured, and the use of the various elements available.

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4 R.40.01 Scope section, articles 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3. Available at: http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r40-01.htm.
C. What Should We Expect from Structure?

Structure provides for disciplinary identity, for academic programming cohesion and organization. It enables the channeling of resources, faculty, staff and students, and physical relationships. Our structure is inseparably linked to the constellation of policies and procedures that enable us to manage our activities and that reward and inhibit us. Our academic organization communicates to our communities, both internally and externally, the priorities of the University, what we value and the ways in which we define and differentiate ourselves. Our structure creates the framework for the flow of our communications, our interactions, and our innovation. However, the structure does not dictate or determine the totality of the activities and decisions that define our lives as members of a University community.

Further, structure alone does not create organizational success. Strategy, leadership, resources, and people all play critical roles in influencing and shaping an organization’s success. However, different structures may facilitate and enhance the ways these factors play out and create conditions that facilitate success. The way in which we organize ourselves can also exacerbate the tensions identified above and can compartmentalize knowledge in unproductive and inhibiting ways. Structure can create boundaries, discourage engagement, and create fortresses.

There is no one right answer to the question of structure, rather there are various configurations that might lead to better realization of our values or that will lead to a better balance of productive tensions or diminish those that can be inhibiting.

IV. Academic Structures at Other Universities

A. Academic Structures in Canadian Universities

With the exception of Carleton University, Simon Fraser University has the most modest academic structure (in terms of the number of Faculties) for an institution of our size or larger in Canada. When reviewing the categorization of Faculties at universities across the country, there are four overwhelming impressions. First, universities vary little in terms of the labeling of the Faculties. Arts (or Arts and Science, or Arts and Social Science), Education, Business (or Management), and Science can be found at nearly all institutions. The Faculty structure clearly identifies those universities engaged in the study of Law, Medicine, Social Work or Nursing, each being represented by a distinctive Faculty.

Second, the Faculty of Arts, with a few exceptions, typically holds by significant margin the greatest proportion of enrolment. Notable exceptions to this are the University of Calgary which has adopted a very comprehensive Faculty structure with 15 independent Faculties and the University of Manitoba which houses 21 Faculties. In these models the disciplines comprising our Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences would cut across 3 (and potentially 4) Faculties at the University of Calgary and at least 3 Faculties at the University of Manitoba.

Third, the Faculty Structure suggests substantive difference between the universities regardless of whether at lower levels of academic organization these differences persist. Several examples are illustrative. The University of British Columbia notably is the only University with a Faculty of Land and Food Systems. The University of Waterloo signifies its difference through the inclusion of a Faculty of Software Engineering, a Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, and a Faculty of Applied Health. The University of
Western Ontario lists Information and Media Studies as one of its Faculties. The University of Calgary includes a Faculty of Communication and Culture. The University of Victoria includes a Faculty of Human and Social Development. McMaster University includes both a Faculty of Collaborative Nursing and a Faculty of Midwifery.

Fourth, several of the universities give significant prominence in their academic structures to exploratory first year programs and integrative opportunities. The University of Manitoba for example, identifies the University 1 Program on its list of faculties and captured more than 20% of undergraduate enrolment in the 2005/06 academic year. The University of Calgary separately identifies a Combined / Collaborative Degree among its faculty listings. And the University of Alberta includes a Faculty of Open Studies which captured approximately 4% of its 2005/06 undergraduate enrolment.

Without exploring the nuances of actual program offerings and cognate clustering within each of the Faculties, what strikes the Task Force is the way in which this simple form of definition and signaling leads to perceptions of a University and which likely plays an important role in recruiting students to these institutions. We must be mindful that the overall size of the University may afford opportunities for differentiation at the Faculty level that are not appropriate to smaller sized institutions.

B. Academic Structures in Other Jurisdictions

Major universities in the United States generally do not employ the “Faculty” element of structure. Instead, most of the top tier universities such as Princeton, Yale, Duke, Columbia and Stanford employ the Colleges and Schools as the large umbrella academic structures. In these institutions, Faculty refers to a community of scholars, all of whom are members of distinct departments and/or Schools, and, on occasion more than one of each. Many, like Columbia University, for example, have a Faculty of Arts and Sciences, but this is a body of governance, and lacks structural significance at the level of academic activity. Colleges and Schools in these contexts are often complemented by cross-laticing structures such as a Graduate School or Undergraduate College.

In general, universities in the United States also more frequently have named Schools. The branding of such Schools, generally in the professional areas, including Business, Law, Public Policy areas and International Studies, occasionally distinguishes them from the universities in which they are situated and with which they are associated. Some have relative autonomy vis-à-vis the procedures of faculty governance that operate elsewhere in the University. However, the primary determinant of such naming appears to be the need to recognize donor contributions, and/or the achievements of alumni, factors that are related to the relatively significant presence of privately-funded education, and in the culture of advancement and fundraising that are its consequence.

Universities in Australia and the United Kingdom appear to adopt an academic structure relatively similar to that observed in Canada. Oxford and Manchester both employ a Faculty model with a sub-layer of Schools that comprise both clusters of disciplines and single disciplines. Australian universities such as Monash (10 Faculties), Adelaide (5 Faculties) and Melbourne (14 Faculties) each use the Faculty as their umbrella unit of academic organization. Very little substantive difference exists in the overall choice of Faculty naming and clustering with a relatively small number of Faculties signaling key areas of strength or potentially unique areas of exploration.
In general, regardless of whether the University employs a College or Faculty structure as its umbrella organizing principle, there is clear evidence of a core list of Faculties covering the general areas of Business, Education, the Arts and Sciences. There is variation in the way in which Arts is categorized – in some universities as Humanities and Social Sciences are separate from Fine Arts, or in other cases with particular foci removed from the more encapsulating Faculty (e.g. a Faculty of Classics or a Faculty of Languages and Literatures). There also appears to be a substantial number of universities that clearly demark a presence in the area of the environment (most frequently captured as a Faculty or College of Environmental Studies or a Faculty of the Environment). Additionally, there is common representation of the integration of Science and Technology in the Faculty or College structures.

V. Academic Restructuring Initiatives at Other Universities

There have been a significant number of academic restructuring initiatives over the past decade throughout the institutions of higher education, both in Canada and abroad. Such restructuring has occurred predominantly through a response to the external political and/or fiscal environment.

Australian universities in particular were forced into a process of core academic restructuring in response to major declines in public funding. The Vice-Chancellor's speech of the University of South Wales on November 27, 2002, echoed both the need for increased funding as well as the resignation that this will probably not be forthcoming and so a plan of action to differentiate universities and develop their unique expertise may be a more positive path forward.

The University of Western Australia proceeded more directly into its restructuring process. On October 21, 2001, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Australia wrote to the university community advising them that "a historic moment had been reached at UWA". With a vote of 86-1, the Academic Board of the UWA Senate had approved a proposal to restructure the academic units of the University. The result was the creation of a 9 Faculty, 33 School structure, developed "to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the academic profile to improve the positioning and academic standing of this University internationally". The fundamental principle upon which academic areas were selected for continuation were those "where there is opportunity to develop a strategically distinctive comparative advantage that is likely to position the University to achieve international distinction in the areas concerned". In the case of Australia, the drive to achieve international competitiveness was linked to a reorientation of the national economy toward Asia, emanating from the highest levels of government. The retraction of state funding for post-secondary education was simultaneous with the initiation of a strong recruitment drive aimed at enlarging the largely foreign, transient professional student body. In some regards, this turn to Asia put the Australian universities in competition with Western Canadian universities, as both began turning to Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Asia for increased foreign enrolments.

Australian universities are by no means alone in their quest to undertake core academic restructuring. Examples in the United States are prevalent, particularly in the State of Virginia. As is true of many other university academic restructuring initiatives Virginia universities were mandated by the State legislature to prepare plans that would "effect long-term changes in the deployment of faculty, to ensure the effectiveness of academic offerings, to minimize administrative and institutional costs, to prepare for the demands of enrolment increase and to address funding priorities" (quoted in Gumport and Pusser). In response, a massive reconfiguration of academic programming occurred across the State with 47
programs being eliminated. Many courses were outsourced to extension credit offices and technological innovation and curriculum reform initiatives were commonplace.

