

S.74.43

## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

## MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDIESSubject FURTHER REPORT - CURRICULAR ISSUES  
RELATING TO UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Date FEBRUARY 11, 1974

Issue 1. PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND APPROVING CURRICULUM CHANGES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74- 43

- a) That SCUS normally will consider the Faculty Curriculum Committees to be the major investigatory body in matters relating to curriculum and review.
- b) That the recommendations of Faculty Curriculum Committees as approved by the relevant Faculty will be returned to the Faculty after consideration by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies if one or more of the following conditions obtain.
  - i) The documentation of the course proposed or program change is inadequate, i.e. the answers on the course proposal form and supporting memoranda where appropriate do not indicate how the course fits into the program, is too vaguely worded, etc.
  - ii) There is a specific reason, such as course overlap with another department, which has not been adequately dealt with by the Faculty Curriculum Committee. The difference from the first condition is that SCUS must state specifically the reason for referral, whereas under the first condition, it may simply refer by indicating areas of insufficient documentation.
  - iii) Where a Faculty Curriculum Committee is unable to resolve an issue, it should clearly state the nature of the problem and refer to SCUS for a recommendation which must then be approved by the department(s) and Faculty Curriculum Committee(s) concerned. If the parties involved agree to disagree, then the issue accompanied by the alternative solutions will be forwarded to Senate for resolution.
  - iv) Where Faculty Undergraduate Curriculum Committee proposals

do not conform to Senate policy or to the department's previously stated policy."

Issue 4. USE OF DIRECTED READINGS/DIRECTED STUDIES AND DIRECTED RESEARCH COURSES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74-43

- a) That each offering of a directed/reading, directed study or directed research course within a department require the approval of the Departmental Chairman.
- b) That the chairman's approval be based upon a submission by the instructor covering each of the following:
  1. a description of the content of the course
  2. a statement of how the course is to be conducted
  3. an assessment of the relation between workload and credit hours assigned to the course
  4. a statement of how the student's performance will be assessed for grading purposes
  5. a written statement justifying the need for the particular course rather than one of the regular courses offered by the department.
- c) That the present practice of having Senate approve the establishment of directed research/readings/and study courses for departments but not the content of such courses be continued.
- d) As a general principle, that an instructor in a directed research/readings/or study course should expect to meet with his students at least weekly.
- e) That vector numbers for all directed research/readings/or study courses be deleted from both the University's Calendar and Course Guide.
- f) That directed research/readings/or study courses not be permitted (except under the circumstances provided in Senate paper S.73-125, Issue 12, Motion C) as substitutes for either required courses or special topics courses."

Issue 6. COURSE/CONTACT HOUR RELATIONSHIP (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES\* ONLY)

*\*A regularly scheduled course is defined as a semester length course expected to be meeting for a predetermined number of contact hours per week in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory as approved by Senate.*

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74-43

1. That the determination of the appropriate relationship between credit and contact hours rest with departmental undergraduate curriculum committees subject to the approval of Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate."

If Motion 1 is passed,

"That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74-43

2. That motion 1) of Issue 5 - Use of Special Topics Courses - contained in S.73-125 and approved at the November 1973 meeting of Senate: 'As a guiding principle for special topics courses, that one contact hour be set equal to one credit hour' be deleted."

Issue 7. USE OF VECTOR PATTERNS (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES)

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74- 43

- a) That all vector patterns be eliminated from the University Calendar.
- b) That each course description contained in the University Calendar be accompanied by an indication of the nature of the course, e.g. lecture/tutorial, lecture/tutorial/laboratory, seminar, etc.
- c) That, within the total number of contact hours assigned to a course, and subject to the approval of the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee, the Chairman be permitted to vary the vector pattern. Such vector patterns to reflect only the class requirements and the calendar description of the course.
- d) That vector patterns for all regularly scheduled courses be

included in the Course Guide; Departmental approval will be in writing and submitted to the Registrar."

Issue 11. CRITERIA FOR NUMBERING COURSES (EXCLUDING DIRECTED RESEARCH, READINGS AND STUDY COURSES AND SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES)

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74- 43

- a) That the following criteria be established as guidelines for departments in determining the number division to be assigned individual courses.

000 division courses are credit or non-credit courses of a general nature designed to introduce a student to a broad area of learning. Such courses are designed to provoke thought and to stimulate a desire for further exploration of the field(s). They may be disciplinary or inter-disciplinary in nature. Such courses are open to all students and do not carry pre- or co-requisites."

