

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.78-36A

MEMORANDUM

To Chairmen of Departments

From..... Brian G. Wilson

Vice-President, Academic

Subject..... Interior Programming 1978/79

Date..... 1978/03/28

I would like to provide you with an as up-to-date picture as I have of plans for Interior Programming in the forthcoming fiscal year. A variety of statements have appeared in the press and elsewhere which have raised more questions than provided answers. In this memorandum I will try to summarize developments over the past six months.

The Report of the S.F.U. Interior Programs Planning Committee, based on six months' evaluation of the possibilities for degree completion programming, was forwarded to the Interior University Programs Board on September 15th. Copies were also sent to the Universities Council of British Columbia and to the Ministry of Education. This Report suggested a two-prong approach to the question of how to provide degree completion opportunities to residents of British Columbia who for economic, geographic or health reasons were not able to attend one of the three public universities. The development of a distance learning system was proposed which could provide credit courses at the upper levels for all residents of the province. The approach suggested was to include the development of course materials by university departments, which could be distributed in print form, supplemented by audio-visual techniques, to students in remote locations. This learning-at-a-distance activity would be supported by a tutorial system, where practicable on a face-to-face basis or using telephone. The second proposal was the creation of a university presence in the Interior based on the concept of Regional University Schools. A School would include ten to twelve faculty members, from a variety of disciplines focussing on a common research area. The program taught at an individual School would focus on a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary theme, unique to that particular School. This model supposes that the quality of instruction and the interest of the subject area would be sufficient to draw students from all over the province and beyond, in order to make the development economically viable. The common area of research would also provide long-term viability for individual faculty members in a way that a conventional university program with one or at most two per discipline, with interests covering a wide spectrum of each discipline, could not have.

This proposal was considered by the Interior University Programs Board and was approved in principle in December 1977. The proposal was also approved by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning and by Senate and the Board of Governors during the Fall semester.

At the December I.U.P.B. meeting, S.F.U. was invited to develop a specific theme for a particular location as a pilot project for the concept, to be instituted in September 1978. Since the operating costs for each School might approximate \$1 000 000 when fully running, there was some hesitation about committing the province to sequential development of a number of such Schools until the concept had been evaluated in practice.

As a result of this request the Planning Group at S.F.U. suggested the development of a School of Resource Management at Kelowna and presented a proposal for this with a detailed budget evaluation to the Programs Board in January. This proposal was accepted with a minor change in the budget, and recommended to the Universities Council for recommending funding through the Ministry of Education. Part of the proposal indicated that development of a detailed curriculum must await the hiring of a Director for the Program and initial staff, taking into account the needs and interests of students in the Kelowna area and the local environment.

The Universities Council tabled the recommendation at its February meeting since the program proposal was not complete. If S.F.U. had recommended an existing program to be developed at Kelowna the Universities Council might have found the proposal more acceptable, but the proposal for a brand new program was seen to require evaluation by the Program Coordinating Committee of Council before Council could act upon it.

The Interior University Programs Board met on February 27 and 28 and approved the following motion:

That whereas the Interior University Programs Board has recommended the establishment as a pilot project of the Simon Fraser University School of Resource Management in Kelowna as part of the Board's overall planning to provide degree completion programs in the Interior of the Province, and

whereas the Board has recommended that Simon Fraser University be granted the sum of \$585,320.00 to develop a detailed curriculum for the School, to appoint a Director and initial faculty and to offer part of the program in the Fall of 1978.

Be it resolved that the Board request that its representatives meet with the Program Coordinating Committee of the Universities Council of British Columbia to describe the program and explain the need for some form of approval in principle in order that funds can be expeditiously released to emergent expenditures.

Two staff members of the Interior University Programs Board and I met with the Program Coordinating Committee of Council early in March with another member of the Board also present, sitting as a member of the Program Coordinating Committee of Council. After considerable discussion the Program Coordinating Committee voted not to recommend the program to Council. Representatives of the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria, who spoke while I was present at the Program Coordinating Committee meeting, opposed the proposal. On the one hand it was suggested that the concept of Regional University Schools was a mistake and that Resource Management could not effectively be taught at the undergraduate level; on the other hand it was suggested that the concept was good but that the choice of Resource Management was bad. However, if Resource Management was to be taught, then the University of British Columbia, with its better known resources in that area, should assume responsibility for it. There was some concern regarding an interdisciplinary development remote from a main campus.

The Universities Council considered the detailed report of the Program Coordinating Committee and the motion of the Interior University Programs Board and other submissions on Friday, March 17 and approved the following motions:

That the Universities Council agree that the School of Resource Management be established in the Interior and

That the matter of the development of a detailed curriculum and the appropriate means to deliver the program be referred back to the Program Coordinating Committee in collaboration with the Interior University Programs Board. Funds will be recommended by the Universities Council of British Columbia for the hiring of consultants for planning purposes only, and no permanent staff is to be hired at this time.