Universities in Europe and Asia have also been active in academic restructuring. For example, the University of Edinburgh announced on June 25, 2002, that it had completed the discussion stage of its academic restructuring process. The future academic structure will consist of 21 Schools, grouped into three Colleges (Humanities & Social Sciences, Medicine & Veterinary Medicine, and Science & Engineering). Accompanying the reorganization is the devolution of authority and accountability from the centre to the Colleges. The Colleges will be headed by the equivalent of a Vice-Principal. The University undertook its restructuring process in order to develop larger, transdisciplinary units that would increase the University's ability to increase recovery of indirect costs of research, increase international full-fee overseas student enrolment, decrease its physical space requirements, and increase income generation by individual units. The impetus was simultaneously reactionary to financial pressures, a capital and space squeeze on the one hand, and a desire to change for academic strength and focus in the future.

The University College of Dublin provides another example of wide-scale restructuring. In 2004, in partial response to several external institutional and quality reviews, the UCD was highly criticized for its excessive division of the academic community into too many Faculties and Departments. It was argued that the large number of units were, among other reasons, an impediment to academic collaboration, a barrier to interdisciplinary research, limiting on the University's capacity for strategic and financial planning, and cost-ineffective due to duplication, and dissipation of resources. The proposal recommended the creation of 6 Faculties and several key latticing Institute structures to organize graduate education and to facilitate new program and research innovation. The University of Edinburgh also engaged in substantive restructuring which culminated in the creation of 3 Colleges (College of Humanities and Social Science, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, and College of Science and Engineering) to replace pre-existing Faculties and the reduction to only 21 Schools.

Other smaller scale academic restructuring initiatives have also taken place in recent years. The College of New Jersey restructured its School of Arts & Sciences into seven separate Schools in 2000. In the end, the following Schools were identified: The School of Art, Media and Music, the School of Business, the School of Education, the School of Engineering, the School of Culture and Society, the School of Nursing, and the School of Science. The restructuring occurred in order to achieve a better system of collegial shared governance within the Schools, strategic academic planning, and to generate more frequent collaborations and alliances between faculty members. The larger integrated School had become too large in the view of the College to successfully support these integral areas. An alternate, smaller-scale approach, was adopted by the University of Texas at San Antonio, which seeks to establish a new College in response to a new physical campus location. The President sought to have an academic "anchor" for the new downtown campus and so engaged in a process of academic restructuring. It was felt that the development of a new college would:

- "bring additional academic and intellectual coherence to the identified disciplines"
- "provide synergy for the programs within these disciplines"
- "better serve students"
- "provide additional academic visibility and integrity to the course offerings"
- "enhance the research activity within these disciplines, and"

Domestically there have been fewer large-scale examples of academic restructuring. The University of Manitoba has engaged in a visioning exercise that may have significant repercussions for the academic organization of units. The rationale for such a comprehensive re-examination was as follows:

"The time has come for the University to take stock of its standing among Canadian Universities, and do this in the context of resource realities, current and future ... What the University of Manitoba wants to be in the near future requires articulation, along with the affirmation that our University has the capacity for creativity and innovation that will move it to the first ranks of Canadian universities. To live by our convictions requires change at the University of Manitoba."

While the report, "Partnerships: Building Community", made specific recommendations about a number of individual programs, it also asked that "every academic Department and Faculty consider amalgamation with other units". Such considerations were to take into account four criteria: functionality, faculty complement, student numbers, and infrastructural support.

The University of Calgary has engaged in a restructuring exercise that led to a significant expansion in the overall number of Faculties. It is understood that such a restructuring exercise was driven in part by a view that more focused units would facilitate an increased level of responsiveness by the University and would provide increased visibility to previously buried areas of expertise.

It is possible that more limited restructuring activity in the Canadian context can be attributed to the youth of some of the universities but also to the absence of significant funding retrenchment. Moreover, small institutions have fewer options for restructuring, and there is a general correlation between scale, financial resources, and restructuring initiatives. Larger institutions faced with fiscal pressures appear more likely to undertake restructuring than others.

VI. Environmental Scan

The Task Force believes that structure should follow strategy. From this perspective, it is impossible to undertake a study of structure without first fully understanding the context in which the University is developing its strategic vision and the strategic course it has set thus far. The following section will highlight major trends, opportunities and/or challenges contained in the demographic, intellectual and financial context of our times.

A. Student, Staff and Faculty Complement Growth

At its origins in 1965/66 Simon Fraser University had 2,400 FTE undergraduate students, 50 FTE graduate students, and a faculty complement of approximately 320 members.

In 40 short years, Simon Fraser University has witnessed a tenfold increase in its student population. In 2005/06, there are now 17,425 FTE undergraduate students, 2,731 FTE graduate students, 940 FTE faculty positions, and close to 1,400 FTE academic and administrative support staff members.
This significant growth has not occurred uniformly across the academic disciplines in the University. The Faculty of Arts had a total FTE student enrolment of 3,771 in 1965/66. By 2004/05, enrolment in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences had risen to 8,723, representing 230% growth. In this same period of time the Faculty of Science grew by 333% (from 960 to 3,199 FTEs), while the Faculty of Education grew by 132% (from 1,616 to 2,127 FTEs).

If we look at the last ten years alone (between 1994/95 and 2004/05) when all Faculties excluding Health Sciences were in existence, enrolment growth has been significantly varied by Faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>1994/95 FTE Enrolment (Graduate &amp; Undergraduate)</th>
<th>2004/2005 FTE Enrolment (Graduate and Undergraduate)</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Sciences</td>
<td>1,867.40</td>
<td>3,284.64</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>7,353.20</td>
<td>8,723.28</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>1,448.60</td>
<td>2,009.92</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,663.80</td>
<td>2,127.20</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2,432.90</td>
<td>3,199.44</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total University</td>
<td>14,765.90</td>
<td>19,344.48</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Growth in the student complement has been accompanied by a significant growth in the faculty and staff complements.

B. Campus Diversification

In accordance with its foundational principle of integration and engagement with its external communities, Simon Fraser University has developed a network of four campuses in the lower mainland: the main Burnaby Mountain campus, the Vancouver Campus⁶, the Surrey Campus, and the Great Northern Way Campus.⁷ Additionally the University has developed a presence in Kamloops in First Nations Studies. These campuses each have their own distinctive mandate.

Simon Fraser University's Burnaby campus will continue to be its main campus and provide comprehensive educational and research opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate levels in all six Faculties.

The Vancouver Campus has not strayed significantly from its original vision proposed in 1983:

"[a campus where SFU would offer] graduate and professional programs concerning themes central to the development of an advanced urban society. In addition to graduate degrees, each program area would offer professional development and public policy seminars to meet emerging educational needs

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⁶ The Vancouver Campus consists of Harbour Centre (established in 1989), the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue (opened in 2000), the Segal Graduate School of Business (inaugurated in 2006), the Chief Dan George Centre and the future School of the Contemporary Arts.

⁷ The Great Northern Way Campus located in the South East False Creek area of Vancouver is a multi-University initiative including the University of British Columbia, the British Columbia Institute of Technology and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.
for professional and mid-career education in a managerial, highly technological information services society."  

The vision for the new Surrey campus also contains an important element of engagement and integration with its community. The development of this campus will be guided by a desire to:

"offer distinctive undergraduate and graduate ... interdisciplinary, research-based programs that build on strength in technology, management, human-centered design, and the integration of arts and science; ...[The campus will be known for its] first-year cohort programs .... smaller class sizes and an intimate campus experience ... [embracing] innovative learning and teaching approaches and responsive student services that improve the learning experience."

Finally, the Great Northern Way multi-University partnership is designed to develop a

"distinctive and integrated centre of academic excellence. ... Academic Programming [will be] centered upon the convergence of art, culture and design with science and technology. ... [it's goal is to play a critical role] in renewing the urban environment of Greater Vancouver, while simultaneously enriching the province's knowledge-based economy."

Together the unique roles and mandates of each campus enable Simon Fraser University to clearly distinguish itself from other Canadian universities and to maximize its strengths in meeting the diverse needs of the different communities in which it has situated itself. It will be essential that our academic structure enables these campuses to proceed in accordance with their visions and that sufficient flexibility is embedded in our structure for differential responses to the needs of our external.

C. Demographic Context and Future Projections

The population projection for British Columbia for the next decade identifies some clear challenges and opportunities for Simon Fraser University. As the table below reveals, there is a projected decline in one of our typical student recruitment categories – the 18-21 age cohort. Significant growth is, however, projected in the 25-29 age cohort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>2005 Population</th>
<th>2015 Projected Population</th>
<th>Population Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 18 – 21</td>
<td>233,310</td>
<td>224,975</td>
<td>-3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 22-24</td>
<td>180,594</td>
<td>187,311</td>
<td>+3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25-29</td>
<td>275,916</td>
<td>334,291</td>
<td>+21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30-44</td>
<td>955,105</td>
<td>1,011,743</td>
<td>+5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


9 SFU Campus Planning and Development document – page 4.


Further, if we look locally at the BC Grade XII Enrolment Projections produced by the BC Ministry of Education, we observe a flat-lining of projected enrolments. In 2004, BC Grade XII enrolments totaled 27,755. A decade later in 2014, enrolments are projected to be essentially the same, at 27,784.