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.74.43

## MEMORANDUM

To Senate

From Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

Subject Further Report - Curricular Issues Relating to Undergraduate Education

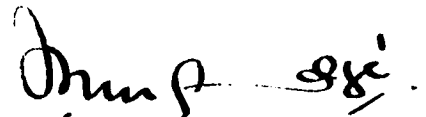
Date 11 February, 1974

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies submitted its initial report on curricular issues related to undergraduate education to the November meeting of Senate. These recommendations were contained in Paper S.73-125. At that meeting, Senate approved the majority of the recommendations of SCUS; and, for the information of Senators, a copy of S.73-125, as amended at the November 5th meeting of Senate, is attached.

The following issues were referred back to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies:

- Issue 1 - Procedures for Reviewing and Approving Curriculum Changes
- Issue 4 - Use of Directed Readings, Directed Studies and Directed Research Courses
- Issue 6 - Course/Contact hour relationship (for regularly-scheduled courses only)
- Issue 7 - Use of Vector Patterns (for regularly-scheduled courses only)
- Issue 11 - Criteria for Numbering Courses (Item 1 concerning 000 courses only).

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies has now reconsidered these items and now transmits them to Senate for its reconsideration.



I. Mugridge  
Chairman

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att.

Issue 1 - PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND APPROVING CURRICULUM CHANGES

MOTION: "That Senate approve,

- a) That SCUS normally will consider the Faculty Curriculum Committees to be the major investigatory body in matters relating to curriculum and review.
- b) That the recommendations of Faculty Curriculum Committees as approved by the relevant Faculty will be returned to the Faculty after consideration by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies if one or more of the following conditions obtain.
  - i) The documentation of the course proposed or program change is inadequate, i.e. the answers on the course proposal form and supporting memoranda where appropriate do not indicate how the course fits into the program, is too vaguely worded, etc.
  - ii) There is a specific reason, such as course overlap with another department, which has not been adequately dealt with by the Faculty Curriculum Committee. The difference from the first condition is that SCUS must state specifically the reason for referral, whereas under the first condition, it may simply refer by indicating areas of insufficient documentation.
  - iii) Where a Faculty Curriculum Committee is unable to resolve an issue, it should clearly state the nature of the problem and refer to SCUS for a recommendation which must then be approved by the department(s) and Faculty Curriculum Committee(s) concerned. If the parties involved agree to disagree, then the issue accompanied by the alternative solutions will be forwarded to Senate for resolution.

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- iv) Where Faculty Undergraduate Curriculum Committee proposals do not conform to Senate policy or to the department's previously stated policy."

### Rationale

Curriculum changes are defined as:

- a) changes in departmental graduation requirements for major and honors students
- b) additions and deletions of course offerings
- c) changes in course content
- d) changes in course numbering
- e) changes in course credit assignments
- f) changes in course vector patterns
- g) changes in pre- and co- requisites for individual courses
- h) changes in Faculty graduation requirements
- i) editorial changes

With the exception of the latter, which may be approved by the Registrar, curriculum changes follow a lengthy route through departmental undergraduate curriculum committees, departments, faculty undergraduate curriculum committees, faculties, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. Since the role of each committee and Senate in the curriculum revision and review process has not been clearly delineated, unnecessary duplication and much time consuming effort occurs because each feels obliged to undertake a comprehensive review of all that has gone before. These problems have been further compounded by the lack of a standardized form for submitting proposed curriculum changes for review.

We do not believe it is desirable to eliminate any of the review bodies from the process. Rather, we believe that many difficulties can be minimized by clearly designating one body as being the major investigatory body in matters of curriculum revision and review. This body, we believe, should be the Faculty Curriculum Committees.

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Issue 4. USE OF DIRECTED READINGS/DIRECTED STUDIES AND DIRECTED RESEARCH COURSES

MOTION: "That Senate approve,

- a) That each offering of a directed reading, directed study or directed research course within a department require the approval of the Departmental Chairman.
- b) That the chairman's approval be based upon a submission by the instructor covering each of the following:
  1. a description of the content of the course
  2. a statement of how the course is to be conducted
  3. an assessment of the relation between workload and credit hours assigned to the course
  4. a statement of how the student's performance will be assessed for grading purposes
  5. a written statement justifying the need for the particular course rather than one of the regular courses offered by the department.
- c) That the present practice of having Senate approve the establishment of directed research/readings/and study courses for departments but not the content of such courses be continued.
- d) As a general principle, that an instructor in a directed research/readings/or study course should expect to meet with his students at least weekly.
- e) That vector numbers for all directed research/readings/or study courses be deleted from both the University's Calendar and Course Guide.
- f) That directed research/readings/or study courses not be permitted (except under the circumstances provided in Senate paper S.73-125, Issue 12, Motion C) as substitutes for either required courses or special topics courses."

