“REMOVING BARRIERS: DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF SFU”

SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT

Phase 2 Task Force on Academic Structure Discussion Paper

Presented to the University Community
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Executive Summary

Introduction and Context

The Phase 2 Task Force on Academic Structure was established by Senate in November 2006 with a threefold mandate: (1) to review and recommend an overall academic configuration for Simon Fraser University; (2) to review and recommend a strategy that will provide definitional clarity, administrative effectiveness, and appropriate differentiation among the structural building blocks; and, (3) to recommend structural and/or policy changes that will enhance interdisciplinary innovation in the future. This Task Force builds upon the work of the Faculty Structure Task Force (2005/2006) which examined the 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 growth of the University has been extraordinary over the past decade, and we have witnessed dramatic changes in the range and scope of academic activities including the expansion of our activities to four campuses. We have also experienced significant changes in the external social, political, demographic, fiscal and intellectual contexts. During this time we have, consistent with our legacy, ensured that we are able to make meaningful contributions through our research, teaching and outreach to society and the world in which we live.

In November 2005, the first phase of academic restructuring (Faculty Structure Task Force) concluded:

“We believe it essential that Simon Fraser University preserve the foundations upon which it has been built. Any changes to Faculty structure therefore must preserve six pillars: strong core disciplines, a comprehensive liberal arts and science education, interdisciplinarity, integration with our many communities, excellence in educational programming and research, and an international reputation for innovation. ... With [our] foundations in place and kept intact, the Faculty Structure Task Force believes that where change is required, we must not hesitate and we must be prepared to be bold. We must direct ourselves to creatively imagine, design and build our future; to embrace change as opportunity; and, to construct an academic structure that will ensure that in all areas of the University, we can realize our goal to be the best comprehensive research university in Canada. (p.2, Final Report, FSTF)

We echo the view and need for preservation of core commitments and take up the challenge to creatively imagine the University of the future and seek change where that will contribute to new opportunities for us.

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1 Campuses include Burnaby Mountain campus, Surrey Campus, Vancouver campus (which includes Harbour Centre, the Wosk Centre for Dialogue, the Segal Graduate School of Business, and the various Contemporary Arts studio facilities in the downtown eastside) and the Kamloops campus. We also have a presence at the Great Northern Way Campus, but due to the joint institutional nature of this development we have not claimed it as an SFU campus in this report.
While we do not wish to engage here in a comprehensive discussion of the external social, demographic, political and economic contexts within the University of the future will find itself, we do believe it necessary to highlight several contextual factors that underpin our recommendations. These are summarized as follows:

(1) First, demographic changes in British Columbia will see a decline in the proportion of the population aged 18-21, will see BC Grade 12 enrolment flat line over the next decade, and will see a substantial increase to the population aged 25-29. Additionally, immigration continues to outgrow domestic population growth. These demographic shifts will have several important impacts on the University including an increasingly competitive recruitment environment for our traditional student body, an increasing need for post-graduate educational opportunities, an increasing need for the provision of accreditation programs for qualified immigrants seeking to qualify for careers in their new country, and an expanding need for a diverse array of lifelong learning opportunities.

(2) Second, diversification of the University’s revenue sources is becoming increasingly critical. In 2000/2001, the provincial government grant accounted for 69.2% of the University operating budget. By 2004/05, the grant represented only 53.9%. To continue to be able to sustain high quality academic programming and outstanding research, the University will have to continue to seek opportunities to diversify its finances. This means ensuring that we are positioned to take advantage of research funding opportunities from provincial and federal granting councils and by offering programming that will attract dedicated funding envelopes that may emerge from the provincial government. It also means that we must continue to expand our reputation for research and teaching excellence nationally and internationally so that we attract the best students from around the world, and that the overall vision, direction, and reputation of the University is seen as attractive to potential financial benefactors.

(3) Third, the province continues to expand access to post-secondary education and continues to diversify the post-secondary system. This demands from us that we be highly competitive in recruiting highly qualified undergraduate and graduate students. It also requires us to ensure that we are seen as one of the foremost comprehensive research intensive institutions in the country.

(4) Fourth, the University system in Canada appears to be showing initial signs of a new tiering of universities, with those institutions attracting more than $100 million in annual research funding identifying themselves as Tier I institutions. We are concerned that this tiering of Canadian Universities may have a direct impact on the way in which universities generally are able to participate in, and exert influence, provincial, national and, potentially even, international research agendas. We must ensure that Simon Fraser University is widely recognized nationally and internationally as a Tier 1 University.

(5) Fifth, the environment and climate changes have assumed unprecedented prominence in society. It is critical that Simon Fraser University be seen to be engaging in issues of societal concern and that we are seen as leaders in the study of, and discovery of solutions for, pressing world issues.

(6) Sixth, around the world, interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary and knowledge integration is achieving heightened importance, profile, and expanded presence within Universities. We do not believe this is simply a transitory trend. The President of Stanford University,
Dr. John Hennessy, has argued\(^2\) that the transformation of knowledge and understanding by multidisciplinarity will be as revolutionizing as technology has been over the past two decades. The Task Force believes that there is compelling evidence to support his prediction. We also believe that successful interdisciplinarity can only occur in the presence of successful and strong disciplines and so the multifaceted strategy we identify within our report is also aimed at supporting and nourishing our traditional disciplines.

(7) Seventh, and finally, the Task Force has observed an international trend toward expanded engagement, connectivity, and efforts to be relevant to communities and individuals by universities around the world.

It is within the context of these important shifts and directions, that the Task Force has concluded that we must design a University for 2025 that can be described by four key qualities. We note that many of these attributes are currently in evidence in various areas of the University. We recognize these strengths and aim to build upon them.

(1) Faculty members will see Simon Fraser University as a place where they can effectively pursue disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge discovery, application, and practice of their art; where they can easily share their discoveries, applications and arts with colleagues and communities; where they are able to identify and engage with colleagues with whom they wish to collaborate; where their energy and creativity for programmatic and research innovation will find incubation, support and development; and where this environment will lead to the attraction and retention of a world-class academic complement.

(2) Graduate students will see Simon Fraser University as a place where they are afforded an expanded range of outstanding programmatic options; where there is a diverse range of opportunities for disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses of study; where they are intimately connected with the research agenda and activities of the University; and where this combination will continue to be attractive to outstanding students interested in pursuing advanced disciplinary and interdisciplinary study.

(3) The design of our undergraduate programs will be recognizably distinct and of exceptional quality providing students with life-changing experiences, a wide range of opportunities for study, and which therefore, will continue to attract students of the highest caliber from local, national and international origins.