In the context of these population projections and flat-lined secondary education enrolments, the provincial government has committed to meet the demand from BC's post-secondary higher educational institutions to fund an additional 25,000 FTE throughout the province by 2010/2011, 3,000 FTE of which have been directed to Simon Fraser University.

As we meet the accessibility agenda of the provincial government by 2010/2011 and then continue to expand in the following decade to an enrolment base of between 25,000 and 30,000 FTE level by 2025, we will need to take a multidimensional approach to achieving our enrolment objectives. Given the population age trends for British Columbia, it is likely that more graduate level and professional programming will be in demand in our local catchment area. It is also expected that Simon Fraser University will need to pursue a broadened recruitment strategy to accommodate what will prove a significant shift from supply drive to demand driven student interest – directing sufficiently greater energies than present to attracting students from other areas of Canada and the rest of the world. International recruitment will therefore become an increasingly important component of our overall student recruitment strategy and will have a significant impact on the shape and character of Simon Fraser University. The more mature enrolment base and more multinational character of the undergraduate and graduate student body will no doubt have far reaching consequences for the programs offered and the experiences that all students are afforded.

D. Resource Challenges and New Directions

Simon Fraser University is rooted in the tradition of most Canadian universities wherein the provincial government grant is the mainstay of its funding strategy. The following table demonstrates the diminished ability of the University to rely upon the provincial operating grant. Only slight over half (53.9%) of the University's total operating budget revenue is now derived from the BC Operating Grant—a significant drop over the past five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>2000/01 Total (in 000's)</th>
<th>2000/01 Share of Operating Budget</th>
<th>2004/05 Operating Budget</th>
<th>2004/05 Share of Operating Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC Operating Grant</td>
<td>$132,391</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>$161,429</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov't. of Canada</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>$5,464</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Fees</td>
<td>$52,344</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>$109,939</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$3,533</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>$6,081</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: General Purpose Operating Fund Classification, 2000/2001 to 2004/2005

The change in proportionate support by the Provincial Government has led the University to rely more significantly on tuition revenues. While the University has raised tuition fees across the board, it has also diversified its tuition fee strategy and has introduced differential fees for higher programs and for international students. There has also been a significant investment by the University in its fundraising goals and we are expected to exceed the ambitious goal of $125 million identified in the Reaching New Heights capital campaign.
Federal programs over the past decade have provided a significant infusion of support for research within post-secondary institutions across the country from initiatives such as the Canada Research Chairs Program, increased funding for the Tri-Council granting councils, investment in the Canada Foundation for Innovation and indirect funding for research. There has also been enhanced research funding within the province of British Columbia through investment in the British Columbia Knowledge and Development Fund (BCKDF) and in the creation of a smaller version of the CRC Program known as the British Columbia Leadership Endowment Fund.

Simon Fraser University's faculty members have attracted a steadily increasing level of research and contract funding with the total amount doubling over the past decade: from $21.4 million in 1994/1995 to slightly more than $49 million in 2004/2005. This growth reflects the outstanding quality of research being conducted at Simon Fraser University.

The chronic lack of provincial support for infrastructure and facilities development over the past decade combined with skyrocketing construction costs in the lower mainland have placed unparalleled pressures on financial resources to continue with the development initiatives underway. Unprecedented efforts to stay the course of the vision for these capital projects totaling in excess of $400,000,000 have been required. Even with the spate of capital projects underway completed, Simon Fraser University will have only met, and not surpassed, the physical facilities objectives required to meet the enrolment targets of 2005/2006, and future enrolment growth will place new pressures on the research and teaching space available. A long-term strategy with core infrastructure funding will be critical if we are to meet our enrolment projections by 2025 while sustaining the quality expected and demanded of Simon Fraser University. This has import for our academic structure. The capacity for development of our physical facilities may determine our future growth strategy and the types of academic expansion we undertake. The dependency of laboratory sciences and technological arts on an adequate physical plant is the most obvious case of impact, but there are undoubtedly others.

E. Changing Intellectual Environment

There have been several general transformations in the intellectual environment over the University's forty year history. First, the conception of the University as a place of inquiry, discovery and broad-based learning where knowledge is pursued as an independent good, and where citizens of the world are created, has been supplemented. There has been an increasing emphasis on the potential application, commercialization, and direct introduction of knowledge creation into the world in which we live.

Second, there is an increasing belief that multidimensional, multi-perspective, and multidisciplinary approaches to research questions provides added value. As a consequence there have been significant redirections, particularly among research funding agencies, to support interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and collaborative research initiatives. Undoubtedly these changes in the intellectual environment have had and will continue to have a direct impact on research and education and ultimately in the birth of new programs and disciplines.

Such a notable change in the direction of the research granting funding strategy, however, must be viewed critically. We should not let this contemporary focus of priority be equated with a diminishment in the value of traditional discipline-based inquiry. Simon Fraser University to date has managed to effectively balance its response to the opportunities afforded by the changes in the intellectual environment while simultaneously preserving its core commitments to traditional, discipline-based knowledge generation, discovery and innovation. Going forward, we must ensure that, while we maintain the ability to provide
the mechanisms of adaptability and support necessary to successfully participate in new frontiers of knowledge, we also ensure that we preserve and reaffirm our commitment to our core disciplines. Any structural reform at Simon Fraser University must bear in mind this fundamental commitment.

F. Pedagogical Innovation

The core educational experiences of Simon Fraser University are generally provided through relatively traditional pedagogical approaches to learning. However, there have been some significant experiments in our curriculum and major new initiatives. The experimental Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue has been extraordinarily successful. Its cohort approach to thematic study focuses on teamwork, service learning and lateral thinking and has become a model of curricular innovation. Other cohort-based learning programs are also progressing – Explorations and Tech One programs at Surrey, and a new Science One program is under development. It is anticipated that these curricular structures could be used as "book ends" to the undergraduate experience combining broad-based introductions to thematic study and preparation for advanced learning, as well as a capstone strategy to develop a final integration of the undergraduate learning experience.

Other curricular innovation includes the new joint degree program between Zhejiang University in China and Simon Fraser University's School of Computing Science and a proposed similar program in Business Administration. This forward-looking program represents a distinctive academic experience for both Canadian and Chinese students and significantly expands the perspectives of all involved. Such international learning partnerships have been recommended for further expansion. It will be critical that the academic structure of the University is transparent and legible enough to transcend international borders and permit academic endeavors of this type.

The new undergraduate curriculum initiative, which has introduced core competency breadth, quantitative reasoning and written communication skills as the core of undergraduate learning, will have a significant impact on the flow of students across traditional disciplinary boundaries. This expansion of the horizon of student experience aims to provide students with an increasingly broad-based understanding of the world in which they live. It will also bring faculty from non-cognate disciplines together as they interact around the goals and objectives of this all-encompassing curricular initiative.

The Task Force envisions that there will be calls on Simon Fraser University to further diversify its approaches to learning. The pace of intellectual and technological change will both require new areas and modes of lifelong learning, new certificate programs, and a level of responsiveness to new fields that as yet may be unimagined. There are also sweeping changes in areas of international relationships, national and international safety and security, international health issues, the interrelation between organic and mechanical sciences, to name a few, that will likely create new areas of inquiry that are only just emerging.

We must ensure that our academic structure enables us to successfully mediate the changing and contemporary world in which we exist and the demands for curricular change and innovation that will arise. At the same time it must remain grounded in the raison d’être of universities and the traditions of knowledge inquiry, discovery, and creation that have historical traction and help to maintain institutional stability.
VII. SFU's Values and Strategic Vision

A. Values of SFU

As the Task Force traced the history of Simon Fraser University and reflected on its vision, values and commitment documents, we have concluded that there is a continuous articulation from 1965 to the present day of our core values. The desire to continue to uphold these core values will be a major framework by which we will assess the effectiveness of the current academic structure at the University. The structure must serve to support, enhance and protect our core values.

The Task Force has identified four core values that extend equally to our initiatives in educational programming, research, and the student experience. In listing them thus, they may appear to be autonomous or extractable from other values. However, they are integrally interrelated and the separation suggested below is for expository convenience only.

