“REMOVING BARRIERS: A DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE OF SFU”

Phase 2 Task Force on Academic Structure Discussion Paper

Presented to the University Community
December 17, 2007

from the members of the Phase 2 Task Force on Academic Structure

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“Removing Barriers: A Design For the Future of SFU”

VOLUME III – INTERDISCIPLINARITY

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The third area of the mandate for the Phase 2 Task Force on Academic Structure is that of interdisciplinarity. Specifically, Senate mandated the Task Force to:

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

As we delve into this area of our mandate, the Task Force wishes to reinforce that all of the recommendations contained within this report are aimed to further Simon Fraser University in its pursuit of excellence: excellence in research, excellence in teaching, and meaningful engagement with, and contributions to, our community, both locally and globally.

Successful interdisciplinarity can, and will only, occur in the presence of strong, vibrant, and dynamic disciplines. We value the research being undertaken within disciplines and understand its importance to interdisciplinary research and we 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 recognize that both disciplinary and interdisciplinary advancement will occur at all scales and in all settings.

The Task Force 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.

Over the following section, we highlight those ways in which Simon Fraser University is currently successful in supporting interdisciplinary research and teaching, identify areas that are in need of review, support or redesign, and set out an overall multifaceted strategy for how we believe interdisciplinarity at Simon Fraser University can emerge as one of our hallmark qualities that deserves the ongoing core commitment of the University.

*What is Interdisciplinarity?*

While there is an expansive literature speaking to the definition, qualities, hierarchies, and activities of interdisciplinarity, the Task Force finds that a straightforward 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.

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1 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 G - the Bibliographical references to our full report.
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}).

**Process Overview**

The Task Force pursued its study of interdisciplinarity through two primary activities: a literature web review and an Interdisciplinarity Charette Day. The latter was held as a full-day event on March 23, 2007 and attracted more than 80 members of the University community. The Charette Day was designed to accomplish six goals:

1. To hear members of the University community speak of their experiences in pursuing interdisciplinary research and teaching;
2. To understand the ways in which current structures, policies, frameworks, or supports, enable successful interdisciplinary research and teaching to occur;
3. To learn about the impediments to the pursuit of interdisciplinary research and teaching;
4. To develop a view of what SFU’s goal(s) should be with regard to interdisciplinarity for the future (we think of the future being at least the next 20 years);
5. To determine if there are any principles that should guide the incubation, encouragement, facilitation, support, and/or evaluation, of interdisciplinary research and teaching; and,
6. To imagine/invent/or model – structures, policies, frameworks and supports to enable SFU to successfully facilitate interdisciplinary research and teaching.

To realize our goals, we designed the event in two parts: the first – “Learning from Experience” – featured a series of presentations. Dr. Roberta Katz, Associate Vice-President of Strategic Planning, at Stanford University, began the day with an enlightening discussion about the multidisciplinary vision and activities at Stanford University. This was followed by eight presentations from the following Simon Fraser University faculty members:

- Dr. Peter Borwein (Director of IRMACS, Burnaby Mountain Chair in Mathematics)
- Dr. Jeff Pelletier (Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Science; Professor, Departments of Philosophy and Linguistics)
- Dr. Bob Anderson (Professor, School of Communication)
- Dr. Ken Lertzman (Professor, School of Resource and Environmental Management)
- Dr. Marilyn MacDonald (Professor, Department of Women’s Studies)
- Dr. Rick Gruneau (Professor, School of Communication)
- Dr. Meg Holden (Assistant Professor, Departments of Urban Studies/Geography) and Dr. Janet Moore (Assistant Professor, Urban Studies Program/Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue)
- Dr. Jennifer Marchbank (Director of Explorations, Professor, Women’s Studies) and Dr. Jane Fee (Director of TechOne and Special Advisor to the Dean of Applied Sciences)
The second part of the day – “Imagining a New Future” – consisted of small group design teams led by experienced SFU facilitators. Proceedings from the Charette Day can be found on the Task Force website.