(4) Our communities, both locally and internationally, will see Simon Fraser University as a place where we fulfill our social responsibility to provide learning opportunities to all members of society through a comprehensive collection of programming that spans non-credit and credit learning; where we actively pursue and contribute to understanding and knowledge development concerning the social and environmental problems of the world; and where we provide our students with opportunities to learn with individuals, and participate in initiatives in communities around the world.

Our recommendations build upon the existing strengths and accomplishments of Simon Fraser University and ensure that, throughout the University, these qualities are showcased. We propose structures and policies that are more flexible and responsive, that provide for expanded

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\(^2\) This was a report of his words by Dr. Roberta Katz, Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning, Stanford University.
permeability between disciplinary boundaries, that create an environment for enhanced collaboration, that more clearly highlight strategic directions, that demonstrate our emphasis on, and commitment to, a distinctive educational experience for our students, and which recognize that we take seriously our role and obligation to address issues that are of pressing concern to citizens around the globe.

**Process and Structure of Report**

In January 2007, the Task Force issued a call for proposals to the University community. This call produced 25 proposals from a broad cross-section of the University. Given the number of proposals received and the need for detailed investigation and evaluation of each, the Task Force created five Academic Structure Working Groups to consider these proposals. Each Working Group was chaired by a member of the Task Force and augmented with several faculty members from the University community who had interests in the proposals being considered but who were not from any of the units identified in the proposals. A student representative, either graduate or undergraduate, was also a member of each Working Group.

The Working Groups engaged in extensive consultation with the units and individuals from whom proposals were submitted and met with interested members of the University community who wished to discuss proposals with the Working Groups. Working Group 3 which considered proposals from the broad areas of environment, development and sustainability, also held an Open Forum on the Environment for all interested members of the University community. In total, more than 260 members of the University community were consulted as part of the Working Groups’ activities. In June 2007, each Working Group submitted a report to the Task Force containing their assessment of the submissions they considered and their recommendations.

Upon receipt of the Working Group reports, the Task Force held five open forums - one on each of the Working Group reports. In total, approximately 225 members of the University community interacted with the Task Force and provided their views and insights on the recommendations and contents of the Working Group reports.

As the Task Force considered the Working Group reports and the feedback to them, it implemented several follow up processes. This included soliciting further information from the Schools of Engineering Science and Computing Science; seeking a formal indication of interest and commitment to a new Faculty from the Schools of Communication, Contemporary Arts, Interactive Arts and Technology and the Master of Publishing Program; initiating an independently led facilitation and visioning process around a potential initiative in the environment; engaging in a further collaborative development process for a vision statement of a new Faculty of Environment and Sustainability; and consulting with stakeholders in the TechOne Program.

Following release of our Discussion Document on December 17, 2007, the Task Force held four Open Forums and received a number of written submissions to our report, including one prepared on behalf of members of the Simon Fraser University Faculty Association. More than 125 members of the community engaged in this process of consultation and the feedback we
have received has, in important ways, affected the final shape and form of a number of our recommendations.

The large scope and tripartite nature of the Task Force mandate have resulted in a lengthy report in which we have laid out the structural framework for the University, examined issues and recommended new structural configurations, and considered and devised ways to enhance interdisciplinarity. To facilitate accessibility of our report we have decided to organize it into volumes. These are necessarily interrelated, but can also stand as topic focused sub-reports.

Volume I – Introduction and Background
Volume II – Major Structural Change
Volume III – Interdisciplinarity
Volume IV – Programs, Processes and Other Activities
Volume V – Academic Structural Elements
Volume VI – Implementation

The remainder of the Executive Summary will provide highlights from each of Volumes II – VI.

**Volume II – Major Structural Change:**

The major changes that are being recommended by the Task Force are as follows:

- the elimination of the existing Faculty of Applied Science
- the creation of three new Faculties:
  - Faculty of Contemporary Arts, Communication and Design (exact name to be determined) consisting of the Schools of Communication, Contemporary Arts, Interactive Arts & Technology, and the Master of Publishing Program
  - Faculty of Engineering and Computing, comprised of the Schools of Engineering Science and Computing Science.
  - Faculty of Environment and Sustainability / Faculty of Environment (name to be determined) initially comprised of the following units and a Faculty Interdisciplinary Program Committee to develop future integrated programming:
    - School of Resource and Environmental Management
    - Department of Geography
    - Environmental Science Program as a new Department of Environmental Sciences
    - Centre for Sustainable Community Development
    - Graduate Certificate Program in Development Studies
- the relocation of the School of Kinesiology to the Faculty of Science
- the establishment of a College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning comprised of two divisions:
  - Experiential Learning Division including an amalgamated Semester in Dialogue and the Centre for Dialogue
  - Lifelong Learning Division comprised of the existing Continuing Studies activities, and Distance Education
- the future development of an Institute for Advanced Scholarship.
Faculty of Engineering and Computing

With a current combined complement of over 70 faculty members, an ongoing program of expansion initiated through the provincial government Doubling the Opportunity (DTO) initiative for computing and engineering programming, a positive reversal to recent enrolment declines, the continued witness of technological and computational transformation of society, and the potential for Simon Fraser University to lead innovative disciplinary and interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate programming innovation and expansion, we conclude that the units of Computing Science and Engineering Science offer a compelling case for distinction within the overall academic organization of the University.

Faculty comprised of Contemporary Arts, Communication, Interactive Arts and Technology and the Master of Publishing Program

The Task Force finds the arguments of Working Group 4 compelling for the creation of a new Faculty. “The creation of a Faculty of Contemporary Arts, Communication and Design is intellectually and socially appropriate and timely. Significant innovations in technology and media historically have exerted tremendous influence on human societies and cultures, and have created new possibilities for communication, self and other understanding and expression, and interaction with the biophysical world. Applications of new technologies and media permeate every facet of contemporary life, and have enabled forms of communication, art, and design that are significantly restructuring our forms of life, understanding, and agency.” The Task Force further endorses the view by Working Group 4 that there are unique opportunities and contextual factors for each of the units that support their enhanced profiling and the commitment by the University to articulate them as part of the strategic strength of the University to the external community. With the world’s attention on Vancouver for the 2010 Olympics and a new venue in the downtown Eastside of Vancouver, the School for the Contemporary Arts at its new Woodward’s site in 2009 can help realize President Stevenson’s vision for Simon Fraser University as an international destination for arts and culture, and as a flagship for multifaceted and diverse social interaction within an urban community. Further, the Task Force believes that the University has a social responsibility to preserve and promote the arts and art making as a societally important activity.

