

TO: Senate

FROM: Senate Committee on University Budget

DATE: December 4, 1979

RE: Annual Report - For Information

MEMBERSHIP OF SCUB

1977/78

S. Thomas (Chairperson)
F. Mackauer
M. Overholt
P. Buitenuis
K. Okuda
T. Arrott
B. Holweg
R. Ghozali
A. Kazepides
J. Chase (Secretary, non-voting)

1978/79

J. Weinkam (Chairperson)
R. Hobson
D. Moffett
S. Luetzen
T. Arrott
C. Jones
J. Young
D. MacMillan
S. Dawson
J. Chase (Secretary,
non-voting)

ANNUAL REPORT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY BUDGET
(SCUB)

INTRODUCTION

Under the rules of Senate, the Senate Committee on University Budget is required to prepare and submit an Annual Report. SCUB's first Annual Report covered the period from the Committee's establishment by Senate on 6 October 1975 to June 1976, inclusive; the second report covered the period July 1976 through July 1977. Through a misunderstanding, no report was submitted in 1978 and thus this, SCUB's third Annual Report, covers the period from July 1977 through July 1979.

This report will provide Senate with an overview of the Committee's deliberations and actions and further reflections on the Committee's role.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

In the period covered by this third report, the Committee has held twenty-five meetings. In the course of these meetings, it has reviewed the Capital Plan encompassing the period 1978/79 through 1981/82 as well as the updated plan for 1979/80 through 1982/83; it has reviewed and commented upon the budget for the proposed Applied Clinical Psychology Program; it has reviewed the 1977/78 revised budget application and the proposed

"Minimum Three Year Planning Budget;" it has reviewed and provided input on the proposed budgetary policies regarding equipment; repairs and alterations; furniture; and carry-overs of operating funds; it has reviewed in detail and provided input to the President regarding the specific University Review Committee recommendations; it has reviewed a set of historical comparative data on the allocation of financial resources by line item category for Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria; it has monitored the "progress" in acquiring a new central processing facility for the Computing Centre; it has reviewed and commented upon proposals for increases in undergraduate and graduate tuition rates; it has reviewed the Universities Council Provincial Operating Grant Allocation Formula; it has reviewed and commented upon allocation of potential savings resulting from the AUCE strike; it has considered the adequacy of support provided via Financial Aid; and it has reviewed and commented upon the adequacy of operating budget support for the University Library. Finally, the Committee requested and was presented with a report indicating the extent to which new course proposal forms submitted to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies has identified particular funding implications.

In addition to the above action-oriented items, the Senate Committee on University Budget has also had discussions on the following three issues. First, the roles and inter-relationships of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, the Graduate Studies Committee, the Senate Committee on University Budget, the Senate Committee on Academic Planning, Senate, the Board of Governors,

and the Universities Council. Second, discussion on the most effective policies and procedures for assessing the financial implications and assigning financial priorities to not only new programs and courses but other items approved by Senate having substantial budgetary implications. Third, identification of an appropriate role for the Senate Committee on University Budget to play in the Budgetary process.

In some cases, the Committee's reviews and deliberations have led to the preparation of a specific written report and/or recommendations which have been communicated directly to the President. In other instances, informal communication with the President, Academic Vice-President have served in lieu of written submissions.

THE COMMITTEE'S ROLE IN BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

Since its inception, the Committee has been severely handicapped by its inability to define a distinctive role for itself. As noted in previous reports, the Committee has two major functions. The first function is to offer advice and counsel to the President on the development of the Operating and Capital grant requests to the Universities Council. The second function is to offer advise and counsel to the President on the development of the Operating Budget. In each of the preceding four years, the Committee has had an opportunity to review both Operating and Capital Budget grant requests. However, lack of expertise in budgetary matters, insufficient time to devote to the financial complexities associated with a \$50 million per annum operation, the limited time available to the Committee for review and analysis prior to Operating and Capital Budget grant request deadlines, and continual changes in Committee membership have all converged to make the stipulated tasks of the Committee onerous and frustrating.

In a meeting with the Committee in February of this year, the President suggested a number of areas in which the Committee might play a useful role:

- (1) Input on Operating Budget grant requests to U.C.B.C.
- (2) Input on Capital Budget grant requests to U.C.B.C.
- (3) Exploration of ways in which to improve the efficiency of University operations.
- (4) Examination and evaluation of various University operations where increased operating support is desirable or decreases can be accommodated.