**Evidence of Successful Interdisciplinarity at SFU**

Simon Fraser University has from its earliest planning documents shown a clear institutional commitment to interdisciplinarity. This commitment appears in nearly all vision statements, university-level strategic plans, our statement of purpose, and our major communications to the external community. Testament to our commitment to interdisciplinarity is the strength of units such as the Schools of Criminology, Communication, Contemporary Arts, Interactive Arts and Technology, Resource & Environmental Management, and the Faculties of Business Administration, Education, and Health Sciences. Testament to our commitment to interdisciplinarity is the strength of units such as the Schools of Criminology, Communication, Contemporary Arts, Interactive Arts and Technology, Resource & Environmental Management, and the Faculties of Business Administration, Education, and Health Sciences. Equally evidentiary of our commitment are new initiatives in research funding through the CTE Fund for large multidisciplinary projects, the undergraduate student breadth requirement to encourage knowledge acquisition outside of primary disciplines of study, first-year experience programs such as Explorations, TechOne and Science One, and new interdisciplinary degree programs such as Global Health, Public Policy, International Studies and Urban Studies. Others are in the development stage such as the proposal by Dr. Rick Gruneau for the creation of a program in Sport, Commerce, Culture and Community. Finally, we have seen internal leadership in promoting and advancing interdisciplinary connection by such policy decisions as the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences which chose to use all of their Canada Research Chairs as vehicles for promoting and expanding interdisciplinary work.

Clearly there are a number of other examples. We hope, however, that the brief list in the above paragraph signals the success the University has achieved to date, and the actual realization of our commitment to interdisciplinarity.

**Issues Raised and Areas Identified for Review, Support or Redesign**

Despite our successes, many faculty members at Simon Fraser University believe that, as an institution, we could better incubate and support interdisciplinary research and teaching. Through the Interdisciplinarity Charette Day, a survey of faculty with joint appointments, and a variety of input provided during Working Group meetings and Task Force consultation processes, we have learned of the following issues and areas where Simon Fraser University is not as successful as we could be in facilitating strong interdisciplinary teaching and research.

At an institutional level, the University does not have a clearly articulated and focused vision or strategy for how to support interdisciplinarity. This is viewed as one reason underpinning the lack of a university-wide culture of understanding, support, or recognition of the merit of interdisciplinary work. A number of faculty members believe that this permeates performance review processes wherein they feel that there are difficulties in the measurement of the quality of interdisciplinary scholarship, in the establishment of parameters for assessing excellence for interdisciplinarity, and in the recognition of interdisciplinary scholarship being of potentially
equal caliber and quality to disciplinary scholarship. It was further noted that one of the primary structural mechanisms designed to promote interdisciplinarity – joint appointments – were not being used effectively or to the degree used by some other institutions. The Task Force attempted to compare our use of joint appointments with other institutions in the country but have experienced difficulty in obtaining information from other institutions. Those who have responded to our query for information, share our concern that joint appointments serve as important mechanisms for interdisciplinarity but that these have not been marshaled to most institutions’ advantage.

Barriers to effective interdisciplinarity have been noted for, and by, students in relation to our teaching and program development, in our research activities, and in the way in which we have deployed Centres and Institutes in the past.

In the area of students, we learned from professors and students alike, that students encounter the following barriers to interdisciplinary study:

- they often experienced difficulty in taking cross-Faculty minors and double majors;
- they feel there is an over-prescription of prerequisites that make the design of interdisciplinary programs difficult and opportunities for students to explore other disciplines nearly impossible;
- they find having credits recognized towards overall degree credential from one discipline to another can often be extremely difficult and students may be required if they switch programs of study to ultimately take more than 120 credits for degree completion;
- they find the course approval process cumbersome and unwieldy for students seeking to study across disciplines;
- they believe that structures of registration priority to disciplinary majors is restricting exposure to other disciplines;
- they see a lack of choice in navigating a path of study at the graduate level and often non-disciplinary learning is accomplished through “special arrangements” or directed readings courses;
- they find that financial support structures, particularly for graduate students, come from discipline-based channels and research funding which is typically directed at discipline-based research and learning; and,
- they believe there is a significant lack of integrated, problem-centered courses available to students.