Environment Faculty

The environment has emerged as a dominant global issue that permeates our society at all levels. Environmental concerns will increasingly influence the way people live on the planet and shape global aspirations for improving human wellbeing and health. The university is uniquely positioned to contribute to the global environmental challenge. This is because of its a key role in education and research as well as its inherent quality of universality which puts the university in the unique position of housing expertise in the many areas of sciences and humanities relevant to addressing environmental problems. Furthermore, universities recognize that to remain relevant and receive broad support from all aspects of society, it is important to respond to the need for engagement in the area of the environment.
The field of the environment is clearly a high priority for Simon Fraser University, featuring in the President’s Agenda, the Strategic Research Plan, in the award of eight Canada Research Chairs (three of whom are in area of Climate Change), a B.C. Leading Edge Endowment Fund Chair, and a Chair in Coastal Studies. We have an internationally recognized School of Resource and Environmental Management, strength in environmental research and teaching across campus, and a developing nexus of researchers in environmental health and in the areas of sustainable development and urban studies.

Dr. Munro has pointed out in his report, that student undergraduate enrolment in environmental courses at Simon Fraser University has been relatively stable, and thus as overall enrolment of the University has grown, this has represented a declining proportion of our educational activity. Several trends point to a positive student demand scenario in the future. First, the heightened attention to environmental issues in the public is increasing prospective student awareness to the importance of research and education in the solution to the world’s environmental problems. Second, the “graying of the green generation” and the accompanying recognition that activism needs to be accompanied by scientific research is leading to an increasing need for trained environmental managers and researchers. Third, the interrelated nature of environmental problems has led to a call for a new type of research and education, one focused on the integration of disciplinary approaches to discovery and knowledge development. Fourth, movements to increase environmental education within the K-12 system within North American will lead to increased awareness about the areas of potential study and career paths available to students who pursue advanced study in the environment. Finally, a recent poll of high school counselors by Simon Fraser University resulted in 80 of 110 indicating that there would be a very positive response by prospective students to the opportunity to study in an Environment Faculty at Simon Fraser University.

From the Task Force perspective, the area of the environment is likely to be one of the most attractive areas for external fundraising. Over the past few years, the newspapers have reported a number of multi-million dollar donations to universities who are seeking to expand or reshape their environmental research and educational programming. Situated in one of the most resource intensive provinces of Canada, we believe there will be a positive response from provincial organizations, individuals, and the provincial government to invest in a new Environment Faculty. At the granting council level we have already witnessed significant new ventures by the National Research Council of the United States to identify high funding priorities from the “Grand Challenges” to the environment, and we have seen these require not only balanced integrated teams from the social and natural sciences, but also significant components for graduate and undergraduate education initiatives as part of the research proposals. Locally, we believe there is in the works at the provincial government the design of a graduate enrolment funding pool dedicated to environmental enrolments. These are likely only the beginning of a growing commitment by provincial, national, and international governments, agencies, individuals and organizations to seek to support the advancement of knowledge in searching for solutions to the environmental problems that plague our communities and our planet.

In response to the global environmental crisis and the actions of governments, organizations, and professional councils, North America universities are restructuring, refocusing, and re-visioning, their focus on environmental research and teaching. The range of responses is instructive. In the
United States, there has been an increasing occurrence of pan-university, multidisciplinary environmental initiatives led by the large institutions such as Harvard, Stanford, and Columbia. These are often of an initiative-style model built upon dispersed disciplinary Departments, Faculties, and even Colleges, which form the coordinating nexus of a number of Institutes, Centres and programs. Typically they are topic-centered and multidisciplinary in approach and have the benefit of extraordinary levels of funding. In contrast, the Canadian University system until recently has been predominantly characterized by Faculties of Environment, Departments of Environmental Science or Departments of Environmental Studies with a clear divide between the social and natural sciences. Within the past five years, there have been three initiatives that have caught the attention of the Working Group and the Task Force. These are the Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth and Resources at the University of Manitoba, the Centre for Environment at the University of Toronto, and the new Interdisciplinary School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan. Each, in their own way, seeks to support a more interdisciplinary and expansive conceptualization of environment spanning the social sciences and natural sciences. The move of universities to interdisciplinary collaboration has not gone unnoticed in the popular media. In a recent article, “A Threat So Big: Academics Try Collaboration”, in the New York Times (December 25, 2007), Jeff Toppin cited just a few of the major institutions such as Duke University, Arizona State University, University of California, Berkley, Rochester Institutes of Technology, Yale, and others, which all have recently developed multidisciplinary initiatives around environmental topics.

In consideration of the opportunities presented by a more focused and highly profiled initiative in the environment, the Task Force believes that its recommendation to create a critical nexus of researchers and educational programs is in the best interest of the University. As a consequence, we recommend the creation of an Environment Faculty. Our vision for the new Faculty is that it be multifaceted with core disciplines, new integrative interdisciplinary programming, exceptionally permeable boundaries, and a dynamic interweaving of faculty members from within and external to the new Faculty. To realize this vision, we identify a series of core defining pillars for the new Environment Faculty. Founding membership in the new Faculty would consist of the following existing units and programs: School of Resource and Environmental Management, Department of Geography, Environmental Science Program as a new Department of Environmental Sciences, Centre for Sustainable Community Development and the Graduate Certificate Program in Development Studies. In addition, we recommend the establishment of a Faculty Interdisciplinary Programming Committee with a specific mandate to develop a blueprint for new integrative environmental programming involving faculty members and programming from within and external to the new Faculty.

College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning

Our vision of Simon Fraser University for 2025, combined with changes to the demographic profile of students and an exceedingly competitive recruitment environment, demands from us that undergraduate students have an unparalleled and multifaceted learning opportunities. The education provided through our disciplinary structures in the core areas of arts and humanities, natural, applied and social sciences, health, and in our professional areas of education and business administration, is critical and students are well served by the outstanding complement of faculty who populate these areas. The Task Force believes, however, that there are three ways
in which the University can build upon, complement and supplement the discipline based learning experience of students. First, we believe that the improved structures in support of interdisciplinarity and the new capacities that are provided to our research centres and institutes will provide the mechanisms for the generation of exciting new credit courses that stem directly from the leading edge interdisciplinary research. Second, we believe that there is an equally exciting opportunity to further enrich the student learning environment by developing a comprehensive network of experiential educational opportunities. Third, we believe that Continuing Studies as currently exists should be reconceived as a more integral extension of the disciplines of the University and positioned to respond to the demographic changes that are before us.

The Task Force has chosen to develop a multifaceted strategy to deal with interdisciplinarity at Simon Fraser University. It is our view that the three remaining areas – experiential learning, community engagement and lifelong learning can form the cornerstones of a new “College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning”.

Why create a College?. In part the answer is one of pragmatics. We are trying to signal the creation of a new structural that will cross-lattice, and interweave with the disciplinary pillars of the institution. In its mandate and raison d’etre, the “college” is both an extension of the academic disciplines into our communities through our lifelong learning programming, distance education activities, and it aims to be a complement to our disciplines by providing a home for supplementary interdisciplinary and experiential academic programming. From a nomenclature perspective, our academic structure already defines programs, departments, schools, centres and institutes. We needed to find a term that would depict the academic mandate of the cross-latticing entity while simultaneously not confounding it with our existing structures.