(i) Innovation and Excellence

All of our teaching, research, and outreach initiatives aim to be innovative and excellent. These values are the cornerstone of Simon Fraser University just as they are for most organizational entities. In the University context, innovation occurs across the full range of knowledge development and discovery, in the processes and approaches to inquiry, in the ways in which phenomenon become understood and explored, and in the ways in which the knowledge that is created contributes to the understandings of the discipline or to the ways in which such knowledge can be applied, adopted or integrated within the society in which we live. Innovation also occurs with the educational programming in the development of pedagogical approaches, the creation of new programs, the modes of delivery of the educational units, and the ways in which we stimulate the process of learning. Such innovation and excellence has manifested itself at Simon Fraser University though in distinctive ways. The commitment to liberal arts and science education, to comprehensive educational experiences; to supplemental learning environments such as tutorials, practicums and international field schools and exchanges; to the flexibility of the trimester system; to interdisciplinarity and to distinctive foci within the boundaries of traditional disciplines: all indicate the implementation of the values of innovation and excellence.

While these values are embedded within our core sciences and liberal arts they have also framed our decisions to develop the specific combination of applied and professional programming that now defines our Faculties of Applied Sciences, Business Administration, and Education. The decision to enter the field of health-related research and programming in new ways but not pursue the route of some traditional institutions to associate health with Medical and Nursing Schools, signifies that we continue our initial traditions of innovation and distinctiveness.

We have also innovated in our approaches to the undergraduate experience. The opportunity for exploration is entrenched in many programs with our structure of having majors remain undeclared until 60 credits have been acquired. We have also adopted a structure of enhanced learning with the decision to define SFU by its tutorial and open lab learning structures. The new undergraduate curriculum requirements for breadth, quantitative reasoning and written communication abilities have further distinguished Simon Fraser University's undergraduate institutions from many other Canadian post-secondary institutions.
We remind our readers that while we have highlighted examples of recent initiatives, the reputation for excellence that has been established for Simon Fraser University emanates significantly from our traditional disciplines. The Academic Structure must continue to encourage, support and provide opportunity for continued innovation and excellence both within existing disciplines and beyond them.

(ii) Integration

In most of the strategic planning documents reviewed by the Task Force, the term interdisciplinarity was used as a defining feature and goal of Simon Fraser University. We reaffirm this commitment but feel that there is an additional component of this commitment that we have chosen to term “integration”.

Integration encompasses the many ways by which we strive to infuse the undergraduate teaching experience with our research activity. This is accomplished in the most straightforward way through the engagement of research faculty in undergraduate teaching and in their design and development of curriculum. It is also accomplished through the opportunities provided to graduate students (and occasionally undergraduate students) to participate in the specific research projects of faculty through research assistantship roles.

The academic structure must ensure that all mechanisms of integration are effectively promoted and sponsored.

(iii) Engagement

Simon Fraser University seeks to integrate our knowledge creation with the needs of the global society within which we live, through the understanding of phenomena, and the application, adaptation, adoption and commercialization of the knowledge that is created. We have a life-long history of engagement with students, researchers, educators and other members of our external communities. Our value for engagement is reflected in the extraordinarily diverse ways that we have developed external partnerships both locally and internationally, and with public and private sector organizations. Joint degree programs between Zheijhang University in China and SFU's School of Computing Science is an example at one end of the spectrum. Ballard's support and collaborative research activity in fuel-cell research is another. The activity of the Centre for Economic Development in the downtown Eastside of Vancouver represents another spectrum of integration with partners external to the University. Multi-university endeavors such at MITACS or RIIM provide yet another example. There are countless others. Together they identify the extent to which Simon Fraser University has succeeded in engaging itself with external partners.

We have also been actively involved with the physical and intellectual life of our communities, as is evident in our multi-campus strategy to provide direct opportunities for local engagement with our surrounding neighborhoods in downtown Vancouver, Kamloops, and Surrey. In programmatic ways we have interjected the intellectual environment into local coffee shops and neighborhood venues with our Philosopher's Cafe program. We have also contributed the intellectual expertise of our faculty on contemporary issues through the press, public seminars and discussions. And we have created a comprehensive portfolio of outreach and distance education programming to take the University's activities, research and programming to citizens outside of our local communities.

Our engagement with learners beyond the University’s traditional student population occurs at the earliest stages of academic development. It is showcased in the HIPPY program through Continuing Studies and the later years of life through the curriculum of the Seniors Program.
Together, these various initiatives, each extending to a different aspect of the contextual situation within which SFU operates, express the long-standing and on-going commitments to engagement. Indeed, they reveal why Simon Fraser University has the international reputation that it does for being one of the most engaged universities in Canada.

This defining characteristic of Simon Fraser University must be supported by our academic structure and we must remedy existing or future structural impediments that prevent us from continuing our success in this area.

(iv) Adaptability and Flexibility

We must also add to our list of core values, the respect and attention we play to the qualities of adaptability and flexibility.

Simon Fraser University’s level of program diversification has demonstrated our awareness of and responsiveness to changing demographic, political and intellectual forces. Within the past two years alone, new programs have emerged in International Leadership, International Studies, Mechatronics, Biomedical Engineering, Urban Studies, Global Wealth and Asset Management, Population and Public Health and Global Health. While not an exhaustive list, this is representative of the degree to which Simon Fraser University is able to adapt and respond to the world in which it lives.

The value of adaptability and flexibility are also deeply embedded in the structural design of Simon Fraser University. Our overlapping structures of a trimester system, a tutorial system, part-time learning opportunities, executive programming, and encouragement of knowledge exploration, provide remarkable variety and flexibility for students. Such diversification of opportunity has, however, contributed to a course access problem that is hindering timely degree completion for some students. The appropriate balance between flexibility and successful student experiences must be determined and implemented.

B. Simon Fraser University in the Future

The Task Force has reviewed the major academic planning reports, strategic vision documents, value statements, and articulations of commitments and priorities over the University's 40 year history. There has been a large degree of consistency across these planning documents, and an undeniably recurring commitment to the central values of innovation, excellence, integration, interdisciplinarity, community outreach and engagement, flexibility and responsiveness, program diversification and responsiveness, a commitment to core liberal arts, social science and science programming and research, and a dedication to developing professional and applied programming and approaches to inquiry.

The Task Force recognizes that it is critical to articulate our understanding of the University's future but we do not wish to merely reiterate the detail provided in other documents. Our mandate is not to write a strategic planning document for Simon Fraser University's future: our mandate is to assess whether our academic structure will enable us to succeed in the vision developed by others. It is essential though in assessing the academic structure for Simon Fraser University’s future that we review the operational framework that is guiding us. We have chosen therefore to encapsulate our understanding of what the
University will look like if continued to be shaped by current strategic planning documents in the following summary.\(^{12}\)

"SFU in the Year 2025"

- **SFU will be known for the value it places upon, and commitment it has to, innovation, excellence, integration, engagement and adaptability;**
- **SFU will be recognized as the best comprehensive research university in Canada. Its academic strength and comprehensiveness will be demonstrated through its:**
  - Reaffirmation and continued commitment to its liberal arts and sciences core
  - Ongoing development and innovation of applied and professional programming
  - Significant presence and growth in Health Sciences programming
  - Significant growth and development in strategic research areas including Communication, Computation and Technology; Culture, Society and Human Behavior; Economic Organization, Public Policy and Global Community; Environment; and Health
  - Evidence of differentiation from other universities
  - Development of new academic programming within and beyond traditional disciplines;

- **SFU will be known for its far-reaching international strategy:**
  - This will be in evidence through the many significant international educational and research partnerships between individual faculty members and institutional arrangements, faculty research teams and exchanges, student study abroad programs and joint degree learning opportunities, the expanded internationalization of the curriculum, and the increased opportunity for study and research into global issues;

- **SFU will be recognized for its expanded presence in providing outstanding graduate education;**

- **SFU will provide one of the best student experiences in Canada**
  - It will become a destination for graduate learning with unparalleled opportunities to engage at the frontiers of knowledge and understand the potential intersections with other disciplines
  - It will offer a unique undergraduate educational experience characterized by the following:
    - required experiences in writing intensive learning, quantitative understanding, and knowledge breadth,
    - innovative pedagogical approaches and diversified learning opportunities (cohort programs, semesters of study, capstone courses, supplemental learning in tutorials, open laboratories, and technological enhancements)
    - experiential learning by means of cooperative education, research participation, civic engagement and/or international study
  - It will offer a rich spectrum and integrated network of academic and non academic student services, supports and experiences;

