

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

*As amended
by Senate
Apr 6/98*

To: Senate
From: Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules
Date: March 18, 1998
Subject: Motion re Eastern Indonesia University
Development Project

At the March 2, 1998 Senate meeting, a Notice of Motion was submitted by Robert Russell for the next meeting of Senate. The following revised version of the motion is presented to Senate for consideration.

Motion: "that Senate recommend to the Board of Governors that an external review of the Eastern Indonesia University Development Project be undertaken and completed by March 1, 1999. The purpose of the review is three-fold:

1. To determine what academic benefits SFU has accrued as a result of the EIUDP.
2. To see if the Simon Fraser University Policy on International Activities has been adhered to by the EIUDP.
3. To see if the stated goals of the EIUDP have been met."

MOTION (AS AMENDED):

"that Senate review the Eastern Indonesia University Development Project following the final CIDA evaluation of the project. The purpose of the review is three-fold:

1. To determine what academic benefits SFU has accrued as a result of the EIUDP.
2. To see if the Simon Fraser University Policy on International Activities has been adhered to by the EIUDP.
3. To see if the stated goals of the EIUDP have been met with respect to SFU's interests."

Motion: That Senate recommend to the Board of Governors that an external review of the EIUDP be undertaken and completed by March 1, 1999. The purpose of the review is three-fold:

1. To determine what academic benefits SFU has accrued as a result of the EIUDP.
2. To see if the Simon Fraser University Policy on International Activities has been adhered to by the EIUDP.
3. To see if the stated goals of the EIUDP have been met.

Rationale:

- SFU has become increasingly active in pursuing international development projects, and now is an ideal time to see how its policy governing such projects is working. It is important that

- (i) enough preliminary discussion takes place to ensure that university benefits will be sufficient to warrant involvement in any such projects,
- (ii) adequate information is provided to the academic community demonstrating that indeed these benefits are being realized, and
- (ii) the necessary parameters are in place to ensure our general policy regarding academic standards and human rights issues is being satisfied.

Why should a review of the Indonesia project be done now that the project is being phased out?

At around \$50,000,000, the EIUDP is apparently the second largest international development project ever undertaken by a single Canadian university, yet it was undertaken without general university discussion at Senate or elsewhere. After almost 10 years experience behind us with the EIUDP, now is a natural time for a review. The internal review at the end of Phase 1 acknowledged some concerns about the project and recommended an emphasis on "development education". We should investigate whether or not these changes have been successfully incorporated.

While the EIUDP is winding down, even with a drastic reduction in expenditures in 1999-2000 it will still be SFU's largest development project (source: the 1997 SCIA annual report to Senate and the EIUDP November 1996 Midterm Project Plan). For its intellectual credibility, a university has a responsibility to see that projects in countries where human rights are not to internationally recognized standards have sufficient safeguards in place to guarantee that it is meeting its responsibilities.

Why should there be an external review?

While there was an internal review of the project by SCIA at the completion of Phase 1 in 1993, it was limited in several respects:

- (i) Despite the fact that SFU has no real academic experts on Indonesia among its faculty, outside experts were not only not solicited but discouraged from providing input.
- (ii) The vast majority of positive input from people knowledgeable about the project was from groups and individuals who stood to gain from its continuance. This conflict of interest applied to members of the review committee as well. At issue is not the integrity of these individuals, but rather their ability to be objective.
- (iii) Members of the university community who were more critical of the project were hampered in attempts to gather information about the project and were naturally reluctant to speak out against a project in which their colleagues were involved.

It is important that reviewers be not only objective but be perceived to be so by the outside community. There may indeed be the need to carry out periodic external reviews of larger development projects as part of our policy. Such need can only be determined after an evaluation of the success of a project such as this one. Moreover, our approach would be

consistent with that of Canadian corporations, which have increasingly recognized the need for such reviews and have built in the mechanism of periodic external reviews to determine how their corporate policies impact upon human rights issues in their countries of operation.

Conclusion:

A minimal standard of good university governance requires accountability to the outside community. A review of development projects in the context of our policy is consistent with and indeed closely tied to academic freedom itself. It is important to add that the issue is not one of development per se. International development projects should be strongly supported and valued. But it is incumbent upon the university to act with transparency in a way which is seen by the community to be consistent with the university's policies, ethical standards, and long term benefits.