During the first phase of the academic restructuring exercise, the Faculty Structure Task Force conducted a review of the use of structural elements elsewhere and presented the following summary:

“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.” (p. 12, FSTF)

Since the time the first phase report was written in July 2006, the University of British Columbia established a College for Interdisciplinary Studies in January 2007. Its mandate demonstrates
that it has been created in many ways as a parallel kind of cross-latticing structure to the College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning albeit with a different thematic foci.

Given the compatibility of our goals with both local and international university systems, we believe that describing our proposed new initiative as a College is a reasonable, defensible, and appropriate structural term to be added to Simon Fraser University.

The College would be comprised of two divisions – the Experiential Learning Division and the Lifelong Learning Division.

The Experiential Learning Division would have the following responsibilities:

- develop, incubate, nourish and house credit (but not degree granting) programming of an interdisciplinary, cross-Faculty character within College Programs;
- develop a portal to showcase experiential programming and learning opportunities across the University;
- serve as a reference, resource, and support centre for members of the University community seeking to develop new experiential programming; and,
- coordinate experiential credit administration and adjudication processes in the future

Over time, the College will house a diverse array of supplemental pan-university programs such as interdisciplinary capstone programs, integrative thematic semesters or summer workshops, interdisciplinary graduate certificate programs, etc. While we can imagine that there may be first year programming in the future (such as a university-wide environmental literacy initiative) which might prove an excellent initiative for the College, generally we expect that experiential programming in the College will be focused at the senior undergraduate or graduate levels once students have attained a clear identity with an academic field and can bring their understanding of their discipline to interdisciplinary conversations in a broader learning environment. We do not propose relocating existing first year programs - Explorations, TechOne, or Science One - into the College unless that becomes the desire of these individual programs in the future.

There is a vast literature on “experiential learning” and “experiential education” and the Task Force does not pretend to have a complete or necessarily sophisticated understanding of these fields. What do we mean by an “experiential” component to the educational experience of Simon Fraser University? For the Task Force, the answer lies somewhere between the definitions of “experiential learning” and “experiential education” (see the full report for a discussion of these two areas). What we are seeking to create is a paradigm in the College that combines course-based learning (both disciplinary and interdisciplinary) with experience and engagement in the world. We believe that if fully developed in complement to our discipline based activities, Simon Fraser University will provide students with an unparalleled education that uniquely prepares them for their role in an increasingly multidimensional, globally interconnected, and socially conscious 21st century.

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3 See Volume V – Structural Elements – for a detailed discussion of a College Program.
4 The article, “Reasserting the philosophy of experiential education as a vehicle for change in the 21st century” by Dr. Christian M. Itin, in The Journal of Experiential Education, Fall 1999, has proven useful to us in trying to decipher the difference between the fields of “experiential education” and “experiential learning”.

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The Task Force has a broad, multifaceted vision for developing an experiential component to the undergraduate learning process at Simon Fraser University. Over time, we imagine that there will be an expansive and diverse array of experiential opportunities for students. These might include highly integrated experiences within disciplinary curriculums, participation on leading edge research teams, engagement in collaborative learning ventures with industrial partners, interdisciplinary thematic semesters of study, international studies abroad, community project participation either locally or internationally, work-integrated learning experiences, and others.

We imagine an “experiential component” in its fullest sense. At the most integrative end of the spectrum we cite the residential component of medical degrees or the PDP program in our own Faculty of Education as exemplary of an experiential educational component. Less intensive, but equally representative of an experiential learning activity is the industrial-faculty member collaborations offered through IRMACS, or the senior undergraduate research assistantships of undergraduate students. These are integrative examples, demonstrating experiential components intimately interconnected to the disciplines. There are other examples of initiatives at Simon Fraser University that qualify for inclusion as an interdisciplinary experiential component to the learning experience. The Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue which shares many of the qualities of experiential education in the definition presented earlier combines the features of comprehensive interdisciplinarity and significant experiential activity, with an array of social, political, economic, and community issues and values. Both student and educators are intimately involved in the overall learning experience.

The examples presented so far are less likely to come automatically to mind when one thinks of Simon Fraser University’s activities in “experiential learning”. The most commonly associated types of activities are those that can be broadly classified into our Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) unit. This unit is the area of primary responsibility and coordination for cooperative education, volunteer and internship opportunities, career planning, and more recently service learning. This latter area, commenced in August 2007, is defined by Student Services as a “type of experiential learning in which students connect their academic learning with community issues. Typically, community engagement and structured reflection is incorporated into an academic, for-credit course. Students’ academic, career, and personal development is positively impacted.” The Task Force clearly recognizes that the activities being engaged under the umbrella of work-integrated learning and international experiences (such as learning a foreign language, participating in a field school, international exchange program, or study-abroad experience) clearly fall under our vision for an experiential component to the education of Simon Fraser University students. We do not, however, have any desire for the new College that we ultimately recommend here to seek to assume responsibility for these activities nor to have the activities currently housed within Student Services relocated to the College. The College will serve both as a home to new experiential learning activities and as a conduit of connection between initiatives housed around the University. We encourage and expect that the College and Student Services will develop a strong and positive relationship with extensive interaction, just as the College must develop an integrative network of connections with disciplines across the University.

While we believe that the above examples will clarify our conceptualization of an experiential component to the educational experience of students, we wish also to note that we are not
referring to those experiences that have been gained prior to enrolling at Simon Fraser University, such as work experience or experiences and activities that might qualify for consideration as part of the University’s Prior Learning Assessment processes. Rather, we are specifically referring to “experiences” obtained by students as part of their education at Simon Fraser University.

The Task Force believes that our strengths in this area are hidden. We also believe that we should expand the opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning as part of their study at Simon Fraser University. We believe this vision will require a coherent and easily navigable path for students, as well as a portal opening to a clear directory of choices that is supported by an effective structure to support, stimulate, incubate and nourish experiential initiatives that will emerge and be developed both within disciplines and within a new College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning.

The Lifelong Learning Division of the new College would have the following responsibilities:

- develop programs that provide opportunities for coherent pathways between non-credit and credit learning; and,
- house continuing studies, distance education, and diverse population outreach activities.

The Task Force firmly believes that the University of the future must be actively engaged with its communities and must take a leadership role in addressing the pressing issues confronting society.