Participants in the Interdisciplinarity Charette Day and the literature review confirmed that the most frequent barriers to interdisciplinary learning for students derive from the difficulty of faculty members to effectively engage in interdisciplinary course and program development and teaching. The most frequently cited problems were the lack of encouragement and support for this activity and the low recognition of interdisciplinary teaching in discipline-based performance review processes. There is a view by many that interdisciplinary courses are perceived as diluted in quality and substance. Further, generally there is little if any provision for compensation or inclusion of interdisciplinary teaching outside of departments as part of annual workload activities. In part this may be attributed to the legitimate need of departments to ensure that their degree programming requirements can be sustained. However, such
legitimate calls on faculty members’ time are acting as a substantial barrier to the realization of interdisciplinary programming objectives of the University. Finally, both the literature and Simon Fraser University faculty members confirm that there is a lack of visibility for those interdisciplinary teaching and programs that do exist and there is a lack of support and guidance for faculty members who seek to develop interdisciplinary courses and programs.

In general, interdisciplinary research is more easily pursued and encounters fewer barriers than does interdisciplinary teaching. A number of faculty members reported that if they are interested in engaging in an interdisciplinary team, they can do so by simply gathering together a group of diverse faculty members who may share interests in a project. This ability to marshal multidisciplinary research teams was in evidence through the number and diversity of applications that were submitted in short order to the newly created CTEF initiative two years ago. However, despite these positive reports, faculty members at the Interdisciplinarity Charette Day noted several critical barriers to effective and supported interdisciplinary research at Simon Fraser University. These included poor communication of interdisciplinary research initiatives; a lack of space for interdisciplinary teams to collaborate, meet, and exchange ideas; lack of financial support (particularly for the incubation of smaller-scale interdisciplinary research projects); a lack of opportunities that stimulate interaction among diverse disciplines; and a lack of full-time personnel to support initiatives.

The Task Force learned of many perceived inadequacies with our Centre and Institutes policy, one of Simon Fraser University’s primary vehicles for interdisciplinary research. Our own initial review of Centres and Institutes had led us to conclude that there was considerably variability in the degree to which Centres and Institutes were stimulating and nourishing interdisciplinarity, and equally that there was great variety in the extent to which existing Centres and Institutes appeared to be dynamic and active areas of research.

Participants at the Interdisciplinarity Charette Day alerted the Task Force to a number of perceived deficiencies with our existing Centres and Institutes model including a lack of clarity as to the differentiation between Centres and Institutes, a lack of operational funding and administrative support, inadequate economics of scale for the support and facilitation of Centres and Institutes, a lack of effective enabling mechanisms to encourage faculty member participation and leadership in a meaningful way, the inability for graduate students to become integrated members of Centres and Institutes, the lack of encouragement for the development of courses and programming related to the Centre and Institutes’ research activities, and the inconsistent quality of existing Centres and Institutes which was in part attributed to ineffective adjudication of new Centres/Institutes proposals, review processes and the lack of graceful phase out mechanisms for Centres and Institutes which were no longer dynamic and contributing research engines of the University.

**Multifaceted Strategy**

In view of the barriers to interdisciplinarity that have been identified above, and in consideration of the successes we have recorded, the Task Force recommends that a multifaceted strategy be adopted to successfully stimulate and nourish 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.

**Support, Facilitation, Championship**

The Task Force believes that to overcome the barriers to interdisciplinarity encountered, we will require leadership, commitment and focused attention. We are conscious that additions to the academic administration of the University must be carefully considered and thoroughly justified. It is our view, backed by observations of the activities of leading Universities internationally, the shifting intellectual context to questions of such grand scale that the only way to tackle them is from integrated contributions from the humanities, arts, social, applied and natural sciences, and the desire by students for interdisciplinary learning opportunities, that a renewed focus and commitment to interdisciplinarity is essential. This requires support, facilitation and leadership.

We believe that an Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration should be established. The design, mandate and responsibilities of the OIC are proposed as follows:

- The OIC would be led by a senior academic administrator appointed for a 3-year renewable term, holding the position title of Director. The Director would report jointly to the Vice-President, Research and the Vice-President, Academic.