- **SFU’s will have a projected student, staff and faculty complement as follows:**
  - an undergraduate student complement of 25,000 – 30,000 FTE
  - a graduate student complement of 6,500 – 7,500 FTE
  - an international graduate and undergraduate student complement of 3,000 – 3,500 FTE
  - a faculty complement of 1,500 – 1,800 FTE with more than 150 faculty recognized as distinguished scholars and/or educators
  - a staff complement of 2,000 FTE;

- **SFU will have the most comprehensive network of life-long learning opportunities in Canada;**

- **SFU will have a comprehensive structure for seeding research and pedagogical innovation; and,**

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"A Multi-year Enrolment Plan for Simon Fraser University (covering 2004/05 to 2010/2011)"
SFU will continue its multi-campus strategy based on differentiated foci at each of its four campuses while simultaneously ensuring effective intercampus connectivity and a coherent and unified SFU identity

- SFU will have significantly expanded physical facilities in Surrey, in Vancouver, and on Burnaby Mountain;
- SFU will have developed the best example of an integrated and engaged urban campus in the country at its Vancouver campus. The campus is expected to have:
  - an undergraduate and graduate student complement of 3,000 credit FTEs
  - significantly expanded non-credit programming
  - significantly expanded use of the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue;
- SFU will have fully developed academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate level in all Faculties at the Surrey campus and such programming will be distinctive for its cohort learning style and intimate learning experiences;
- SFU will have a defined presence at the Great Northern Way campus.

This is the future that our academic structure must represent, support and enable.

VIII. Evaluation of SFU’s Academic Structure

A. Changes in Academic Structure and Restructuring Initiatives of the Past

In 1965/66 Simon Fraser University had a relatively lean academic organizational structure consisting of thirteen departments arranged into three Faculties (Arts, Education and Science) which remained in effect until 1970/1971. Today Simon Fraser University has a comprehensive academic organization consisting of 34 Departments and Schools aligned across six Faculties. Three of these Faculties – Business Administration, Education and Health Sciences - are non-departmentalized, and thus the 34 Departments and Schools are located across three Faculties. Schools, Departments and Faculties are complemented by an increasing number of independent academic programs that have yet to reach Departmental or School stature. They are to be found most predominantly in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and currently have very small faculty complements and enrolments. Some examples include the Asia Canada Program, Cognitive Science Program, Explorations Program, First Nations Studies Program, Graduate Liberal Studies Program, International Leadership Program, Urban Studies Program, the Master of Publishing Program, and the Masters of Public Policy Program. There are also small academic programs in other Faculties such as the Tech One Program in the Faculty of Applied Sciences or the Environmental Science Program and Pest Management Program in the Faculty of Science. The increasing number of programs demonstrates the remarkable way in which Simon Fraser University is able to diversify its programmatic offerings in response to contemporary society. It also reflects the supplemental areas of expertise and interests embedded in the growth of the faculty complement. Together, the broad range of academic Programs, Departments, Schools and Faculties establish Simon Fraser University as one of Canada's leading comprehensive research 13 universities.

As would be expected by the growth in Departments, Schools and Faculties over the past 40 years, there have been a number of occasions in the history of the University where the academic structure has been

13 The term "comprehensive" is adopted from the Macleans categorization to mean a Canadian University that comprises of academic programming across the arts, sciences, professional and applied disciplines at the undergraduate masters and doctoral level but which does not have a traditional Medical School.
substantially reviewed. The first major review occurred in 1976 and continued in various forms through to 1978 when The Report of the University Review Committee was released making nearly 150 recommendations for action. The first listed recommendation was for "The Senate Committee on Academic Planning [to] review the advantages and limitations of the present structure of all Faculties in order that the integration of the departments involved within the University be optimized." The outcome of this review was to conclude that,

"drastic changes in Faculty organization at this time would be premature and perhaps ultimately restrictive. The main reason for this conclusion is the perception that external needs are causing changes in university education, for example, an increase in objective-based, usually interdisciplinary, studies, but that the trends have not yet progressed sufficiently far to be clearly adequate reasons for major organizational change."  

The next major reconsideration of the Faculty Structure was derived from the work of the President's Advisory Committee on University Priorities. This led to the decisions outlined in President William G. Saywell's address to the University community on September 20, 1984 - "The Future of Simon Fraser University". The address painted a picture of financial constraint and strategic opportunity. By its end, the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies had been disbanded:

"I now address my comments to the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies and to the Faculty of Engineering Science. In the past, there can be no doubt that interdisciplinary studies, as the nurturing ground for young and innovative programs, has served this University well. ... But here we must measure our past accomplishments against the current climate and look to structure our success in new ways. I have been persuaded by the PACUP recommendations that the time has come to enliven our future prospects by moving mature departments within the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies to homes closer to their cognate disciplines. ... I am [therefore] asking Vice President Ivany to take a recommendation forward to senate calling for the dissolution of the Faculty and for the redistribution of its programs across the University."

By the same address, a new Faculty of Applied Sciences had been born:

"I propose the creation of the new Faculty [of Applied Sciences] out of the conviction that the four areas [Departments of Computing Science, Kinesiology, Engineering Science and Communication] have a common allegiance to the pursuit of knowledge that is at once both applied and theoretical. I believe that they provide a refined complement to our inquiries at the interface between man and the machine – at the frontier where the technological applications derived from human ingenuity can be directed to humane ends and the improvement of the human condition. As both cognate and complementary disciplines, their association in a Faculty of Applied Science will strike a new path for innovation at this University."


15 Source: Bryan P. Beirne, Dean of Graduate Studies, in document titled "Status and Organization of Academic Units" submitted to the Vice President, Academic, Dr. J. Munro, May 6, 1980.

16 Page 6.

17 Pages 7-8.
Since that address in 1984/85 the Faculty structure remained constant until 2004/2005 when the new Faculty of Health Sciences was created. In contrast to the redistribution model adopted in 1984/85, the new Faculty was uniquely independent from existing program areas. Although it evolved from the Institute for Health Research and Education (itself a new entity in 2000), the Faculty of Health Sciences was mandated to establish unique health-related research and programming initiatives that would establish Simon Fraser University as a distinctive player in health programming in Canada. Within this strategy was the principle to build upon, but not duplicate, the strengths of the more than 100 health researchers dispersed across established disciplines within the University. The Faculty of Health Sciences has recently completed development of three teaching programs: Population and Public Health, Global Health and a multi-disciplinary Bachelor degree in Health Sciences.

B. How the Academic Structure Supports our Values and Priorities

The Task Force believes that the academic structure of Simon Fraser University must serve to support, enhance and protect our core values of innovation, excellence, integration, engagement and adaptability. It makes visible our values, strengths, and distinctiveness in an increasingly competitive globalized reality. The academic structure must also help us to retain balance among the inherent tensions of the University and ensure that we can effectively continue to be relevant as the intellectual, political, social, economic, and international context changes.

In consideration of the changing environment within which Simon Fraser University has evolved, the Task Force believes that we have succeeded. We have strong foundations to build upon as we strive towards our future. We have successfully navigated through a changing intellectual environment. We have increased our international reputation for the ways in which we integrate ourselves into, and engage with, our communities. We have been able to attract an outstanding student, staff and faculty complement of increasingly international character. We have successfully participated in and defined many emerging frontiers of knowledge and we have made significant contributions to the established disciplines. Our academic structure has nourished and preserved the primacy of discipline-based knowledge creation and exploration as well as educational programming.

The Task Force takes note of the many ways in which programs have been created within and outside of traditional disciplines. As such, the current academic structure within its historical context is viewed to have supported new program development within the existing structures of current disciplines and in some instances as independent academic units. Examples of new program development within existing Departments might include Legal Studies in the School of Criminology, Forensic Studies in the Department of Archaeology, and Mechantronics in the School of Engineering Science. Examples of independent program development outside of existing disciplinary structures can be represented by the Master of Public Policy Program, Urban Studies Program and School for International Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and by the School for Interactive Arts and Technology in the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

The Task Force can point to examples where interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary academic programs and research initiatives have developed within the current academic structure at Simon Fraser University. The new Biomedical Engineering program involving Kinesiology and Engineering Science; the Geographic Information Science program between Geography and Computing Science; or the French Language Cohort program in Public Administration and Community Development between Political
Science and French serve as illustrations. The programming within the Faculty of Health Sciences is representative of the way in which the University is able to promote, foster and enhance interdisciplinarity using the structural elements we have at present.