Continuing Studies will be a critically important vehicle for community engagement by the University. Shifting demographics, changing educational needs of professionals and adult learners, engagement with diverse communities internationally, all will draw upon the expertise and activities located within our existing Continuing Studies umbrella. We believe, however, that there needs to be some shift in the perception of this arm of the University’s activities. We think it imperative that Continuing Studies offer, and be seen to offer, services and courses of comparable academic quality to those offered within the disciplines at Simon Fraser University. We believe that part of the solution lies in a more effective integration of our outreach activities with our traditional programming activities. There should be more articulated pathways between non-credit and credit-learning and our service to diverse communities should be built upon the foundations of our research and teaching expertise. We also believe that there is a need for more direct involvement in the teaching activities of Continuing Studies by our faculty and for us to more effectively capitalize on the expertise of highly trained professionals and practitioners. Further, we feel that both lifelong and experiential learning represent unique pedagogical approaches to learning for both seasoned academics and professionals alike. Bringing together the expertise of Program Directors in Continuing Studies with faculty members in disciplines will create a vibrant and exciting new research Centre.

The Task Force believes that the creation of the College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning will effectively profile and ‘brand’ Simon Fraser University as a unique place that institutionalizes its commitment to excellence in student learning experience.
Institute for Advanced Scholarship

Modeled after Institutes for Advanced Scholarship at Princeton, Harvard, and others, the goal of a Simon Fraser Institute for Advanced Scholarship (SFU-IAS) would be the pursuit of research excellence at the leading edge of pressing global issues. The SFU-IAS is envisioned as one of the pre-eminent Institutes for the exploration of critical interdisciplinary research questions that would bring together leading world scholars from the arts, humanities, applied, social and natural sciences within and beyond Simon Fraser University around a thematic project for a two year period. With state-of-the-art facilities, an internationally acclaimed conference, and proceedings of the highest quality, the SFU-IAS would bolster Simon Fraser University’s place on the international stage for research excellence. The Institute is also envisioned to have significant graduate educational and community outreach components.

**Volume III - Interdisciplinarity**

The Task Force believes that we must excel in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities. Successful interdisciplinarity can, and will only, occur in the presence of strong, vibrant, and dynamic disciplines. We must value the research being undertaken within disciplines and understand its importance to interdisciplinary research and we must recognize that interdisciplinarity occurs both within disciplines as well as outside of disciplines. As such, the University’s structures and policies must be designed to support innovation, knowledge advancement and the pursuit of opportunities in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary directions. We must recognize that both disciplinary and interdisciplinary advancement will occur at all scales and in all settings.

The Task Force further believes that, as with other areas of the University, interdisciplinarity can, and will, flourish if there is a vision for its future, a strategic plan to guide its development, the leadership to champion it, and the resources to implement the vision.

While there is an expansive literature speaking to the definition, qualities, hierarchies, and activities of interdisciplinarity, the Task Force finds that the most straightforward and compelling operational definition of interdisciplinarity is that offered by Professor Cathy N. Davidson, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinarity Studies, at Duke University:

> “Interdisciplinarity is any productive research or teaching that occurs across, between, and among two or more areas of knowledge that typically have different histories, methodologies, or objects of study. Interdisciplinarity can occur across schools or it can happen within a single department; it can involve collaborations of many researchers or it can be embodied in the work of a single researcher.” (“Why Interdisciplinarity?”, in *InterConnection*, Volume 5.1, Fall 2006, *Newsletter on Interdisciplinarity Studies at Duke*).

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5 While the Task Force did not conduct a thorough literature review of the theoretical classification and definition of Interdisciplinarity, we did read a number of works that we understood to represent dominant thinking in the field. The sources we consulted are identified in Appendix H - the Bibliographical references to our full report.
And although there is an equally extensive literature on the differences between inter-, trans- and multi-disciplinarity, and the nuances of these differences are important to the academic field defining them, we believe it important for Simon Fraser University to act to support and enhance activity in all of these areas.

Despite considerable successes in fostering interdisciplinarity that have been achieved by Simon Fraser University and which are exemplified in our full report, participants in a day long Interdisciplinarity Charette identified a substantial number of barriers. These barriers exist in a variety of ways for students and faculty members. We were surprised to find the extent to which these barriers were seen as obstructing the research capacity of faculty members and discouraging the development of new programming. The Task Force recommends that a multifaceted strategy be adopted to successfully enhance, nourish, promote, and stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching and research at Simon Fraser University. We note that in this area of our work in particular, our solutions extend beyond structures of the University and focus on leadership, support, policy revision and process review.

The Task Force recommends the creation of a new Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration (OIC). Reporting jointly to the Vice President, Research and the Vice President, Academic, the Office would be responsible for championing interdisciplinarity, development and implementation of a strategic plan, developing communication structures, advising, coordination, “bushwhacking”, managing a new Centres and Institutes support centre, developing structures to support university wide initiatives (e.g. the SFU Health Network), and administering funding envelopes to support interdisciplinarity in conjunction with the Vice President, Research and the Vice President, Academic.

The Task Force believes that a key element to a multifaceted strategy in support of interdisciplinary is the reformation of the Centres and Institutes policy. This includes a recommendation for moving to a three category system of Departmental Research Centre, Faculty Centre, and Institute, providing new capacities for temporally defined academic appointment to Centres and Institutes, enabling the development of supplementary, interdisciplinary courses in some categories of Centres and Institutes, and in enhanced quality review for the establishment and continuation of Centres and Institutes.

As the final pillar to our multifaceted strategy on interdisciplinarity, the Task Force recommends that several policies in the University be amended or established. It should be noted that a number of the recommendations made will be a matter of negotiation between the University and the Simon Fraser University Faculty Association and may result in different provisions than what we imagine here. Nonetheless, we felt it important to indicate the issues that we feel need addressing within the academic policy environment at Simon Fraser University. We further note that while the amendments we recommend are designed as ways to enhance interdisciplinarity, the proposed changes will, in many instances, serve disciplinary research and teaching equally effectively.

Joint Appointments Policy - Revisions are recommended to facilitate increased flexibility in the nature and extent of joint appointments, differential percentage contributions by
category of work activity, extension of these appointments to Centres and Institutes, and better mechanisms for the review of interdisciplinary activities.

**Internal Secondments Policy** - A new policy is imagined to provide a temporally limited period of engagement in another unit or Centre/Institute. We believe that this tool can serve as a new mechanism to encourage faculty member participation in interdisciplinary teaching and research activities that are developed through Centres and Institutes.

**Team Teaching Policy** - The Task Force understands from members of the University community that there is considerable variety across the University in the extent to which team teaching is recognized in annual workload calculations and is assessed within performance review processes. It is our view that a fair and equitable process of application, review, and recognition is not only a fundamental component of a positive culture, but also is necessary if all areas of the University are to be participants in initiatives that would integrate the strengths of disciplines across the University.

