

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.438

MEMORANDUM

To Members of Senate

From Brian Wilson

Vice-President Academic

Subject Canadian Studies

Date November 20, 1970

14733-PC

The attached paper represents a recommendation from the Academic Planning Committee for the establishment of a program in Canadian Studies. The paper has been circulated to departmental chairmen and through them to their respective faculty members for information and comment.



Brian Wilson

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RECOMMENDATION:

That a program in Canadian Studies be established and incorporated into the Division of General Studies.

BACKGROUND DATA:

1. The Forces Which Gave Impetus to the Development of this Proposal:

This proposal arises directly out of a basic concern on the part of many of the faculty at this University that Simon Fraser, growing as rapidly as it did and recruiting faculty from all over the world, does not present as much of the Canadian cultural experience to its students as is desirable. In recent years there has developed in this country a fresh and valuable kind of Canadian consciousness. In part this consciousness is revealed in an increased interest in Canadian studies as evidenced by more offerings and larger enrolments in Canadian courses, by more conceptions or actual births of Departments of Canadian Studies in Canada and in the United States, by the founding recently of two more Canadian University Presses, by the founding and success of the Journal of Canadian Studies, and by the recent advocacy of the C.A.U.T. for Canadian course content. The general object of these* developments is to bring Canadian and non-Canadian students to an understanding of the Canadian cultural heritage. Unfortunately, this University has not kept pace with these developments.

The following extract is taken from a "Report on the Present State of Canadian Studies at Simon Fraser University", presented to President K.T. Strand on 19th November 1969 by a group of twenty-four faculty members who were concerned about the lack of Canadian content courses being offered at the undergraduate level:

"The working group is concerned that Simon Fraser is not adequately fulfilling its function as a University within the Canadian milieu. Several fields of study, among them Canadian literature in both English and French, Canadian history, geography, sociology, economics and ecology find their terms of reference within the nation that this University serves. Our concern is that these studies are not stressed as they might be at Simon Fraser University."

"The University has a responsibility to provide students with an understanding of their own culture and country. If the University does not actively accept this social role, but rather constitutes itself as marginal to the local and national community, if it does not provide an education with roots in the society, the result is not only a serious cultural impoverishment for the student but also a neglect of one of the University's basic functions, that of providing an adequate education for its Canadian students."

* See "Canadianization and the University" C.A.U.T. Bulletin, October, 1969, pp. 42-43.

"For these reasons, we would like to point out the scarcity of undergraduate course offerings in the field of Canadian Studies. (You will note that there are only eleven total Canadian content courses offered in the entire University, and of these only four are outside the Department of History.) At the moment we do not offer full courses on the Canadian economy or society. Furthermore, Canadian literature (English and French) is not given as regularly as is customarily the case at Canadian universities. There are no specific Canadian content courses offered in either the Faculty of Science or Education. Without exception, all departments should be offering more Canadian content courses. Furthermore, the calendar does not indicate the real limitations of our present programme since many courses are listed but are offered infrequently."

"We would respectfully remind Senate that Universities across Canada are attempting to fulfill their responsibilities to the national community and suggest that Senate review Departmental course offerings encouraging an increased emphasis on Canadian Studies. Finally in order to remedy outstanding deficiencies and to establish interdepartmental programmes, we would urge Senate to establish a programme of Canadian Studies."

We could best summarize the forces which gave impetus to this proposal as a desire on the part of concerned faculty for students to be able to come to "know themselves" as Canadians. Our basic premise is that Canada is unique because of the unique set of problems which have developed from its law, its cultural pluralism, its history, its geography, its government, its way of coping with survival and expansion. Equally, of course, some of these problems Canada shares with other industrialized countries and some Canadians share with all mankind. Since Canadian higher education generally concentrates on these problems which Canada shares with others, a clear need exists in post-secondary education for examination of the uniqueness of Canada and Canadians. The extent to which Canadians are aware of their identity as Canadians depends on the degree and breadth to which they comprehend their unique problems and are willing to contribute to their solutions.

Thus we see the Canadian Studies concept rooted in the pluralistic, multicultural and bilingual mosaic of our society. Even though Canada exists in a community of nations with similar aspirations its unique character may responsibly be examined academically without descending to petty nationalism or excessive parochialism.

We intend, in this proposal, to expand on the earlier "Report" and hopefully to provide direction for discussion leading to the immediate implementation of a Canadian Studies Programme at Simon Fraser University.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME:

A. Primary Objectives:

1. The Development of a Comprehensive Under-Graduate Canadian-Oriented Curriculum at Simon Fraser University.

The purpose being to enable the student to enlarge his knowledge of his own society. Such a Programme would help students to discover a real and vital Canada for themselves; to appreciate the aspirations and value systems of other individuals and groups; to develop an awareness of the complexities and challenges in contemporary Canadian society; and to become more intelligently concerned with the welfare of their country. By providing such a Programme at Simon Fraser we would be meeting a clearly recognized need of the Canadian community inasmuch as a recent study of civic education across Canada has revealed gross inadequacies in the quality of training students receive in social studies, history and civics courses at the secondary school level.*

Canada has an acknowledged shortage of qualified Canadian academics in the social sciences, literature, history and geography at both the secondary and university level. As these studies are vital to the future cultural development of Canada, it is important that they be stressed in universities across the country. Furthermore, the establishment of a Canadian Studies Programme at Simon Fraser would mean that there was at least one functioning programme in each of the major geographic regions in the country: Mount Allison University in the Maritimes; Carleton University in Central Canada; St. John's College, University of Manitoba in the Canadian mid-west; and Simon Fraser University on the Pacific Coast.