The Task Force has observed that, within our existing academic structures, research has been highly successful. Excellence in research has been recognized repeatedly through our success in research funding competitions by the national granting councils, in our award of 41 Canada Research Chairs, in the national and international Centres of excellence or multi-institutional partnerships we engage in and/or lead, as well as evidenced by the individual recognition received by a significant number of our faculty from their disciplines and the organizations and foundations that support leading research in universities.

Further, the Task Force has noted the ways in which Simon Fraser University has successfully imagined (though not always implemented without difficulty) innovative approaches to education. In this regard, the Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue, the Leonardo project in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, the Dual-Degree program between Zhejiang University in China and our School of Computing Science, the Explorations, TechOne and Science One programs at Surrey, the Field Programs through the Faculty of Education, and the sweeping changes in the undergraduate curriculum serve as important evidence.

The Task Force believes the University has managed fairly effectively to balance the tension that exists between knowledge conceived within a framework of inquiry, explanation, and discovery of phenomenon and knowledge conceived in a context of its application, adoption, and potential for commercialization. Further, we have managed to incorporate both research and professional programming within existing disciplines and beyond them. This is of course, not to conclude that this tension has been perfectly balanced in all areas of the University but the Task Force does not believe that our academic structure is systematically exacerbating this inherent tension.

As is evident in the synopsis above, the Task Force concludes that Simon Fraser University should be proud of its accomplishments and progress to date. We have evolved effectively over our 40 year history. We must, turn now, to a consideration of the extent to which we are positioned for the future.

Earlier in this discussion paper we explored the trends, opportunities and challenges that present themselves as the demographic, intellectual, and financial contexts change around us. The University is a remarkably different institution than 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%. We have four different campuses spread across three cities and we have, since inception tripled the number of academic schools and departments and doubled the number of Faculties.

Enrolment has, to date, operated primarily in a supply-driven enrolment environment. This is dramatically changing. Within the next decade, the age 18-21 population of British Columbia (one of our primary enrolment populations) will decline by 3.6%. At the same time, the age 25-29 population of British Columbia will grow by 21.2%. Under the current projections of our continuing growth as an institution to 2025, we will be adding an additional 5,000 to 10,000 FTEs. To meet our growth goals and to respond to a significant shift toward a demand-driven enrolment market, the University must ensure that our research and program strengths are highly visible to prospective students and that we are meeting the increasing needs for graduate educational opportunities.
Within the changing intellectual context we can see pressures and opportunities for expressing and deepening our research intensification. The world in which we live is becoming increasingly complex, interconnected and multi-dimensional. New research questions are emerging, entire areas of knowledge are being opened and the pace of knowledge development is occurring at break-neck speed. Simon Fraser University has established a reputation for research excellence. We must expand upon this past success and further intensify our mandate for, and commitment to, research, capitalize on our strengths, and engage students more fully in our research program, particularly at the graduate level.

Within the financial context, the University is confronted with a substantial proportional reduction of operating funding from the Provincial Government. Within the short period 2000/01 to 2004/05 the proportion of the operating budget from the BC Provincial Grant dropped from 69.2% to 53.9%. To continue to sustain high quality educational programming and excellent research facilities, the University has had to increasingly diversify its funding strategy. There is every indication that such diversification will become increasingly important in the future. We must therefore ensure that the University’s reputation for excellence be strengthened, that we are highly visible to prospective contributors to the University and that our programs resonate with their interests. We must ensure that students recognize our distinctive programming opportunities and attest to their high quality. We must expand our international reputation to assist us in our financial diversification strategies. We must engage in research that will attract support from provincial and federal research investment programs and other contributors. In securing the financial viability to remain one of the best comprehensive research institutions in the country we must remain absolutely and fundamentally committed to the intellectual autonomy of the University, to preserving the liberty of our institution, to honoring our core commitments and to fundamentally preserving the raison d’etre of a University to engage in knowledge conceived within a framework of inquiry, explanation, and discovery of phenomenon.

The Task Force believes we must pursue the opportunities before us so that we will excel in our future, prevent crisis as external contexts unfold, and secure for Simon Fraser University a legacy appropriate to the illustrious beginnings of this institution. The opportunities we see before us are those that relate to curricular innovation, interdisciplinarity, strategic academic strength, organization effectiveness, visibility and governance reform.

The Task Force has not engaged in a thorough assessment of any of the examples that we will be drawing upon over the course of the next few pages. They are intended to draw attention to the various issues that exist without in any way drawing conclusions about the unit used as an exemplar.

(i) Opportunities for Curricular Innovation

Following our tradition of excellence and innovation, we have been able to successfully envision several curricular initiatives that will define us for our creativity, imagination, and distinctiveness in undergraduate education. These innovations, however, have recently represented an increasing number of structural challenges for the University.

We begin our discussion with the “Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue”. This undergraduate program is a one-semester long period of intense study that brings together students from across the University to explore the knowledge, approaches, methodologies, paradigms, and tools of a wide variety of disciplines. The integrative nature of the subject matter and the way in which students become engaged with internal and external communities leads to the development of a broad-based holistic level of understanding in a particular subject. Students “step out” of traditional disciplinary perspectives and are exposed to the
expertise of faculty from across the University. Such far-reaching breadth means, however, that the program does not naturally affiliate with any single academic area of the University. The faculty member who champions this program is a Professor of Biological Sciences, Dr. Mark Winston. The program is flourishing and seeking to expand.

For obvious reasons, the program does not belong in the Department of Biological Sciences, and while it has equally limited fit in a single Faculty structure, it has been accommodated by the Dean of Science office. This provides some administrative structure related to student and academic issues, but it does not provide an adequate academic structure wherein the program would have natural affinity with other Programs, Departments, or Schools. It also lacks a voice in strategic planning and financial planning exercises within the University. Several fundamental questions need to be examined. Would this program be better nourished under a different structural configuration? How will it expand when it draws so heavily at this time on the interest of colleagues located around the University (there are currently no complement positions dedicated to this program)? How will those who seek to engage themselves in this unique program be evaluated and recognized by the discipline-derived expectations of their home academic areas? How does this program align next to traditional configurations of subject-based disciplines? These are important questions that must find answers not only for the Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue but for equally original curricular innovation in the future. The Task Force believes that the opportunity to investigate these questions afforded by its activities should be seized.

We now turn to a second example of curricular innovation represented by the new first year cohort-based programs at the Surrey campus such as Explorations within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and TechOne within the Faculty of Applied Sciences. The Directors of these programs report through to their respective Dean’s offices and their activities are Faculty-wide in nature. Without establishment by Senate as independent academic programs in the University structure these entities must get “tied” to an academic School or Department even when they are serving Faculty-wide interests and broad-based programming. At the time of this discussion paper, TechOne faculty are appointed through the School of Interactive Arts and Technology and the faculty associated with the Explorations program have an academic home in several Departments in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Conceptually this raises a question as to whether this is an effective outcome for the disciplines, the faculty, or the innovative programs. It also raises questions as to how programming initiatives that do not have a concomitant expectation or requirement for research align with the current academic structural configuration of the University.

The Task Force supports curricular innovations of the types identified above. There are questions, however, as to whether the current academic structure is one that will create the greatest opportunity for the University to continue its legacy of distinctive high quality educational experiences in the future and position us to effectively respond to a shifting recruitment environment that will demand evidence of excellence and innovation.
(ii) Opportunities for Interdisciplinarity

The Task Force has also considered the way in which there are opportunities for interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity to develop at Simon Fraser University. While there may be others, we have identified three models that structure comprehensive interdisciplinatory, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary initiatives at Simon Fraser University. First, we identify what can be described as a “structurally integrated” model. The Faculty of Health Sciences serves as an example of this first model. It aims to bring together social, cultural and population perspectives of health together with basic biomedical, and applied disciplines within a single umbrella and together they adopt a multi, trans- and inter-disciplinary framework to each of the program areas. Second there is the “cross-latticing” model of which the Cognitive Science program might be emblematic. While programmatically independent, it has a primary affiliation with a single academic unit and is technically housed by the Department of Linguistics. However, the disciplinary expertise of Linguistics, Philosophy, Computing Science and Psychology are all significant components of the independent and evolving discipline of Cognitive Science. Third, the Task Force believes there is also representation of a “cognate” model for structuring interdisciplinarity. This model might be represented by the Environmental Science program, where the knowledges and approaches of inquiry from the Biological Sciences, Physics, Earth Sciences, and Geography come together and yet are independently contributing elements to an overall program. Similarly joint programs such as Biomechanics or Forensic Science might also be covered by this third model.