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## Rationale

Most departments offer such courses. While their purpose has never been formally defined, patterns of use have become established. These courses are seen as (i) providing opportunities for students wanting either indepth treatment of particular areas summarily covered in lecture or seminar courses, or topics of mutual interest to students and faculty not covered by formal courses, and (ii) being appropriate for groups of students as well as students working independently. The directed reading/studies/research labels have generally been used where the mode of operation is essentially one of individual research or tutorial. Where lectures and more formal instruction are given, a special topics label is generally considered more appropriate.

Student contact hours vary considerably. Some departments require a one hour meeting per week for a three credit course; some two hours per week for a five credit course; and some simply leave it to the instructor and student to arrange an appropriate number of meetings.

There is no uniform relationship between credit and contact hours. However, general agreement exists that credit should be based on the amount of work required rather than on the amount of time spent with the instructor. In some but not all departments, the topics of such courses must be approved usually by the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee or the chairman. Unfortunately, use of these courses has been subject to some abuse, the extent of which it has been impossible to ascertain. However, it is clear that such courses have often become an almost integral part of some departmental curricula though this was not the original intent. Furthermore, they have been used to substitute for required courses; and this is contrary to Senate's expectations. Together with the special topics courses, they are the only courses given in the University whose content does not require the approval of the department, Faculty, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. We are convinced that such courses can be beneficial to both students and faculty, but we are equally convinced that each department should be obliged to develop protective mechanisms which will guard against their abuse.

RATIONALE (continued)

In its initial report to Senate on this issue, the Committee on Undergraduate Studies recommended that: (i) departments and Faculties seek to standardize the credit hours assigned to directed research/readings/and study courses; (ii) Faculties establish limits on the number of such courses or credit hours a student may take for credit toward the degree of that Faculty; and (iii) only upper level students be permitted to enrol in such courses.

Upon reconsideration, it is our opinion that standardization of credit hours assigned to direct research/reading and study courses is neither desirable nor possible. Because of the nature of such courses, the workload will vary according to what the instructor and the student seek to accomplish. For these reasons we have recommended that the approval of the departmental chairman for each such course offering be required and that this approval be based partly upon an assessment of the relation between workload and the credit assigned. Regarding limits on the number of such courses or credit hours which a student may take for credit toward his degree, the Committee is of the opinion that, providing the practice is not abused, a student may receive a better education more closely related to his own interests, through maximizing his use of such courses than might be obtained through enrolling simply in regularly scheduled courses. To prevent abuse however, the Committee continues to recommend that directed research/readings/or study courses not be permitted, except under the circumstances specified in S.73.125, Issue 12, Motion C, as substitutes for either required courses or special topics courses.

As noted, directed research/readings and study courses provide opportunities for students wanting in-depth treatment of particular areas summarily covered in lecture or seminar courses, or new topics of mutual interest to students and faculty. While students who have previously been exposed to the area through regularly scheduled courses will be the prime beneficiaries of such courses, it seemed to the Committee to be unduly restrictive to limit enrolment to upper level students. Further, since enrolment in such courses normally requires the approval of the instructor, and if these proposals are adopted, of the department chairman-adequate safeguards exist to ensure that only those who would truly benefit from such a course are admitted./.....

Issue 6. COURSE/CONTACT HOUR RELATIONSHIP (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES\* ONLY)

*\*A regularly scheduled course is defined as a semester length course expected to be meeting for a predetermined number of contact hours per week in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory as approved by Senate.*

MOTION:

1. That the determination of the appropriate relationship between credit and contact hours rest with departmental undergraduate curriculum committees subject to the approval of Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate.

If Motion 1 is passed.

2. That motion 1) of Issue 5 - Use of Special Topics Courses - contained in S.73-125 and approved at the November 1973 meeting of Senate:  
"As a guiding principle for special topics courses, that one contact hour be set equal to one credit hour" be deleted.

Rationale

a. Motion 1

Lower and upper division courses in the Faculty of Education, contact hours generally equal credit hours. This relationship applies irrespective of whether the contact hour is in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory form.

In the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, practices vary from department to department. In Communication Studies, a one-to-one relationship generally exists although laboratory and tutorial contact hours in excess of credit hours are sometimes required for upper division courses. In Kinesiology, lower division courses operate on a one-to-one basis but the amount of contact time per credit hour increases with upper division courses. In other areas of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, the relationship depends primarily on the amount of outside class work required.

