

FOR INFORMATION

S.90-28

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: Liora Salter
Chair, SCAP

Subject: External Review of Communications:
Response of the Department

Date: March 14, 1990

The Senate Committee on Academic Planning, at its meeting of February 14, 1990, approved a motion to accept the response of the Department of Communication to its External Review (S. 89-12).

The response is attached for the information of Senate.

Simon Fraser University

M E M O

To: Senate Committee on Academic Planning **From:** Martin Laba,
Department Chair,
Communication

Re: Report on Review Document **Date:** 9 January 1990
Recommendations,
Department of Communication

This report provides a detailed account of the Department's response to, and fulfillment of, the recommendations of the Review Document, Department of Communication (January 1988).

(1) New Faculty Appointments and Curriculum Rationalization.

The single most important means of achieving the Review Document recommendations concerned with curriculum rationalization has been the three recent faculty appointments to the Department of Communication. These appointments were specifically defined on the basis of the recommendations of the Review Document.

Dr. Linda Harasim provides the badly needed expertise in one of the three areas of specialization in the Department -- technology. Dr. Harasim's research, publications and teaching experience fits precisely with the recommendations of the Review Document; specifically, that the Department focus more attention on "technologically-oriented work" within the discipline, particularly in the areas of computer information, technology and communication, "person-machine" interface, and appropriate methodology.

At the undergraduate curriculum level, the Review Document noted that the greatest attention must be paid to the technology area. The Department has responded with the appointment of Dr. Harasim. Two existing courses -- CMNS 253-3 and CMNS 362-4 -- will be taught by Dr. Harasim in her first semester (90-1), and she is currently designing further courses in both the issues of social impacts of communication technology and computer information research and methodology.

The appointments of Dr. Stephen Kline and Dr. Robert Hackett fulfill the recommendation that the extremely high and increasing student demand in the area of media be adequately met by the Department. The needs were identified as media content analysis, advertising and communication, and methodology (in the context of the Department's Media Analysis Laboratory). Dr. Kline provides an internationally renowned expertise in media content analysis, advertising (with a current research and publications emphasis on children's television programming), and media analysis methodologies tied to the technological capabilities of the Media Analysis Laboratory. Dr. Kline will become the Director of the Media Analysis Laboratory beginning in January 1990.

Dr. Hackett's appointment represents the Department's response to, and fulfillment of the recommendation that the entire media area of specialization in the Department be enhanced and expanded to meet the growing needs and demands in both teaching and research. Dr. Hackett offers a critical expertise in this regard -- content and quantitative analytical methods in media research. His research focus in news and news analysis serves as an effective context within which the recommendation with regard to media analysis can be met. As well, Dr. Hackett will contribute significantly to the work in the Media Analysis Laboratory, specifically in the area of news analysis, and political campaigns, mass media and communication.

(2) The Undergraduate Program.

Since its placement in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, the Department has created a tightly integrated curriculum with three areas of concentration -- media, policy and technology. As the Review Document notes, the Department has effectively refocused its work on applied and technologically-oriented issues, while both maintaining and enhancing its core interdisciplinary program. At present, 33% of the Senate-approved courses in the curriculum are new, or have been substantially revised to reflect the current orientation of the Department.

Within this integrated curriculum, the new area of concentration -- "technology" -- received considerable attention in program planning. The Review Document noted this fact, and suggested that there is room and need in the program for even further development of this area of concentration.

The Department responded before and after the Review Document by: (a) the development of three new courses dealing expressly with science and technology; (b) a substantial revision of four courses to ensure their "fit" with the technology concentration; (c) the definition of the area of technology as a hiring priority for a new CFL position (Harasim), and for any subsequent CFL positions; and (d) the adoption of the area of technology as a guiding principle in the structuring of new Departmental program initiatives including the Centre for International Communication at Harbour Centre and the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing.

In all of these strategies, the Department has met the recommendations of the Review Document to focus the "greatest attention" in the undergraduate program on technology, and particularly "person-machine interface".

(3) The Graduate Program.

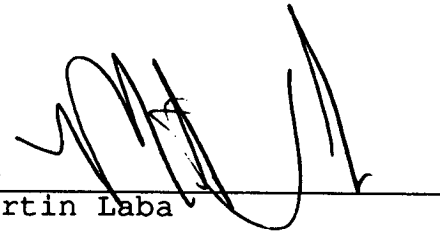
The Review Document notes that there is "a strong argument for not revising the graduate program significantly because of its success in the current format." However, a number of areas of the program were cited for further attention:

- (a) The need for a graduate course in international communication, to be offered by Jan Walls in conjunction with CMNS 346-4. This need has been met, and in addition, Bob Anderson offers a graduate course on international development and communication (CMNS 845-5).
- (b) The need for a graduate course in media content analysis focussing on methods of discourse and program content research and using the Media Analysis Laboratory. Steve Kline, who is arriving for the 90-1 semester, and Robert Hackett are currently working on such an offering. It will make full use of the Media Analysis Laboratory.
- (c) The need for a graduate course on the human context of science and technology, and on theoretical issues related to the information society. Linda Harasim is currently working on such a course to be proposed next semester.
- (d) A graduate course (offered in conjunction with the undergraduate offering CMNS 334-4) in Canadian cultural policy. Alison Beale will offer a graduate section to this course in the 90-3 semester.

- (e) The need to increase the number of M.A. students in the program considering the extraordinary enrolment pressures in the Department. The Review Document suggested that this increase should be done carefully, without sacrificing the high standards and excellence of the graduate program. The Department has responded by increasing the number of M.A. students for 89-3, and indeed, the overall complement of graduate students in the Department. This increase has been accomplished through a strategic management of Department resources.

(4) Conclusion.

The Department has considered the Review Document as a comprehensive and detailed set of guidelines for the growth and development of Communication at Simon Fraser University. The Review Document detailed and emphasized the outstanding accomplishments of the Department, and concluded that its placement in the Faculty of Applied Sciences has been highly beneficial to faculty research and funding, to the success of the Department's teaching program, to the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and to the university as a whole. The recommendations of the Review Document offered concrete and positive suggestions for enhancing the Communications program, and, as outlined above, these recommendations have been followed closely and thoroughly.



Martin Laba

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