2. The Establishment of a Solid Inter-Disciplinary Programme at Simon Fraser University.

Thus enabling the student to enlarge his knowledge of his own society from a number of disciplinary perspectives. We propose that the Canadian Studies Programme should be designed to provide our students with the intellectual skills to use such disciplines as geography, sociology, cultural anthropology, political science, history, economics, and English and French literature in the study of Canada. Through the medium of the Canadian Studies Programme, seven departments in the humanities and the social sciences (hopefully there would be contributions from the Faculties of Science and Education in the near future) would cooperate to offer a Minor Programme which would be interdisciplinary in emphasis but which at the same time would enable the student to maintain a firm base in the discipline of his choice; the eventual offering of a major will be dependent upon student demand. Our present course offerings provide the basis for an interdisciplinary programme. Assuming that additions will be made with time, Simon Fraser has the opportunity of developing a

* What Culture? What Heritage? The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1958.

strong and original programme which will not duplicate present offerings at any other University in the Province.

It should be emphasized that Canadian Studies benefit by integration to an extent not found in contemporary British or American studies. Canadian Studies are closely interconnected. For example, Canadian literature is basically regional, strongly historical and often sociological in nature. For this reason, a student majoring in Canadian literature or sociology requires a thorough knowledge of Canadian history and geography. Such an inter-disciplinary programme would be of great service to all the Departments concerned. The skills and attitudes of the particular disciplines are respected; they are brought into a relationship in which one set of skills and attitudes supports and extends the range of another.

B. Secondary Objectives:

1. Integration of the University into the Community

The Programme should enable Canadians other than University students to become aware of themselves as Canadians. In the future the programme envisages going beyond the bounds of the degree-oriented curriculum. The role of the individual citizen as a decision-maker on issues of vital national interest is determined by his awareness of his Canadian identity. Canadian businesses, governments, and churches also need people educated in this way, and require personnel and facilities for retraining and upgrading opportunities. Thus the Programme should include the capacity to provide opportunities of this kind. We look forward to introducing a supplemental programme of extension or evening sessions at some point in the not too distant future. We are convinced that the two programmes will support, reinforce, stimulate and inspire each other as the members of one programme utilize the services provided by the other, or as when academic and non-academics meet to share their skills on a common project. Such a programme of community-oriented, adult-centred education would attract additional resource personnel who are available in the metropolitan area.

2. Integration of Faculty with the University

Up to now Canadian problems have been explored in the various disciplines, with little apparent communication between the various groups in this academic community. A Programme of Canadian Studies will encourage faculty with a common professional interest in Canada and Canadian culture to co-ordinate their academic efforts in a more stimulating environment. In such an atmosphere artificial departmental barriers will be broken down and inter-disciplinary conversations will occur to a far greater extent than is the case at present.

ORGANIZATION:

Administrative organization will consist of a part-time coordinator and a Coordinating Committee composed of a representative from each of the

"core departments", i.e. departments in which Canadian Content courses are offered. The coordinator will report directly to the Dean of the Division of General Studies. The Coordinating Committee through its coordinator/director will advise the Dean of the Division on: admission of students to the Program, *curriculum, budget requirements and candidates for degree.*

IMPLEMENTATION

The Spring semester of 1971:

The nucleus of the Programme at this stage would be the staff currently at Simon Fraser who teach Canadian oriented courses, and would include existing calendar listings of courses with (i) total Canadian content, and (ii) partial Canadian content (40% or more). During this period, the Coordinating Committee will undertake the following:

- a) Coordinating academic planning for Stage II by
 - i) Liaison with departments and their curriculum representatives,
 - ii) Establishment of two interdisciplinary courses to be implemented under Stage II at the 200 and 400 level.
- b) Selection of a search committee to find a coordinator/faculty member for Stage II.
- c) Library acquisitions for the Programme.
- d) Public relations with other Canadian Universities and the Community.

It should be emphasized that we consider Stage I of the Programme to be an extended feasibility study, examining the role and value of Canadian Studies within the University and the Community. Before deciding on the final details of Stage II, we propose to hold an exploratory seminar on the establishment of a Major Programme of Canadian Studies at the undergraduate level.

LONG TERM:

If student and societal demand proves the viability of this program, we hope eventually to establish a major in Canadian Studies. For the immediate future, however, we are proposing the establishment of a minor in Canadian Studies to be taken in conjunction with a major in a recognized discipline. Under either the major or minor we feel that this tie to a major in a recognized discipline is essential so that the student may have the benefit of a programme which is inter-disciplinary in emphasis but which at the same time allows him to maintain a firm base in the discipline of his choice. Furthermore, the eventual double major will ensure that Canadian Studies does not become an end in itself but will remain an integral part of the undergraduate education of this University.

* It is recognized that some of these responsibilities will come only if a major in Canadian Studies is eventually approved.