- The Office would be responsible for:
  - championing interdisciplinarity at senior decision-making tables, as well as within and external to the University community
  - developing a strategic plan for interdisciplinarity at SFU, creating an implementation strategy, overseeing its execution, and preparing accountability reporting on interdisciplinary activities at SFU
  - working with the Advancement Office to develop a significant fundraising campaign in relation to signature interdisciplinary initiatives
  - facilitating interdisciplinary initiatives at SFU through advising, process development, problem-solving activities between units and individuals, and coordination
  - developing communication structures for members within and beyond SFU regarding SFU’s interdisciplinary activities – to include development of “connections” databases, coordinate speaker series, develop newsletters, host events aimed at bringing researchers together from across disciplines
  - managing the Centre/Institute Shared Support Centre which would be housed within the OIC
  - supporting the Vice-President, Research in the processes related to Centre and Institute application, review and renewal
  - developing structures to support the strategic integrated research directions of the University (the SFU Health Network serves as an example)
o developing unified profiles for major areas of the University where diverse research and teaching activities would benefit from a consolidated profile to the external community (perhaps such as: Health, Environment, and other future areas), and,

o administering funding envelopes related to the support and development of interdisciplinary activities in collaboration with the Vice-President, Academic, Vice-President, Research, and an elected interdisciplinary adjudicating committee for proposal review.

Centres and Institutes Reform

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. Our proposed reformation is designed to make Centres and Institutes better-suited to the support of research generally and interdisciplinary research in particular.

Simon Fraser University’s policy for Centres and Institutes R40.01 is an overarching framework designed to:

“Facilitate collaborative research, especially multi-disciplinary research; to undertake specific types of teaching or training programs; to facilitate multi-university initiatives, such as centres of excellence; and to provide specific types of services to the community”.

We generally support these overarching goals. However, we find that there is a lack of definitional clarity regarding particular distinctions, objectives and capacities (such as what “types of teaching or training programs” are intentioned) of Centres and Institutes; that modifications to these structural vehicles can help them become a more powerful complement to other academic structures; that clarifications and qualifications are required to ensure that these structures do not become parallel academic universes or synonyms for Independent Programs, Departments, Schools or Faculties; and that the requirements for application, review and continuation are premised on a more substantial program of quality performance expectation and accountability.

Our investigation into the ways in which Centres and Institutes are currently being used led the Task Force to the view that there is considerable diversity in the extent of activity and substantial differentiation in quality and the degree to which existing Centres and Institutes are dynamic in nature and contribute to the overall research profile of the University.

Our review uncovered several examples of where credit courses (or even a certificate program in one case) are being offered through a Centre. These include the Centre for Labour Studies, the Centre for Education, Law and Society and the Centre for Sustainable Community Development. We also became aware that there have been historical examples where Institutes were used to host degree programming and/or academic appointment: Humanities, and the Institute for Health Research and Education serve as examples. At least in the latter case, however, the proposal that
established IHRE explicitly defined the Institute as a concept and structure unique from those envisioned and supported by the R40.01 policy. We are not certain whether the circumstances surrounding the creation of Humanities were also unique.

The Task Force believes that several substantive revisions are required to the conceptualization of Centres and Institutes at Simon Fraser University if they are to effectively advance the research mission and research profile of the University, if they are to serve as an important component of graduate student learning, and if they are to serve the University as devices to nourish and develop interdisciplinarity. The areas of revision we propose are summarized as follows:

- Re-conceptualization of the categories of Centres and Institutes
- Introduction of expanded and more rigorous review at the time of creation and renewal
- Introduction of 3 to 5 year renewable terms for Centres and Institutes
- Introduction of meaningful graduate student membership
- Establishment of temporally and numerically limited opportunities for faculty members to more fully engage with Centres and Institutes through joint appointments and secondments
- Empowerment of certain categories of Centres and Institutes to offer limited credit programming in the form of interdisciplinary course(s) or certificate programs that is supplemental to degree programming offered within disciplines
- Development over the longer term of a “Shared Centres and Institutes Support Office”
- Establishment over the longer term of limited financial support to enable faculty member participation and start up for Centres and Institutes, subject to increased budget allocation to the Vice-President, Academic Strategic Initiatives Fund and the Vice-President, Research “Centre and Institutes Start-Up Support Fund”.

We recognize and remind readers that all recommendations relating to academic appointment provisions for Centres and Institutes will be the subject of negotiations between the University and the Simon Fraser Faculty Association, and the ultimate shape of the parameters related to these matters may be different than those recommended by the Task Force.