A frequently cited obstacle to interdisciplinary participation and success at Simon Fraser University, as with institutions elsewhere, is the lack of effective review processes for interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching. In part this stems from a lack of defined parameters for effective review of interdisciplinary work generally; in part it stems from the diverse nature of interdisciplinary work that often makes comparisons across faculty members, and standards of assessment extremely difficult. It is an issue that all Universities struggle with. We believe that Simon Fraser University has a reputation for progressive academic policies that is often cited as a best practice example. The customized nature of criteria and standards for promotion, tenure and salary review should provide a vehicle under which interdisciplinary assessment criteria can be effectively developed. The Task Force believes though that the University should consider the establishment of a framework for individual interdisciplinary review committees, an expansion to the Faculty College to include interdisciplinary expertise, and specific guidelines for disciplines on how to incorporate and evaluate interdisciplinary expectations for renewal, tenure and promotion into departmental criteria documents.

**Volume IV – Programs, Processes and Other Activities**

This Volume examines four additional areas that came before the Task Force in the submissions we received: specific academic programs, existing structures, process reviews, and infrastructure support.

We have recommended that the arrangements underlying the Cognitive Science Program be formalized and that adequate commitments be given by participating units. We have also recommended that the External Review of the Program scheduled for Spring 2008 will be critically important and will provide the University with the opportunity to have an independent assessment on the issues brought forward to the Task Force.

In addition to being an important proposal for the future collaborative relationship between Computing Science and Interactive Arts and Technology, the proposal for a new IT/ICT Program draws expertise from, and extends partnership involvement to, Engineering Science, Business
Administration, Cognitive Science, and potentially others. Students from all of these programs would benefit from the expanded collaborative environment, and it is envisioned that specialty streams could be developed within the undergraduate IT/ICT program such that students could then further specialize at the graduate level within the partnership disciplines or perhaps even in a graduate IT/ICT Program. Collaborative opportunities would also be highly likely with industry and the program would be extremely compelling as an object of external financial support, industrial collaboration, and coop and career placement for students, thus serving our external community and our students in a highly effective way. In recognition of this program’s potential to position Simon Fraser University as a world leader in this emerging field of knowledge (there are currently no other competing programs in Canada and an initial review suggests no direct competition within North America), and in developing a culture of effective collaboration among disciplines within the University, the Task Force supports the development of an IT/ICT program.

Simon Fraser University’s TechOne program is a model first year cohort experience, providing entering students an introduction into the field of technology and future educational paths in Computing, Engineering, Business Administration, Mechatronics, Interactive Arts and Technology, and Communication. This unique program has been evolving since its inception at the University and it has recently undergone a fairly extensive redesign. The TechOne program which is comprised of six core courses, four interdisciplinary courses and two elective courses, will, by the various recommendations of the Task Force, serve three distinct Faculties. This program’s history has been fraught with challenges in design, in interrelationships with various disciplinary units, and with a series of administrative constraints. Until recently, limited term teaching appointments were offered under the umbrella of the School of Interactive Arts and Technology and seconded to the program. Permanent positions have now been authorized under the appointment of other disciplines but again with the majority of duties seconded to the program.

In our Discussion Document released to the University community on December 17, 2007, the Task Force argued that the interdisciplinary, cross-Faculty nature of the TechOne program makes it an ideal candidate for inclusion as an independent College Program within the College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning. Headed by a discipline-based academic steering committee, the program would find a nourishing and supportive home that would encourage interdisciplinarity. The Steering Committee of the TechOne program had, however, requested that the Task Force instead provide the TechOne program with the opportunity to stabilize its newly designed program and leave it in a familiar environment for a temporary period. On the basis of this request, the Task Force accepted the view of the Steering Committee. Subsequent to the release of our report we have heard various views from the disciplines served by the TechOne Program regarding the effectiveness of the program in serving their discipline’s needs, their view as to where the program should ultimately be located, and the resource implications of the location of the program. While we are committed to elements of our original recommendation, we believe it will be essential over the next year for the University to develop a clear view of what direction it wishes to pursue with the TechOne program, how best to serve the needs of the disciplines which rely on it, and the resource implications of these decisions. As such we recommend that a process of review be undertaken with the oversight and engagement
of the Vice President, Academic’s office and constituent members prior to a decision being made as to the permanent home of the TechOne Program.

The Task Force believes that given the University’s commitment to internationalization and global participation and its geographical location at the edge of the Pacific Rim, Simon Fraser University should position itself as one of the nation’s leaders in the study and training in foreign languages and cultures. To date, this has not occurred. In particular, we have the following observations to make with regard to the way in which foreign language training is currently structured and offered at the University:

- First, foreign language learning at Simon Fraser University is viewed by students as incoherent, poorly profiled, and a difficult area of programming to navigate.
- Second, in our view the Language Training Institute has not found a successful partnership in its relationship with the Department of Linguistics.
- Third, there is poor integration between academic unit programming requiring foreign language learning and the language offerings of the University.
- Fourth, there does not appear to be a clearly developed strategic plan for foreign language study in relation to the University’s key commitment and priority in internationalization nor in the development of foreign language learning in support of the communities within which we have situated our campuses (i.e. east Asian languages are not adequately developed at the Surrey campus).
- Fifth, the internationalization of disciplines across the University and the increased presence of international research teams and the study of issues globally speaks to the need for language study in disciplines across the University.
- Sixth, in comparison to most other universities locally, nationally and internationally who espouse a commitment to global engagement, Simon Fraser University does not have a sufficiently strong or diverse foreign language learning program.

Despite our findings, the Task Force believes that foreign language study and training is an area of critical import to future generations of students who will increasingly require languages, cultural understanding, and international engagement. There is already evidence of foreign language learning becoming an integrated component of disciplinary learning at the University. For example, Chinese language learning is required in association with the dual degree program in Computing Science, the new international experiential programs in Business Administration and the School of International Studies within the Faculty of Arts and Social has a requirement for language both have foreign language requirements. The Task Force believes there will be an active expansion of such integrated language requirements in the future.

We also see significant opportunities for the expansion of language learning in connection with our international agenda and potentially in terms of the creation of certificate programs to accompany majors, particularly in areas of international business, development, health, environment, and others. Further, there will in a need for the development of greater coherence and articulation between non-credit programming, our translation programs, and for-credit language learning. If structured in a coordinated and effective manner, we believe that ultimately non-credit language learning could form a pathway into credit language and cultural
studies for those members of the community who, over time, seek to continue their exploration and acquisition of foreign languages.