Rationale (continued)

For lower division courses offered by the Faculty of Arts, contact hours equal credit hours. This is true whether the contact hour is in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory form. The only identified exceptions to this policy are Commerce 223-5 and three or four D.M.L. four credit language courses. Credit for upper division courses offered by the Faculty of Arts is either two, three or five hours. For both the two and three credit hour upper division courses, two laboratory hours equal one hour of credit while one hour of tutorial, seminar or lecture equals one credit hour. The major point of variation within the Faculty of Arts is that different departments, and sometimes different courses within the same department, do not require the same amount of class time for a five credit hour course. Some require five hours of class time, others three. So far as it has been possible to establish, no seminar meets for less than three hours per week although two departments sometimes allow a seminar to meet two hours per week provided the faculty member sets aside a fixed time for individual instruction for each member of the seminar, usually one hour per student. In general, most departments in the Faculty of Arts give five hours of credit for three hours of class seminar work.

All departments in the Faculty of Science equate one credit hour with one lecture hour. Tutorial contact hours are not counted. Practice varies regarding laboratory hours. The Department of Chemistry sets one credit hour equal to two laboratory hours. In the Department of Biological Sciences, the relationship is one to three. In the Department of Physics, one credit hour equals two laboratory hours, three credit hours equal four laboratory hours and four credit hours equal six laboratory hours.

While departments recognized the need for University standards in this area, there was no agreement on such a standard. The options expressed were:

- a) relating credit hours solely to lecture hours taught
- b) one-to-one relationship for non-laboratory courses with courses involving laboratory work requiring a greater number of contact hours per hour of credit

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- c) relating credit hours to the amount of outside work required
- d) relating credit hours to the amount of both class and out-of-class time required for the course
- e) relating credit hours to difficulty of materials encompassed by the course
- f) one-to-one relationship for all lower division courses. For upper division courses, no less than two contact hours for a two credit hour course, no less than three contact hours for a three credit course, and no less than four contact hours for a five credit course. No distinction to be made between lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory contact hours.

The difficulty with option (a) is that it forces all courses to be offered on a lecture basis since the proposal would provide no credit for seminar courses. Options (c), (d) and (e) would be difficult, if not impossible, to legislate because of the lack of defined norms against which to measure either the amount of outside work spent on the course or the difficulty of course materials. Moreover, the amount of time spent by individual students on a given course is as much a function of the student's interest and ability as it is of class assignments or the difficulty of course material. Thus, only options (b) and (f) appeared to merit further consideration.

Implementation of either alternative (b) or (f) or some combination thereof would require a major reorganization of the curriculum in both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science. While there was no disagreement with the principle that a defined relationship between credit and contact hours is desirable in a new situation, the Committee is convinced that the costs involved in a major restructuring of the present curriculum of two Faculties far outweigh the benefits to be derived from implementation of a University or even Faculty-wide credit/contact hour relationship. Our recommendation, therefore, is that the determination of the credit/contact hour relationship for particular courses be left to the discretion of departments proposing the course. Departments must,

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however, be prepared to justify their recommendations before Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate.

b. Motion 2

Since special topics courses are regarded as regularly scheduled courses, the Committee recommends that the policy regarding the appropriate relationship between credit and contact hours be the same for both regularly scheduled and special topics courses.

Upon reconsideration, the Committee is convinced that the policy recommended for regularly scheduled courses is the most appropriate and, therefore, recommends the substitution contained in the above recommendations.

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Issue 7    USE OF VECTOR PATTERNS (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES)

MOTION

- a) That all vector patterns be eliminated from the University Calendar.
- b) That each course description contained in the University Calendar be accompanied by an indication of the nature of the course, e.g. lecture/tutorial, lecture/tutorial/laboratory, seminar, etc.
- c) That, within the total number of contact hours assigned to a course, and subject to the approval of the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee, the Chairman be permitted to vary the vector pattern. Such vector patterns to reflect only the class requirements and the calendar description of the course.
- d) That vector patterns for all regularly scheduled courses be included in the Course Guide; Departmental approval will be in writing and submitted to the Registrar.

Rationale

There is considerable confusion about vector patterns. This is attributable to the many uses to which they are currently put. For some courses, vector numbers indicate the lecture, tutorial, laboratory pattern, while others use the first vector number to indicate the amount of outside work required. Seminars present special problems with some departments indicating vector patterns of 0-5-0 and others the vector 2-3-0. There is agreement, however, that current vector patterns:

- a) often do not bear any relationship to either the contact hours of the course or the credit hours assigned to it.
- b) need not reflect the way in which the course is actually taught.
- c) will vary from semester to semester for individual courses dependent upon the instructor.
- d) serve no useful purpose in the University's Calendar

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- e) would be of assistance to students if placed in the Course Guide provided they carried a consistent meaning.