The Task Force recognizes that these three different models can effectively serve the development of interdisciplinarity. It is, however, the view of the Task Force that the University should assess the degree to which each particular initiative is being supported and advanced by the model under which it currently falls.

In addition to the models of interdisciplinarity already in place at Simon Fraser University, the Task Force also considered the degree to which our academic structure stimulates and incubates multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and programming for the future. We note that affording opportunities for additional developments in multidisciplinarity or interdisciplinary research must be seen as supplemental to the importance of discipline-based research and programming.

The Task Force has noted the development of the Simon Fraser University Community Trust Endowment Fund (CTEF) and is interested by the ways in which it offers an opportunity for the stimulation of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in one of the five thematic areas identified in the Strategic Research Plan for Simon Fraser University in 2005. The thematic areas include: (i) communication, computation and technology, (ii) culture, society and human behavior, (iii) economic organization, public policy and global community, (iv) environment, and (v) health. The University’s investment in collaborative research initiatives through the Community Trust Endowment Fund will prove to be a critical component of Simon Fraser University’s overall strategy in the area of integration and interdisciplinarity with regard to our research mission.

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18 The SFU Community Trust was established to support the overall research environment of Simon Fraser University through annual contributions of up to $500,000 for each of five years for research initiatives that:

- enhance SFU’s research intensity and distinctiveness
- support the implementation of SFU’s Strategic Research Plan, and
- attract and support outstanding students, particularly those who will enhance the University’s research capacity, and whose education will be enhanced by a research intensive experience. [18]
The Task Force is not certain, however, whether this structure provides a sufficient mechanism for the development of interdisciplinary teaching programs or for the incubation of new areas of integrated interdisciplinary research and teaching strength over the long-term. Nor does the CTEF, understandably given its focus on five thematic areas, provide support for interdisciplinary research and teaching programs outside of the thematic areas. The CTEF model though of central encouragement and support for development of multi-disciplinary engagement is interestingly compatible with the way in which Institutes have been used at some other institutions as incubators of multi-disciplinary innovation. Notwithstanding the desire for a more stabilized and enduring structure, the initiative is seen by the Task Force as a very significant initiative of Simon Fraser University to inspire multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research at the institution.

The Task Force believes that this model might be extended to incubate integrated interdisciplinary teaching and research programs that would bring together faculty into a focused relationship for a period of time, perhaps augmented through distinguished visiting professorships and enhanced graduate learning opportunities, to help seed emerging research and teaching program areas. While some institutions have used the Institute structure to house this type of initiative, it is not presumed that this is necessarily the structural entity that might be considered at Simon Fraser University.

(iii) Opportunities for Strategic Strength

The Task Force, in its evaluation of the academic structure of the University, by necessity must look to determine whether the structural configuration of units recognizes the academic strengths present or developing within the University. The Task Force finds evidence of three different potential approaches for developing strategic strength at Simon Fraser University: the supplemental approach, the clustering approach, and the rapid development approach. Again the Task Force reminds the reader that the examples provided below are intended for illustrative purposes only. The areas identified have not been examined to determine if they are appropriate for further strategic development. This would be the decision of a second phase of evaluation.

At several junctures over a period of nearly twenty years, Simon Fraser University explored establishing a presence in Health. By the time the last review commenced in 1999, there were over 100 faculty members (1/6 of the faculty complement at that time) engaged in health-related research across the University and yet in most quarters, Simon Fraser University was not known to have any presence in Health. It was the Steering Committee’s ultimate determination that an Institute for Health Research and Education should be established. By design, IHRE was to be a University-wide initiative. As a consequence, from its very inception, it was recognized that there would be issues of where to establish the Institute within the existing academic structure. Placement in the Faculty of Science, or Arts and Social Sciences, or Applied Sciences would immediately establish impressions and reinforce concerns about the nature of programming and research that would eventually evolve. Institutes also are not empowered with the rights for faculty appointments nor student complements. It was clear sooner, rather than later, that we must move to a different organizational structure and so the Faculty of Health Sciences was created. Despite the significant population of researchers across the University engaged in health research and the presence of independent academic units that might naturally affiliate with a Faculty of Health Sciences, the University specifically chose to institute a constraint preventing any single faculty member or academic unit from relocating into the new Faculty until such time as the new Faculty had independently determined its own unique presence in health-related research and programming. The constraint is
scheduled to expire in September 2006 and therefore, there will soon be an opportunity for the Faculty and other units or individuals to reconsider their future.

The Faculty of Health Science example has been detailed here because of the way in which it provides an example of how through evolution of the University, a critical strength in a general category of research emerged. This area of strength for the University was dispersed and not readily visible, and there was considerable unmet demand by the external community for health-related programming. Equally important was that the strength that existed was distinctive from many other universities engaged in health-related research and programming and this gave the University an opportunity to be recognized for its unique contributions. The strategy for the Faculty of Health Sciences, however, was not to extract the 100 researchers from across campus and position them within a new organizational unit. Instead, it was determined to develop a structure that could supplement that core strength that existed in all corners of the University. This “supplemental” approach is not the only way for the development of strategic strength.

A second strategy is for dispersed but highly cognate academic units (and/or in some cases including a few individual researchers) to determine that they and the University would be best advanced if they were clustered together under a new umbrella structure that would lead to something greater than their individual parts. Such creation of critical mass provides for new opportunities for self determination, for strategic visioning, for increased visibility, for increased opportunity for distinctiveness, and for increased representation in terms of the overall priorities of the University and in terms of fiscal discussions and decision-making. Opportunities for this type of “clustering” approach might be available to an area such as Environmental Science where the Dean of Science and a recent External Review team have commented on the high degree of existing strength, its current fragmentation, and the opportunity for significant recognition and contribution to the field should a clustered approach be considered.

A final way by which the University develops academic strength occurs more immediately through a series of strategic planning decisions and community responsiveness actions. The creation of a new School of Interactive Arts and Science combined with a significant expansion of the School of Communications has created a significant new critical mass of researchers and educators at Simon Fraser University in the Communication, Media and Technology areas. The affinity of the expanded and new programming in these areas has substantially aligned them with the strengths and interests in the School for the Contemporary Arts. Together there may be an opportunity to establish a very unique presence in Canada, and perhaps in North America.

(iv) Opportunities for Increased Organizational Effectiveness

The significant increase in our faculty complement over the past five years and projected further expansion in the future, have brought, and will continue to bring an increasing diversity to the research expertise of our institution. The combination of decentralized planning and flexible academic structures such as the academic program have enabled Simon Fraser University to quite masterfully enter into new directions of research and learning as intellectual environments change, as new areas of knowledge develop and as the needs of our students and communities evolve and change. New programs and Schools such as the School for International Studies, the Urban Studies Program, the Masters in Public Policy, the Explorations Program, TechOne Program, and others have been developed. This program development is, of course, critical to the role of a University. The preservation of this nimble structure must be retained within the overall academic structure of the University. However, such program growth in the model of the current academic structure means that all academic entities have a similar academic organizational structure regardless of the size of the program, its enrolment base or its faculty complement. While this
challenges the units in basic policies ways (i.e. having enough members for a Tenure and Promotion Committee), it also leads to concerns about achieving critical masses for a faculty member’s intellectual engagement, for program stability for students, and for the cost-sustainability of this approach.

(v) Opportunities for Visibility

Faculty and degree designations are critical in the way in which they communicate to the external community what the academic priorities and values are of the University. The labels we attach to them thus carry significant import. At present our Faculties – Applied Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Health Sciences and Science – reveal our core commitments to the liberal arts and sciences and thus root us in the historical traditions of inquiry-based learning. They also signal our involvement in the application and adaptation of knowledge and preparation of individuals to engage in professional activities.

Our Faculty labeling also communicates things we are not. We are not a University engaged in Law or Medicine for example. We are not a University that organizes itself around pedagogical functions (i.e. a College of Graduate Studies and a College of Undergraduate Studies). We also do not identify ourselves by affiliations such as a Women’s College or Catholic College. The Task Force has noted earlier that it does not see the benefit in establishing a Faculty/College structure defined in pedagogical or affiliation terms.

As a critical element in our overall communication strategy, we must analyze the descriptors we have chosen (which represent the way in which we have clustered our activities) and evaluate whether our Faculty arrangement communicates the values we place on innovation, excellence, engagement, integration and adaptability. These must be evaluated within the tension of requiring our academic structure to have permanence and stability over time but also reflect our engagement within a contemporary world. They must also be legible beyond our borders, to those who come from other educational traditions and knowledge systems.