In the discussion document released in November 2007, the Task Force recommended that the College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning assume leadership and responsibility for both credit and non-credit foreign language instruction and development. During the consultation process, however, we received a strong appeal by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, especially the Dean’s office, to provide them with the opportunity and mandate to execute the vision for the study of foreign languages and cultures that was articulated by the Task Force. The Task Force has thought carefully about models for foreign language learning at other institutions, the problems we see that challenge Simon Fraser University’s language offerings, and the content of conversations and insights offered to us by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. What has emerged most clearly to us is that we have found in the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences an advocate and a passionate leader for the vision we have defined. In consequence, the Task Force has concluded that we should provide the Dean with the opportunity and the mandate to redefine foreign language and culture studies at Simon Fraser University.

In some cases, we felt that revisions to the process or policy framework of Simon Fraser University would prove more beneficial to the issues in need of resolution and to the overall cost and administrative efficiency of the institution than would structural change. Two areas where we believe process review should be undertaken are: (1) undergraduate student mobility and course access review, and (2) enhancing interdisciplinary programming for graduate students.

**Volume V – Academic Structural Elements**

The Task Force considered deploying only the term Department within the academic structure rather than having both the terms Department and School exist as synonyms within the structural framework. Ultimately, however, we felt that there are particular areas of the University where the term School has significant meaning within the larger international context of the discipline.

The Task Force believes that a new entity – a College – needs to be added to the academic structure of the University. We do not propose this as part of the structural templates to be deployed in other circumstances. Rather, we imagine the creation of a single College – the College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning. The College may house College Programs, and may offer credit courses, (as is the case now for Continuing Studies) program components (e.g. Semester in Dialogue), for-credit certificate programs, and non-credit programming. All programming within the Experiential Division must be of an experiential or interdisciplinary nature. The College will not be degree granting. Programming is envisioned to occur at both graduate and undergraduate levels. We wish to be clear that it is not our intention to create a parallel curriculum or synonym for Faculty and we would further note that any credit program developed within the College would, as is true for discipline-based programming, require Senate approval.
As part of its examination of structural elements and its mandate to identify ways to enhance interdisciplinarity, the Task Force examined the role and definitions of Centres and Institutes and has devised an expanded conceptualization of the types of and powers of Centres and Institutes including: Departmental Research Centre, Faculty Centre, and Institute.

A Centre is defined as a structural mechanism established for the purpose of promoting collaborative engagement among its members in the areas of research or research and teaching that primarily falls within the framework of a single Faculty. Such research and teaching activity must extend the disciplinary or interdisciplinary research and teaching provided within the contexts of Independent Programs, Departments, Schools or non-departmentalized Faculties. The majority of membership within a Centre will be from within a single academic Faculty.

An Institute is defined as a structural mechanism established for the purpose of promoting collaborative engagement among its members in the areas of research or research and teaching that crosses the boundaries of Faculties or which involve other Universities and/or Institutions. Such research and teaching activity must extend the disciplinary or interdisciplinary research and teaching provided within the contexts of Faculties. Significant membership must be drawn from each of two or more Faculties, or involve a University or Institution outside of Simon Fraser University.

**Volume VI – Implementation and Process Forward**

The recommendations contained throughout this report are recognizably both substantial and ambitious. As a consequence, we have attempted to carefully think our way through at least some of the issues that will arise with the implementation of the initiatives and structural changes we have identified.

**Impact on Individuals**

The most important implementation issue arising from our recommendations is the potential impact of our proposals on students, faculty, and staff.

We see the following as implementation issues for students:

- the need for a seamlessness in the implementation of new Faculty alignments, unit relocations, and new governance relationship and that these occur in a way that ensures that educational programming remains stable and of the highest quality
- the need for degree credentials in which students are currently registered to remain intact, highly respected, and internationally recognized
- the need for students registered in the Bachelor of General Studies, Applied Science, to be able to complete their program of study despite the dissolution of the Faculty of Applied Science

We believe that the various processes of engagement we have undertaken prior to making our recommendations are the reason why the recommendations for new Faculties have been nearly unanimously supported by faculty members in all of the directly affected units. We take this as a
very positive endorsement of the merit of our proposals and the view by the academic complement that our proposals will ensure a productive, creative, and stimulating research and teaching environment for faculty members’ careers at Simon Fraser University.

Nonetheless, we also recognize that there will be a very few faculty members within directly affected units who will not see the proposed Faculty location for them as being the opportune environment for their intellectual research and teaching development and career. We believe it imperative that the University work with these individuals to ensure that suitable academic homes are found.

The dissolution of the Faculty of Applied Science is the one recommendation of the Task Force that has a direct impact on administrative, professional, technical and clerical staff. This undoubtedly has led, and will continue to lead, to a period of anxiety and uncertainty for staff members in this area. We believe, therefore, that it is fundamentally important that the Senate and the Board of Governors approve the recommendations in this report, that the University immediately establish a process of engagement, opportunity assessment and review with all affected staff.

**Costs and Implementation Timeline**

When the Vice-President, Academic initiated the work of the first Task Force in the Fall of 2005, he did not do so in a context of financial crisis, crisis of reputation, or crisis of vision, that is often typical of restructuring exercises at other academic institutions. He did so in view of designing the best University for the future: a University that would be seen as a leader in the liberal arts and sciences, in areas of great societal concern such as environment, education, and health, in recognition of the need for resuscitating the value and importance of arts and culture in society and in universities, and in areas of professional and applied fields. The Task Force has aimed to build upon our many and internationally renowned strengths and excellence. We have striven to enhance the environment for research and graduate education. We have sought to develop one of the most distinguished and exciting undergraduate student experiences in the nation. We have aimed to strengthen the environment for faculty members, providing them with opportunities and support for discovery both within disciplines and in new interdisciplinary collaborations, and it is envisioned that this will afford Simon Fraser University with the continued ability to attract and retain the world’s leading scholars and educators. And, finally, the Task Force has recognized that Simon Fraser University in the future will engage with our communities in unparalleled ways, revitalizing art and culture in society, opening our doors to diverse communities locally and internationally and truly be an institution that, by its actions, demonstrates it is “thinking of the world” and contributing to it.

At present, we are clearly feeling the forces of tight fiscal realities and the Task Force has been critically concerned with the current financial reality and the impact of the recommendations that we are proposing. We do not wish in any way to minimize the reality of the current budgetary context nor to downplay the fact that our recommendations indeed have cost implications for the University. We understand that there are competing views as to what the priorities for investment should be and we have heard the concerns about the financial climate of the University raised during Open Forums discussions and in other feedback to the Task Force. As
this discussion has unfolded it has at times taken the character of a competition between financial commitment to the core liberal arts and sciences and commitment to new initiatives. We wish to comment briefly on this critically important issue and perception. During the five-year period 2002/03 to 2006/07 the academic operating budget of the Faculties has nearly doubled, growing from $88.5 million to $166.4 million; an 88% growth. During this time, the budgeted CFL faculty complement grew 22% from 714.3 FTE to 874.4 FTE; annualized graduate and undergraduate FTE enrolment grew by a more modest, but still sizeable amount, 14%. The growth in the academic operating budgets and CFL faculty complements of the Faculties is, in the view of the Task Force, a clear demonstration of the commitment by the University to support and develop our core areas. We would not be prepared to make the recommendations we do in this report if we felt that in doing so we would in any way compromise the core strength of the arts and sciences, applied and professional programming of the University. Our reputation for excellence will continue to depend on our strength in these areas.