For the convenience of readers, Table 1 below provides a summary of the powers and capabilities of each type of Centre and Institute that we propose. Full details of each are provided in the full discussion of structural elements in Volume V of this report.
Table 1: Summary of Types of Centres and Institutes and their Defining Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Appointments</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Reports to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Research Centre</td>
<td>Majority of members from single Department / School / Independent Program</td>
<td>Credit teaching not permitted.</td>
<td>Normally up to 2 temporally limited joint appointments or internal secondments</td>
<td>3 – 5 year terms, renewable</td>
<td>Chair / Director, Department, School, or Independent Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Research Centre</td>
<td>Vast majority of members from single Faculty; significant membership from at least 2 disciplines</td>
<td>Credit teaching not permitted.</td>
<td>Normally up to 2 temporally limited joint appointments or internal secondments</td>
<td>3 – 5 year terms, renewable</td>
<td>Dean, Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Research &amp; Teaching Centre</td>
<td>Vast majority of members from single Faculty; significant membership from at least 2 disciplines</td>
<td>Non credit programming; supplementary credit courses of interdisciplinary nature; certificates; no degrees</td>
<td>Limited number of temporally limited joint appointments or internal secondments</td>
<td>3 – 5 year terms, renewable</td>
<td>Dean, Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Institutes</td>
<td>Significant membership from 2 or more Faculties or involve another Institution or University</td>
<td>Not permitted.</td>
<td>Normally only up to 4 temporally limited joint appointments or internal secondments</td>
<td>3 – 5 year terms, renewable; unless prescribed by Multi-University agreement</td>
<td>Vice-President, Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Teaching Institutes</td>
<td>Significant membership from 2 or more Faculties or involve another Institution or University</td>
<td>Non credit programming; supplementary credit courses of interdisciplinary nature; certificates; no degrees</td>
<td>Limited number of temporally limited joint appointments or internal secondments</td>
<td>3 – 5 year terms, renewable; unless prescribed by Multi-University agreement</td>
<td>Jointly to Vice-President, Research and Academic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy Revision

As part of our multifaceted strategy on interdisciplinarity, the Task Force recommends that a number of policies in the University be amended. 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:

  The Task Force suggests that the Joint Appointment Policy be revised as follows:

  o Limited timeframes for joint appointment provisions be introduced and that these be extended to particular categories of Centres and Institutes (i.e. for 3-5 year terms, renewable)
  o Flexibility be introduced into the nature of joint appointment relationships (i.e. they may have differential teaching commitments, service expectations or research locus between two or more units) and that these be articulated
  o Strategies be developed to ensure appropriate and adequate review mechanisms of interdisciplinary and multi-unit research and teaching
  o Expectations for faculty who are appointed to multiple units to have their workload activities in relation to each unit be clear and consistent with the overall expectations of annual workload requirements for faculty members of the university who are solely in disciplines

  The Task Force also believes that it is critical that incentives be developed to encourage units to make joint appointments.

- Secondments Policy

  The Task Force believes that the University requires a new mechanism to encourage faculty member participation in interdisciplinary teaching and research activities that are developed through Centres and Institutes. Such a policy would need to address issues of performance review, possibility of renewal for multi-year secondments, process for application, etc. The Task Force understands the tension between departmental teaching requirements and planning on the one hand and support for faculty member engagement in interdisciplinary initiatives on the other. As a consequence, we believe that while it is critically important that Department Chairs/School and Program Directors have a direct role in the approval of secondment applications, they have constraints placed upon them in their power to delay or refuse a secondment application. In terms of a delay, we believe that a Department must be able to effectively plan for the continued offering of
degree program requirements and the financial functioning of the unit, and so the Department should have the right to delay for these two reasons the timing of a secondment. We believe that a Department should also have the right to deny a secondment application where the past performance of a faculty member has been assessed as unsatisfactory. Finally, a Department should have the right to ensure that a faculty member’s annual workload expectation is being fulfilled. If a faculty member applies for secondment to an institute but this secondment does not fulfill the expected teaching and service expectations of a faculty member, then the Department should be empowered to place conditions on the secondment to ensure that these will be met. In such cases we imagine that teaching and service commitments would be met through activities within the department. Notwithstanding these rights of the Department, the Task Force firmly believes that these matters should not be used to deter the approval of secondment applications, and the Director of the Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration should be seen by both parties as a facilitator to aid in the success of secondment applications.

- **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.

- **Interdisciplinary Performance Review Mechanisms**

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 most 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. While we recognize that changes to performance review of academic members is a matter for negotiation between the University and the Simon Fraser University Faculty Association, we believe that the Director of the Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration should provide an independent discussion paper on interdisciplinary performance review. There is a significant literature on the topic and this issue has emerged in many other institutional contexts, though we were unable to locate in our limited research an exemplary model to offer the University and the Faculty Association as part of this report. 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.