Because teaching method and content often influence students' choice of courses, it is reasonable to expect that accurate information on both will be supplied to students in advance of the course. We recognize that individual faculty members will vary in their approach to the same course and that the annual publication of the University's Calendar cannot therefore reflect these semester changes. Furthermore, the University's Calendar is a statement of general policies and principles and we find little justification for the continued inclusion in it of vector patterns. Because the Calendar is used to determine transfer credit for students enrolling at other universities who have taken courses at this University and because it is a general guide for students taking courses at Simon Fraser, we have recommended that each course description contained in the Calendar be accompanied by a general description of the manner in which the course will be taught. Since the Course Guide provides information on individual semester course offerings, we believe that it is the most appropriate place in which to incorporate course vector patterns.

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Issue 11. CRITERIA FOR NUMBERING COURSES (EXCLUDING DIRECTED RESEARCH, READINGS AND STUDY COURSES AND SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES)

Motion: a) That the following criteria be established as guidelines for departments in determining the number division to be assigned individual courses.

000 division courses are credit or non-credit courses of a general nature designed to introduce a student to a broad area of learning. Such courses are designed to provoke thought and to stimulate a desire for further exploration of the field (s). They may be disciplinary or inter-disciplinary in nature. Such courses are open to all students and do not carry pre- or co-requisites.

Rationale

Currently, there are no University guidelines available for determining the appropriate numerical division, i.e. 100, 200, 300, or 400 to be assigned individual courses. Lacking such guidelines, departments have had to use their own discretion with the result that differences in numbering philosophy have become apparent producing both endless and fruitless debate in Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. To minimize the debate relating to numbering changes, we have recommended a set of criteria to be utilized in establishing numbers for individual courses. It should be understood that adoption of these guidelines does not carry with it a commitment that all departments adopt a 100, 200, 300, 400 course numbering policy. For example, the Department of English has no 300 division courses. Such deviations from the recommendations should be permitted provided they are acceptable to the Faculty Curriculum Committee, Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate.

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February 11, 1974

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

## MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDIES

Subject REPORT ON CURRICULAR ISSUES RELATING  
TO UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Date OCTOBER 18, 1973

S.73-125

Motions as amended and approved by Senate at its meeting of Nov. 5, 1973.

NOTE: The statements of rationale are extracted from the support paper and are not a part of the formal motion approved.

### Issue 2 - OVERLAP OF COURSE CONTENT BETWEEN COURSES OFFERED WITHIN A DEPARTMENT, WITHIN A FACULTY, ACROSS FACULTIES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That, in all cases where overlap in course content exists, Faculty Curriculum Committees be charged with requiring jointly approved and justified course proposals to be submitted by the departments involved. Such charge to apply to both departments within a single Faculty and across Faculties.
- b) That, where a jointly approved course proposal is not forthcoming from the departments involved, the issue be referred by the departments involved, to the Faculty Curriculum Committee(s) for resolution.
- c) That, where an overlap in course content cannot be resolved at either the department or Faculty level, the issue be resolved by Senate upon the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies."

### Rationale

We agree that course content overlap may be justified in those instances where, depending on the focus and integrative framework of the lecturer, similar materials are approached in quite different fashion. In our review, we have found a number of existing areas where appreciable and, from our point of view, unjustified course content overlap exists. We have no panacea for such problem areas. At a minimum, however, we believe it is essential that Faculty curriculum Committees be charged with requiring jointly approved and justified course proposals from those departments where overlap in course content exists. Where the problem is not resolvable at the departmental or Faculty level, it will have to be resolved by Senate upon the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies.

### Issue 3 - PROLIFERATION OF COURSE OFFERINGS

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) At the time of internal or external departmental review, departments be required to review all of their course offer-

ings with a view to eliminating those no longer appropriate to the department's objectives.

- b) That justification for the continuance of any specific course offering may be requested, at any time, by the Faculty Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies or Senate.
- c) That any course not offered within a six semester period be deleted from the Calendar unless adequate justification for retaining the course is presented to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies to be charged each semester with reviewing course offerings under this ruling and making appropriate recommendations to Senate."

#### Rationale

Most departments do review their programs yearly. While no department has a defined procedure for undertaking the review, such factors as changes in graduate school emphases, changes in the academic complexion of the department due to new hiring and replacement, student inputs, and interdisciplinary factors are considered by all department. Even so, the number of individual undergraduate courses offered and taken between the fall semester 1965 and the fall semester 1972 was 1161. Considering only the period from Spring semester 1971 through the fall semester 1972, 266 of the 1161 courses have not been offered at all. It is on the basis of these statistics that we offer our recommendations for consideration.