The Vice President, Academic has for many years had a modest budget to direct to strategic new directions of the University. For at least the past five years, this fund (aptly named the Strategic Initiatives Fund), has had a continuing base budget of $600,000 to $650,000. This is only 0.7% of the amount dedicated to the academic operating budgets of the Faculties in 2002/03. In 2008/09, the Strategic Initiatives Fund was increased to $950,000, but in comparison to the significantly increased academic operating budgets of the Faculties, this investment has proportionally declined in comparison, and represents approximately 0.6%. In the past, the Strategic Initiatives Fund has been used to develop such initiatives as the Faculty of Health Sciences, the University Curriculum Initiative (W-Q-B), and new program development.

Ultimately, the Task Force believes that to stop investing in new initiatives chosen carefully in consideration of maintaining excellence for the University’s future would be in significant detriment to the institution. Over the past twenty years, the University has met several occasions of tight budgetary times with fierce resilience and pragmatic decision-making. Yet despite these belt-tightening periods, we have always continued to move the University forward. The Task Force believes this we must continue this fundamental spirit of advancement.

We note that there will be costs associated with the recommendations we have proposed over the course of this report. We believe it essential to be open and transparent in our expectation of what the University may expect in terms of these costs. The costs notably are estimates based on our understanding of the scope of our recommendations and the current average costs in the University. The costs we identify should be understood to be the “costs of change” and do not represent long-term future development costs, just as our cost overview does not include the long-term future development costs of the already established academic Faculties and initiatives at the University.

The Strategic Initiatives Fund is suggested by the Task Force as the primary vehicle for financing the recommendations of our report to ensure that our initiatives do not represent a direct call on the existing Faculty budget lines. As is clear given the value of the SIF and the cost of our recommendations, we are recommending a commitment against the SIF for several years. A second source of funding that is critically important to the Vice-President, Academic’s ability to support new initiatives, focused around technology, has been the Double the
Opportunity (DTO) fund. This fund has not been fully expended in anticipation of potential developments from the Task Force and it could serve as the financial source for the creation of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing as well as the very nominal new positions expected in support of developing a new IT/ICT program. The combination of this fund and unexpended funds from the Double the Opportunity initiative would be directed to the creation of the three new Faculties, the establishment of the College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning, and the Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration. The Institute for Advanced Scholarship would be developed through external fundraising activities.

The only area identified by the Task Force for dedicated position growth is that associated with the new interdisciplinary programming in the Environment Faculty. We are aware that stipulating position growth of any magnitude for the Environment Faculty is a controversial commitment given the current freeze on faculty positions in some parts of the University. We understand the concern of our colleagues in this regard. Nonetheless, we sincerely believe that there are several important reasons for proceeding with our recommendation for the commitment of faculty positions to the new Environment Faculty. First, the vision for the new Faculty is one that is intended to be inclusive of, and enhancing to, the existing strengths of the University. The integrative programming that is intended to emerge through the efforts of the Faculty Interdisciplinary Planning Committee is mandated to identify a modest number of core positions that will fill gaps, augment strengths, and enable new research and programming of an interdisciplinary character to flourish. This should have significant benefits to disciplines both within and external to the new Faculty. Second, the environment is clearly one of the most pressing societal issues of the 21st Century. There is near consensus that while progress in understanding is being made, solutions to issues of global climate change require new ways of thinking of environmental problems. The title of the New York Times article on December 25th, captures the direction that post-secondary educational institutions around the world are heading “Threat So Big, Academics Try Collaboration”. Third, evidence from new initiatives across the continent demonstrates that areas of environmental research and education are attracting external financial support. Numerous examples can be pointed to, but locally there have been two important announcements that demonstrate the potential within British Columbia. The University has just received a donation for the establishment of the Libre-Ero Chair Coastal Studies. In addition, the Provincial Government announced on January 25, 2008 that it will seek legislative approval for $94.5 million to create the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS). This Institute will bring together top scientists, government and the private sector to develop innovative climate change adaptation and mitigation solutions. Hosted by the University of Victoria, the collaboration includes the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and the University of Northern British Columbia. These examples are illustrative of the potential for attracting significant external funding, a strategy which the Task Force believes can be actively pursued to assist with the costs of the new Environment Faculty proposed for Simon Fraser University. Third, we note that the commitment of new positions to the Environment Faculty is dependent upon Senate approval of a blueprint for integrated programming that has a strong indication of future student enrolment demand and will require Board approval of the overall University’s Faculty Recruitment Plan in each year where positions are recommended. Finally, we note that this is a staged recommendation, with anticipated commitment of faculty positions occurring over a three year period between 2009/2010 and 2011/2012 which therefore
calls for a very modest position commitment (approximately 2-3 positions) in any given fiscal year.

A phased implementation strategy may be required in consideration of the current budgetary climate. New programming planning initiatives, policy revisions, and further processes would commence upon approval of our report by Senate and the Board of Governors. Ideally, the new Faculties, the realignment of Kinesiology, and the establishment of the College of Lifelong and Experiential Learning would occur on April 1, 2009. The Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration would be established in September 2010.

**Senate Consideration**

Over the course of our full report, the Task Force makes 25 recommendations related to the original tripartite mandate given to us by Senate. These fall into three broad categories: (1) those that aim to directly change the academic structure of the University through the creation or dissolution of academic Faculties, a new College and the relocation of academic units; (2) those that require process review, program proposal development, or administrative action (such as a Foreign Language Studies program, an IT/ICT Program, a study and proposal on Experiential Learning, etc.) the fruits of which will require full development and future consideration by Senate; and (3) those suggestions to negotiated policies between the University and the Simon Fraser University Faculty Association that are the purview of the negotiation process.

We will leave it to the wisdom of the Senate Committee on University Priorities to whom we submit this report, to determine how best to develop motions to deal with the first two areas of our recommendations. We fully understand the need for the presentation of motions in accordance with the University Act and the powers and responsibilities of Senate. We ask though, that Senate and all of the readers of this report recognize that the vision the Task Force has set out for 2025, and the success we believe that can be achieved for the institution by its execution, is not a fragmented one. Our recommendations have been organized in sub-categories consistent with the three areas of our mandate. But really, it is a single vision, a single future, and we strongly believe that we have developed a carefully interwoven blueprint for Simon Fraser University’s overall success.