

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

M E M O

To: Ron Heath
Registrar and Secretary of the Senate

From: Dr. Jim Cavers, Director
School of Engineering Science

Date: February 12, 1992

Subject: Student Semester Course Loads

In response to your memo of December 17, the issues of semester course loads and number of study semesters to completion are regular points of discussion within our School. It is possible for students to complete the engineering science program in 8 study semesters if they follow the prescribed typical schedules. However, many find the required 20 semester hours a difficult load to sustain, and for those students, we have identified in the calendar the courses which must be taken each semester to avoid later prerequisite problems. This course schedule is strictly voluntary; many choose not to follow the recommendation and ultimately find themselves out of synchronization. A compounding factor is that a number of students elect to go on eight-month work terms. The cumulative effect is felt in later semesters when they lack prerequisites and find themselves having to take additional semesters at reduced credit loads to pick up their final courses. Another contributing factor is the Undergraduate Thesis (ENSC 498-3 and ENSC 499-9), which is considered part of the final study semesters. In many instances, students work on a full-time basis while doing their theses, they don't take any courses and require additional study semesters to complete their degree requirements.

Last summer we compiled some statistics on 40 graduands from 88-3 to 91-2 who did their complete degree at SFU, and discovered that the typical pattern of reduced course load in later semesters resulted in an average load of 14.2 credit hours (slightly below the stated minimum load of 15) and 11.6 study semesters to complete their degree. These statistics were understandable given the points raised above.

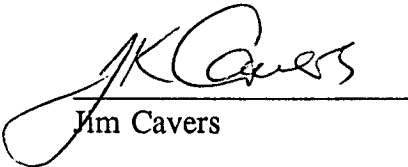
Currently, the Calendar states (page 63 under B.A.Sc. requirements):

...These are listed below on a semester-by-semester basis although there is no strict requirement to follow the sequence of these typical programs. However, any semester's registration less than 15 semester hours must be approved by the Director and students departing from these sequences must be careful about scheduling and prerequisite problems they may face in subsequent semesters.

We would be prepared to take the Senate's suggestion and elaborate further by saying:

...These are listed below on a semester-by-semester basis. The program requirements are structured in such a way that the program can be completed in eight semesters of full time study. Although there is no strict requirement to follow the sequence of these typical programs, students taking less than the designated load must be careful about the scheduling and prerequisite problems they may face in subsequent semesters. Failure to take those courses identified with an asterisk () in the designated semester will almost certainly lead to such problems. Note that any semester of registration less than 15 semester hours requires prior approval by the Director.*

I hope this information satisfies the concerns raised by Senate. If I can provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Jim Cavers