#### Issue 5 - USE OF SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That departments include in the University's Calendar and Course Guide a general statement to the effect that special topics courses are offered and that students should obtain further information from the department prior to registration.

(Note: This initial contact would give departments an opportunity to learn what special topics students want to see initiated and thus facilitate the introduction of special topics courses.)

- b) That, as general University guidelines, special topics courses should be utilized to:
  - 1) fill a particular gap in a department's curriculum
  - 2) respond to student/faculty interests which are worthwhile at the moment but not necessarily of continuing relevance to a department's program
  - 3) experiment with a particular subject matter area before

considering it for introduction into the regular curriculum.

- c) That all Faculties recommend policies to Senate regarding the maximum number of such courses (or credit hours) a student may include for credit toward the degrees of that Faculty.
- d) That the present practice of having Senate approve the establishment of special topics courses for departments but not the contents of such courses be continued.
- e) That the Chairman, on the advice of the Departmental Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, be charged with approving the content of all special topics courses offered.
- f) That once each semester, Deans of Faculties report to Senate on topics covered under special topics, such report to include:
  - 1) the calendar description of each course offered, including the course number, credit hours, vector description, course description.
  - 2) a detailed description of the specific courses offered including the name of the responsible faculty member, a course outline and/or syllabus, a reading list, and method of instruction.
  - 3) the number of students enrolled in each course.
- g) That special topics courses be regarded as regularly scheduled courses, i.e. that class meetings are held on a regular basis.
- h) That vector patterns for special topics courses be deleted from the University Calendar and incorporated into the Course Guide.
- i) As a guiding principle for special topics courses, that one contact hour be set equal to one credit hour.
- j) That where a department wishes to deviate from principle i) above, a justification for the variance must be provided to the Faculty and Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committees and to Senate."

#### Rationale

Special topics courses are currently offered by departments in all four Faculties.

Some departments determine special topics courses on petition of students to the Departmental Undergraduate Curriculum Committee; others on the basis of faculty preference again with the approval of the Departmental

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. In general, topics are approved which fill a particular gap in the department's curriculum or which suit student/faculty interests which are worthwhile at the moment but not necessarily of continuing relevance to the department's program.

Staffing practices vary. In some cases, it is by the faculty member proposing the course and is considered as part of his regular teaching load. In other cases, staffing is on a surplus basis, while in still other cases, special topics courses are taken as teaching overloads by members of regular faculty.

Special topics courses become part of the regular curriculum only if successfully offered at least once and are judged to be central enough to the department's curriculum to be recommended to Senate as a regular course offering by the department's undergraduate curriculum committee. Notice of special topics courses is provided to students in a variety of ways - Course Guide, departmental Student Guides, and public advertising both in the Peak and via posters and notices.

Like directed research/studies/and reading courses, the establishment of such courses is approved by Senate but not the actual content.

We have uncovered no evidence that such courses are being abused by any department of the University. At the same time, we note that some of the special topics courses have been subdivided, thus having the effect of greatly increasing the number of such courses which can be offered by a particular department or Faculty. We believe that this practice is contrary to the intent of Senate and should not be permitted.

We have carefully considered whether or not to recommend that approval of the content of special topics courses be handled in the same way as for regularly scheduled courses of the University. Because a given special topic is normally offered only once, we believe that responsibility for approving the content of particular offerings should rest with departmental chairmen. To guard against possible abuse, we have recommended that each department, through the Faculty Dean, report each semester to Senate on its offerings. In this way, Senate can maintain control without individually approving the content of each course offered.

Issue 8 - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTACT HOURS AND OUT-OF-CLASS PREPARATION TIME

MOTION: None.

Rationale

Present practice varies. Two departments indicated approximately three to four hours of outside preparation for each contact hour in lower division courses; three departments indicated two hours for every weekly contact hour for all courses. One department indicated three hours per week of outside preparation for each semester hour of credit.

As previously noted, out-of-class effort on the part of students is as much a function of their interest and innate ability as it is the amount of work required or the difficulty of the assignment. Furthermore, while the University theoretically has some responsibility to ensure that the amount of outside class work demanded by individual course instructors is reasonable, there is no practical way in which it can exercise its responsibility. Therefore, while the Committee recognizes that a principle or guideline would be desirable, it is not prepared to recommend that which cannot be enforced.