This decision was reported in the press under the heading "Universities Council Turns Down S.F.U. Proposal". However, the wording of the motion makes it clear that the concept has been accepted although detailed planning will be necessary before full support is given to the proposal. I should say that, although there is considerable opposition to the proposal, both academic and political, we have received a large amount of support for the concept from faculty members both at S.F.U. and U.B.C. and from individuals in industry and government. Although the concept was original, similar kinds of programs related to Resource Management have been and are being developed in a variety of locations in North America and one has been in successful operation at the University of Edinburgh for several years.

As a result of the delay in approval of the program it is clear that it will not be possible to commence the teaching program in September 1978 and we are therefore taking to the I.U.P.B. at its meeting on April 3rd a proposal to delay implementation till September 1979. We shall ask for funds to hire a Director for the program, to be associated in the development of a detailed curriculum and to take charge of the logistical problems associated with the development of the School. An Advisory Committee has been set up including representatives of the three universities, government and industry which will advise on the detailed curriculum. However, the development of what is in a sense a departmental structure and the organization of suitable space and research opportunities is clearly a more complex operation than the offering of individual courses tied to existing programs that we have been doing in Kelowna for the last three years. There is some relief, therefore, that the September 1, 1978 deadline has necessarily been relaxed since it is important that the program be well researched, well staffed and successful.

To date there has been little discussion of the second thrust of the Report - the Distance Learning Program. The University received \$217,000.00 to appoint a Director and initiate the further development of courses and the development of a delivery and support system throughout the province, last Fall. Dr. Aronoff was appointed Director of the program and developments have been underway. The scale of the development, however, has been restricted because of the Ministry of Education's interest in acquiring all or part of the United Kingdom Open University system. If this was implemented in its entirety, it would clearly be inappropriate for this University to mount a major Distance Learning program throughout the province. However, the

development of individual courses similar in content and quality to those given on campus will proceed, in order to provide degree completion opportunities for S.F.U. students who are only a few courses short of their degree, wherever they live in the province. Unfortunately, we are still unclear about the size and scope of Ministry plans in this area. A tri-university committee has been set up to review Open University materials and provide the Presidents of the universities with advice regarding the kind of programs that should be offered and the materials available to assist in their mounting. The level of our own programming in this area for the future is quite unclear but we are seeking additional funds in this year's allocation to continue our operation, in order to have approximately forty courses available by September 1, 1979. There have been some suggestions that government initiatives in this area will be disclosed in the Speech from the Throne later this week. If so, the I.U.P.B. may be able to make interim decisions in this area on April 3rd.

Apart from these major initiatives, we have received support from the I.U.P.B. to continue the extensions of the Professional Development Program into the Interior, that received funding last year. \$350,000.00 has been recommended to develop four modules which will maintain our presence in Nelson, Cranbrook and Dawson Creek and initiate the certification program at Terrace. With this development the Professional Development Program will be available to students in all major centres of the province, excluding Vancouver Island, except Prince Rupert. \$40,000.00 has also been recommended to continue the offering of evening credit courses at Chilliwack, in association with Fraser Valley College. This will provide funding for sixteen semester courses next Fall and Spring. \$30,000.00 was recommended to initiate an M.A. program in Administrative Leadership by the Faculty of Education in Kamloops commencing September 1. This will involve the preparation of Distance Learning materials to make the program easily transportable to other Interior centres. A proposal to develop a Native Teacher Program, modelled on the Mount Currie program, at Enderby in the Okanagan was deferred.

Programs developed by the other two universities have also been supported by the Interior University Programs Board. The major elements of these at U.B.C. included the provision of \$150,000.00 to support the offering of credit courses by the Faculty of Education and a variety of centres throughout the province and \$78,000.00 to set up a Bachelor of Social Work one-year program, probably at Prince George.

The University of Victoria proposed a B.F.A. and B. Ed. program to utilize the David Thompson University Centre at Nelson and a recommendation for \$175,000.00 has been forwarded by the Board to support this development. If this goes ahead the potential annual cost is about \$450,000.00. \$156,000.00 has been recommended to provide for the offering of degree completion credit courses in face-to-face settings, in Arts and Science, Education, Fine Arts and Nursing. \$68,000.00 was recommended to support the offering of an alternative B.S.W. program, probably at Castlegar. There are several outstanding requests from both universities.

It is important to emphasize that the funding for all these programs is from a special line item in the Ministry of Education budget, identified for Interior Programming. Consequently these developments can be seen as having no impact on the general university operation, which is funded largely by provincial government grant. It can be argued that the total amount of operating money for the university system may not increase by the amount necessary to fund the variety of projects that I have described above and that therefore Interior Programming will necessarily impact existing programs on the home campuses. On the other hand it can be argued that the favourable publicity of the universities becoming involved outside their campus walls and the educational, social and financial benefits provided by programming in external communities will make the universities overall political impact greater than it currently is. At the moment, I hope that we maintain our enthusiasm and provide the best kind of programming we can both on and off campus.



B. G. Wilson

BGW/tb

cc. Dr. P. Jewett, President
Administrators