**Financial Support**

The final component of the multi-faceted strategy on interdisciplinarity recommended by the Task Force deals with financial support. We believe that it will be essential for the University to provide financial incentives and support to both individuals and units if we are to effectively and significantly move the interdisciplinary objectives and commitment of the University forward. In principle, we believe that the following financial vehicles would be effective for stimulating interdisciplinarity at Simon Fraser University:

- Large Project Funding (CTEF) – VPR Responsibility – no changes recommended to current process
- Small Interdisciplinary Project Funding (SIP) – OIC responsibility – competitive process with interdisciplinary adjudicating committee proposal review
- Interdisciplinary Conference Funding (ICF) – OIC responsibility – this should be considered as an extension of the existing Vice-President, Academic conference fund
- Interdisciplinary Teaching Development Fund (ITDF) – OIC responsibility – dedicated to the support of teaching development

A financial commitment of perhaps $90,000 to $100,000 across the last three funding vehicles would, we believe, serve as a reasonable starting investment in improving support for interdisciplinary activity.

To succeed in creating a supportive, facilitative, and nourishing environment for interdisciplinarity at Simon Fraser University, we must create the space for this to occur. We would suggest, therefore, that through an incremental financial and space strategy, perhaps as a result of an external fundraising strategy, that the Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration be developed over the long-term to have adequate physical facilities and infrastructure to support its activities and the shared Centre/Institute Support Centre. At a minimum, we imagine that a meeting room, teleconferencing facilities, reference library, and support personnel be provided to the OIC.

The Task Force recognizes that the funding allocation formulae used by the University has been devised as part of a complex consideration of enrolment activity and planned growth at the University within academic disciplines. While this strategy ensures that “funding follows scholars”, we nonetheless feel that its current 100% disposition to Faculties reinforces discipline-based competition and barriers which will continue to stifle programming initiatives of an interdisciplinary nature.
**Summary and Recommendations**

We recognize that the multifaceted strategy we have identified in support of interdisciplinarity at Simon Fraser University is an ambitious constellation of structures, supports, policy revisions and developments, and financial strategies. Nonetheless, we feel this strategy is critical to advance both *disciplinary* and *interdisciplinary* research and teaching excellence in the future.

The establishment of an Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration will support faculty members seeking to pursue interdisciplinary knowledge discovery; it will be a centre for the interaction of faculty members across the University, and will serve as a catalyst for incubation of interdisciplinary research and teaching.

The reviews to be undertaken at both graduate and undergraduate levels, will ensure that students are able to effectively and seamlessly engage in study beyond their disciplines, thus providing them with an expanded perspective on the disciplinary areas they choose to explore.

The proposed revisions to the Centres and Institutes are envisioned to be a key component to our success in defining Simon Fraser University as a place where the “research innovation [of faculty] will find incubation, support and development” (p. 9) and where graduate students will be able to be “intimately connected with the research agenda and activities of the University” (p.10).

In the interdisciplinarity area of our mandate, we make the following recommendations:

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**Recommendation 11:** That the University establish a new Office for Interdisciplinary Collaboration (OIC) with the design, mandate and responsibilities outlined in this report.

**Recommendation 12:** That the University’s Academic Policies be revised as follows:

1. **12.1** That the Joint Appointments Policy be revised in consideration of the suggestions included in this report.

2. **12.2** That the University develop a new policy which would allow for internal secondment of post tenure research faculty and permanent teaching faculty members for 2-5 year terms to Centres and Institutes.

3. **12.3** That the University develop a new policy on Team Teaching.

4. **12.4** That the University develop better provisions for the review of interdisciplinary research and teaching in all academic performance review processes.

5. **12.5** That the Centres and Institutes policy be revised as envisioned in this report.
Recommendation 13: That the Vice-President, Academic in collaboration with the Deans and Vice-Presidents undertake the following:

13.1 Develop a series of incentive strategies and position funding arrangements that would lead to a substantial increase in the number of joint appointments at Simon Fraser University.

13.2 Review the current enrolment based funding allocation formula to identify ways in which funding can effectively flow to support supplementary interdisciplinary course credits offered through Centres and Institutes and new strategic and interdisciplinary program development.