Issue 9 - RETROACTIVITY OF CALENDAR CHANGES AS THEY AFFECT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

Before or upon entering the final 60 credit hours (72 credit hours for the Honors program) students must make a formal Declaration of Major (or Honors) with this formal declaration to establish the requirements for graduation as indicated in the published Calendar in effect at the time of the declaration or future calendars at the student's discretion. A change of major or honors field will be deemed a new declaration."

Rationale

Within the Faculty of Arts, students must make a formal Declaration of Major and this formal declaration establishes the exact requirements for graduation as indicated in the published Calendar in effect at the time of declaration. A change of major is deemed to be a new declaration. A declaration of a major is valid for five calendar years.

Both the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Science are silent as to the effect of Calendar changes on graduation requirement.

University opinion is divided on what policy ought to apply. Some believe that a student should be able to graduate under the requirements of any calendar published during the period in which he is enrolled at Simon Fraser. They argue that the graduation requirements contained in all calendars are subject to Senate approval and students might reasonably be expected to have made program decisions on the basis of any of the Calendars to which they were subject. The disadvantages of this approach are twofold. First, it complicates both academic advising and departmental and Faculty Curriculum Committees' consideration of whether individual students have fulfilled graduation requirements. Second, and more serious, is that substantial numbers of students take considerably longer than four or five years to fulfill graduation requirements. If such a policy were enacted, it would permit students to graduate under regulations no longer deemed appropriate or desirable.

Others believe that the Calendar governing the student should be the one in force at the time of the students' major or honors declaration. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that a student changing from a major to an honors program (or vice versa) within the same department should not be considered as changing the calendar governing him. It should be the one in force at the time

of his first declaration in the department. The reason for this is that the major student takes many of the same courses as does the honors student and has to fulfill many of the same requirements. He has fitted himself into a pattern which contains upper division work for both majors and honors students as described in the Calendar of his declaration. This is the pattern he should stick with since, for the most part, changes from major to honors programs (and vice versa) will involve upper level students and should not commit them to what sometimes is a totally different set of regulations.

The advantages of this approach are:

- a) it facilitates the task of both academic advising and Departmental and Faculty Curriculum Committees who must review the work performed by individual students before recommending them for degrees and,
- b) the student is able to build a degree program on the graduation requirements contained in a specific calendar.

The primary disadvantage of this approach is that:

- a) majors of students may be, and often are, changed several times prior to graduation in each of which instances, the requirements for graduation may change.

We see advantages to both approaches. However, given the extent to which departmental and Faculty graduation requirements have changed since the inception of the University, we are more inclined toward the latter than the former approach

#### Issue 10 - MORATORIUM ON CALENDAR CHANGES

MOTION: None.

#### Rationale

Over the past six years, the program requirements and course offerings of many departments have changed frequently. This situation poses a number of difficulties for students and for other departments whose programs interact with those which are revised. Furthermore, it appears to us that because departments have been changing their programs so rapidly, there has often been insufficient time to obtain adequate assessments of the strength and weaknesses of their existing programs.

For these reasons, we believe it would be desirable to impose a two year moratorium whenever a Faculty or department has made substantial revisions to its undergraduate curriculum. This moratorium is the minimum time span that would be permitted to pass in order to allow adequate assessment of the implications of the changes on both students and other departments.

We are not prepared, however, to offer this as a formal recommendation for the following reasons. First, if an action taken has proven unworkable, it should be corrected at the earliest possible date. Second, the introduction of

new programs clearly demands that opportunities be provided to them for experimentation. Third, and probably most important, we were unable to agree on a workable definition of "substantial revisions to its undergraduate curriculum." In the absence of such a definition, we foresaw endless and what appears to us to be, unjustified debate over whether or not proposed curriculum changes could be introduced for consideration. For these reasons, we can only suggest that Faculties and departments provide sufficient time to pass that previously introduced curriculum changes may be adequately assessed.

Issue 11 - CRITERIA FOR NUMBERING COURSES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

That the following criteria be established as guidelines for departments in determining the number levels to be assigned individual courses:

- 2) 100 division courses - are designed to introduce students to a discipline at the University level of study; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their first and second levels of University; such courses will not demand prerequisites at the University level of study although previous learning experiences in the discipline or related disciplines at the secondary school level may be recommended or required.
- 3) 200 division courses - assume either previous learning experiences in the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than courses offered at the 100 division; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their third and fourth levels of University; pre- and co-requisites may be identified.
- 4) 300 division courses - assume a substantive amount of previous learning experiences in either the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than for courses offered at the 200 division; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their fifth and sixth levels of University; only in exceptional circumstances will these courses offered not have pre- and/or co- requisites associated with them.
- 5) 400 division courses - assume a substantive amount of previous learning experiences in either the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than for courses offered at the 300 division; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their seventh and eighth levels of University; only in exceptional circumstances will these courses not have pre- and/or co- requisites associated with them.