The current labeling may not communicate as effectively as we might wish our values of integration and innovation. One must look at sub-layers of the academic structure to see signs, if any, of integrative multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Applied Sciences, and Science. The non-departmentalized structures are, by nature, even less descriptive about our research and teaching priorities.

As we move to an increasingly demand-driven enrolment market within a context of an increasing number of educational providers, we must ask ourselves whether the world knows about our core strengths in liberal arts and science education and research, about the unique strengths we are developing in environmental science or at the interface of communication, technology and the arts, or about the innovation of our applied and professional programming? We must also ask ourselves whether our profile and visibility will enable us to continue to attract the world class faculty, skilled staff, and outstanding students that have so far marked our history. The University will always have as its primary goal to be the best comprehensive research university in the country; we must be certain that we will be recognized for such achievement.
(vi) Opportunities for Governance Reform

In exploring the various elements of structure and in trying to comprehend the ways in which inherent tensions of the University are heightened or diminished, the ways in which some initiatives have succeeded where others have struggled, the Task Force could not help but discuss at times the interface between the University’s governance environment (including the combination of policies, procedures and agreements that are legislated, negotiated, and/or collegially determined) and academic structure. It is equally true that where challenges are identified it is likely that resolutions might require multifaceted aspects of both the governance and structural framework. It is likely that the answer lies in a combination of both. As the University considers the question of how we might better uphold, promote, and realize our core values we need to examine simultaneously how our policies and procedures contribute. The consistent call for interdisciplinarity is seen by some members of the Task Force to sometimes confound and potentially even discourage engagement because of the way in which our performance review policies envision, evaluate and reward it. The way in which we have created academic reporting structures can create extraordinary complexities for multidisciplinary initiatives. Recall that during the initial hiring process for the School of Interactive Arts and Technology, a triumvirate decanal structure had to be invented and soon proved unwieldy as a long-term approach. The way in which the TechOne and Explorations faculty positions must find homes in external units also is indicative of constraints by our current policy environment.

In the context of the policies and procedures surrounding student enrolment, academic adjudication, program administration, and degree granting, the ways in which we imagine curricular innovation will have an impact on each of these areas. The Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue has implications on all of these dimensions. The creation of new curricular forms must be balanced by the need to meet our core value of flexibility, while simultaneously being able to create a sufficiently streamlined framework to ensure students can complete their studies in appropriate timeframes.

We do not wish to provide a detailed examination of the policy and procedural issues but rather to signal not only our appreciation of their influence on matters embedded in structural assessment but also to identify the need to closely attend to these parameters should a second phase be pursued.

C. Reconsidering the Key Question of the Task Force

We have examined the tensions inherent in a university and the values and commitments that have defined Simon Fraser University and which continue to frame our understanding of what we will be in the future. We have thought about the contextual forces that are shaping our world and which present opportunities and challenges for the University in contemporary society. We have reviewed the ways in which other universities have sought to define themselves through their academic structure and the reasons why some have engaged in restructuring exercises. We have traced the history of the academic structure at Simon Fraser University and examined where our strategic plans are directing us.

The Task Force is of the view that in important and fundamental ways our academic structure has effectively supported our success and the Task Force does not see a demonstrated need for University-wide restructuring. The Task Force does believe, however, that there are opportunities before us and changing contexts foreshadowed that must be considered and which may have implications for the academic structure in some areas. In particular, the Task Force has identified four issues that we believe require further discussion with the University community:
• Some curricular initiatives seem to be inadequately supported by the current academic structure.

• A variety of models of interdisciplinarity and approaches to the development of strategic strength are deployed at Simon Fraser University. Some academic areas might further advance the strategic goals, values and profile of the University if they were considered for further development under these frameworks, or if they adopted a different framework.

• There has been a tripling of the number of academic units since the University opened in 1965 and there are an increasing number of very small academic programs. There is reason to explore whether the equivalent administrative structure employed by all is effective for academic, collegial, administrative, financial, and managerial purposes.

• There is an opportunity to explore the creation of an incubator for combining interdisciplinary research programs with the creation of innovative academic programming.

The Task Force believes that collectively in considering the above four issues and in determining how we should proceed on each of them, we can secure for ourselves the future that collectively we are defining, and indeed we will emblemize our motto: "Nous Sommes Prêts!"

IX. Principles for Moving Forward

If it is ultimately determined by the Task Force and Senate that we need to proceed with a further process for any or all of the areas raised above, we propose that the process be guided by the following principles:

1. The University’s academic structure should continue to enhance and support innovation, excellence, integration, engagement and adaptability in teaching and research.

2. The University’s academic structure should address the three primary opportunities and challenges before us: it should position us to succeed in a demand-driven student enrolment environment; it should be financially viable within a diversified fiscal environment; and, it should advance our distinctiveness and strategic strengths.

3. The University’s academic structure should ensure that we continue to effectively transmit our values and our academic strengths so as to increase the University’s profile in strategic areas and feature the unique contributions that we have to offer.

4. The University’s academic structure should recognize the tensions that exist, keep balances where these are appropriate, enhance those that are productive and minimize those that are inhibiting.

5. The University’s academic structure should allow for responsiveness within a framework of stability. It should reaffirm our commitment to the liberal arts and sciences, to professional and applied programming, and to the fundamental value of discipline based inquiry and to the opportunities afforded by interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches.
6. The University’s academic structure should enable us to engage with, and respond to, increasingly diverse communities and student populations with needs that will change as the intellectual and economic contexts change.

7. The University’s academic structure should consider our multi-campus presence and ensure the sustained viability of the distinctiveness of each campus while simultaneously contributing to a unified identity for Simon Fraser University as a whole.

8. The University’s academic structure should foster the implementation of the University’s strategic plans, though it must also be able to accommodate supplementary strategic goals as they develop in the future.

9. The University’s academic structure should incorporate the increasing number of academic programs into structures that will ensure stability, provide the ability for the units to advance themselves to the fullest extent, provide engagement for its members, and minimize the risks of under-representation in priority setting and budgetary discussions.

10. The University’s academic structure should retain or enhance managerial and administrative effectiveness and efficiency particularly as it facilitates and supports effective planning, communication and decision making, collegial governance, and resource utilization.

11. Any proposed change to the University’s academic structure should be based on carefully considered analysis of the reasons and need for change, its impact on other academic units and their members, and the way in which it addresses each of these principles.

12. The process for examining the University’s academic structure should be one defined by its respectfulness of members of the University community, its transparency, and its opportunity for meaningful collegial engagement throughout.

X. Conclusion

A. Summary Comments

We have taken the reader on a comprehensive journey. We have done so with the goal of providing the University community with a clear understanding of where we have come from, what we value, and what our future looks to be. We have examined the elements of structure, their inherent tensions, and the ways in which structure can enhance or inhibit our progress. We have studied the academic structures of other universities and have explored the reasons that they have engaged in structural change and the outcomes they have achieved from doing so. The Task Force would like now to stand back and have you help us reconsider what we have learned, what issues around structure we may have missed, what strengths of our existing structure and what opportunities for future structures may not have been recognized or elucidated. We ask you to consider with us four focal areas, the principles we have defined, and advise us how you feel the University should now proceed.
B. Community Consultation Strategy

The Faculty Structure presents this discussion paper to begin a dialogue with all members of the University community. The future of Simon Fraser University cannot be conceived by 10 members of a Task Force; it must be created through dialogue, engagement and thoughtful exchange among the members of the University community.

Below is our current plan for consultation with the community on this discussion document. We would, however, welcome opportunities for further engagement at your suggestion, so please let us know if there are additional ways in which we can listen to or receive your ideas.

(1) Open forums have been arranged as follows:

July 17, 2006 – 1:30 – 3:00 pm (Halpern Centre Room 126, Burnaby Campus)
September 12, 2006 – 2:00 – 3:30 pm (Halpern Centre Room 126, Burnaby Campus)
September 15, 2006 – 9:30 – 11:00 am (Earl and Jennie Lohn Room 7000, Harbour Centre)
September 19, 2006 – 9:00 – 10:30 am (Galleria 3, Room 3090, SFU Surrey)

(2) We also welcome email or written feedback until September 22, 2006. Email can be sent directly to the Faculty Structure Task Force at faculty-structure@sfu.ca. Written responses should be sent to the Faculty Structure Task Force, c/o the Office of the Vice President, Academic, Strand Hall.

C. Steps Forward

At the conclusion of the community consultation process, the Task Force will reconvene to consider the input from the University community and develop its final report for submission to Senate.