- (5) Examination of the costs of proposed new programs and new courses.

Since February, SCUB has had an opportunity to reflect upon some of the President's suggestions and to act upon others. It has come to the following conclusions. First, as a Committee responsible to both the President and to Senate, SCUB has, within its purview, examination of any issue with budgetary implications. Such issues may or may not have been referred to the Committee by the President.

Second, the Committee believes that it can serve most effectively by dealing with specific questions or tasks. These could include a cost assessment of a new program; a review of a specific department or activity, e.g. the Library or Financial Aid; and such other matters as may from time to time be appropriate for review by a budget committee. As an aid in bringing such questions to the Committee, it would be highly desirable that the Chairman of SCUB meet with the President on a more regular basis.

Third, the Committee's usefulness will be enhanced if it addresses issues with a longer time horizon. The budgetary issues affecting this University are complex. They require a substantial degree of analysis and evaluation before sufficient understanding can be developed to comment realistically. This suggests that commentary on operating and capital submissions and allocations should not be sought from the Committee. The time constraints involved are too severe and the time horizon too short to enable the Committee to offer knowledgeable comment

and recommendations which are useful to the budgetary process.

Finally, a budgetary committee will begin to operate effectively when its collective membership acquires expertise in and understanding of both the budgetary process and the activities and services provided by the organizational units of the University. Continuity of membership is important for these objectives to be met. Unfortunately, SCUB has been continually plagued by changes in its membership. These changes result primarily because Senate terms of office expire on May 31st while those of Senate committee members expire on September 30th. Thus, Senate committees are faced with by-elections for the period from June 1 to September 30 and then additional elections for two year periods beginning October 1. The Committee recognizes that there is no obvious solution to this problem. It may be appropriate for the Registrar and the Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules to give some further consideration to alternative resolutions of this problem.

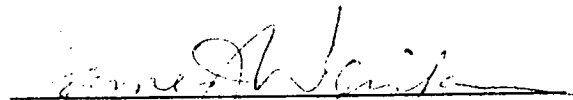
Notwithstanding the difficulties inherent in defining its own role, the Senate Committee on University Budget also feels compelled to comment upon the University's "planning process." There are three inter-related concerns. First, there appears to be almost no institutional planning of any kind taking place. The problems associated with an absence of planning are becoming increasingly apparent and are likely to be exacerbated during the decade of the 80's. During the 1950's, 60's and early 70's, it was easy to avoid planning and priority decisions because of the relative

abundance of operating and capital funds. Moreover, the rapid and substantial growth in students and faculty during this period posed enormous problems of accommodation thus absorbing energies and detracting from long term planning. This situation no longer prevails. Second, even if all members of the University community had some appreciation of the directions in which the University was headed, there is as yet no noticeable integration of our academic planning with our fiscal and capital planning. As operating and capital funds have become increasingly constrained, we have tried to maintain all of the activities, units and services that we have heretofore provided by giving everybody a little less money. At no time have we come to grips with the assignment of relative priorities to the activities and services provided by the University both relative to each other as well as within each organizational unit. Nowhere has this absence of priority planning been more apparent in the last year than in the controversy, confusion and misrepresentation regarding the adequacy of operating support for the Library.

The third subissue revolves around the relationship of the role and functions to be performed by various committees of the University including the Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee, the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, the Senate Committee on University Budget, the Senate Committee on Academic Planning; as well as Senate, the Board of Governors, and the Universities Council. Efficient and effective planning in all of its many ramifications cannot take place if the roles and

responsibilities assigned to committees and individuals are not clearly delineated.

We appreciate that the planning difficulties enumerated above are complex and cannot be quickly resolved. However, we are convinced that it is incumbent upon the University to take some actions to begin the process of developing a more rational planning process. While the impetus for this process must emanate from and be sustained by the President and the Academic and Administrative Vice-Presidents, we believe it is incumbent upon all members of the University community to recognize that the whole University will suffer if we are not successful in our efforts to develop and present to the Universities Council, government, and most importantly, to the public, a sense of direction for Simon Fraser University and a plan by which that direction will be achieved.



J. Weinkam
Chairman
Senate Committee on University Budget

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