Rationale

Currently, there are no University guidelines available for determining the appropriate numerical level, i.e. 100, 200, 300 or 400 to be assigned individual courses. Lacking such guidelines, departments have had to use their own discretion with the result that differences in numbering philosophy have become apparent producing both endless and fruitless debate in Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. To minimize the debate relating to numbering changes, we have recommended a set of criteria to be utilized in establishing numbers for individual courses. It should be understood that adoption of these guidelines does not carry with it a commitment that all departments adopt a 100, 200, 300, 400 course numbering policy. For example, the Department of English has no 300 division courses. Such deviations from the recommendations should be permitted provided they are acceptable to the Faculty Curriculum Committee, Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate.

Issue 12 - OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR WAIVING COURSE, DEPARTMENT AND FACULTY REQUIREMENTS

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That departmental chairmen be empowered in special cases to waive departmental regulations on the recommendation of the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee; that Deans of Faculties be empowered in special cases to waive Faculty regulations on the recommendation of Faculty undergraduate curriculum committees.
- b) That the primary criteria under which waivers may be granted be established as follows:
  - 1) where a student has been misadvised and can provide substantive evidence
  - 2) where a student can demonstrate to a department that he has formal training or background for which he did not receive direct course academic transfer credit. (The waiver does not include the granting of additional formal semester hours credit, but may remove the necessity of undertaking certain prescribed courses.)
  - 3) where departmental programs have changed and eliminated courses or otherwise substantially changed the graduation requirements affecting the student
  - 4) where a student has satisfied the spirit but not the letter of University, Faculty or departmental regulations.
- c) That departmental chairmen be empowered in cases where the unavailability of required course offerings might cause undue delay to graduation to allow substitution of directed study/research/reading courses.

- d) That departmental offices, in the case of departmental waivers, and dean's offices, in the case of Faculty waivers, maintain documentation on all waivers granted and advise in writing the department concerned, the student and the Registrar where affirmative action has been taken on a waiver request.
- e) That the Registrar report to Senate all cases of departmental waivers and Faculty waivers on a semester basis.

#### Rationale

Practice varies throughout the University particularly as regards departmental regulations. In some cases, departments retain the right to waive their own regulations through their undergraduate curriculum committees. In other cases, dean's approval is required. Dean's waivers are generally not given without a favorable department recommendation though a favorable departmental recommendation might be refused.

The criteria for granting waivers also varies. In some departments and Faculties, the criteria vary but the general principle followed is that they will be given only to very good students in exceptional circumstances. Other departments and Faculties are more lenient on the grounds that many departmental and Faculty requirements have changed substantially each year of the last six years with the result that students have been misadvised and regulations have been adopted, the implications of which for individual students have not been fully understood. Under such conditions it is agreed that it is patently unfair to apply these regulations to students simply because they are the existing University regulations.

Documentation practices also vary. In some cases, documentation is maintained by the Department for its own majors and honors students, in other cases by the Dean's offices and in still others, by both. Clearly there is insufficient communication with the Registrar's Office for the purpose of formally recording the approved waiver.

We are of the opinion that there should be relatively few instances in which waivers are granted. We recognize, however, that such cases occur and that provision needs to be made for them in the context of University policy. To ensure as much consistency as possible in the granting of waivers across the University, we believe that only departmental chairmen should be empowered to waive departmental regulations and deans to waive Faculty regulations, upon the recommendation of departmental undergraduate curriculum committees and Faculty undergraduate curriculum committees respectively. We do not envision however, that all individual cases will have to go before departmental or Faculty curriculum committees since it is expected that case law principles can be developed to provide general operating guidelines for departmental chairmen and deans.

We believe it is essential that such waivers be formally recorded and have, therefore, recommended that where affirmative action is taken on a waiver request, the departmental chairman or dean concerned advise in writing the student and the Registrar of the action taken.

#### INFORMATION ON PREVIOUS MATERIAL

At its meeting of November 5, 1973, Senate approved the previous motions. Note that the rationale statements are extracted from the support paper and do not form a part of the motion approved.

The following items, which formed a part of the paper as originally submitted, have been referred back to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies for further consideration:

Issue 1 - Procedures for Reviewing and Approving Curriculum Changes

Issue 4 - Use of Directed Readings, Directed Studies and Directed Research Courses

Issue 6 - Course contact hour relationship (for regularly scheduled courses only)

Issue 7 - Use of vector patterns (for regularly scheduled courses)

Issue 11 - Criteria for numbering courses (Item 1 concerning 000 courses only)