

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Senate Committee on University Priorities

S.02-65

Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: John Waterhouse
Chair, SCUP
Vice President, Academic

RE: Office of Continuing Studies
External Review

DATE: August 20, 2002

The Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) has reviewed the External Review Report on the Office of Continuing Studies, together with the response from the Unit and comments from the Associate Vice-President Academic.

Motion:

That Senate concurs with the recommendations from the Senate Committee on University Priorities concerning advice to the Office of Continuing Studies on priority items resulting from the external review as outlined in S.02-65

The report of the External Review Committee for the Office of Continuing Studies was submitted on August 15, 2001 following the review site visit May 14 – 16, 2001. The response of the Dean of Continuing Studies was received on November 21, 2001 and comments from the Associate Vice-President Academic were submitted on April 10, 2002.

SCUP recommends to Senate that the Office of Continuing Studies be advised to pursue the following as priority items:

General

1. The Office of Continuing Studies should develop rolling three-year business plans and budgets for each of its academic program centers and service units, as well as for its Office overall.
2. The Office of Continuing Studies, as part of an overall space and business plan and in coordination with other Faculties and academic support units, should move towards the acquisition of more space in Harbour Centre.

3. The Office of Continuing Studies, through ^{their} ~~its~~ Teaching and Learning Technologies unit, should increase their efforts in the area of on-line learning. The development and application of on-line learning activities should be ^{as appropriate} considered high priority in any future strategic plans of Continuing Studies. In addition, increased communication and collaboration with other campus units involved in e-learning activities such as the LIDC are encouraged.

4. Should the Office of Continuing Studies seek to provide any continuing professional education programs in the area of Health Sciences, such activities should be coordinated with the newly established Institute of Health Research and Education.
5. The University should consider offering undergraduate degree programs downtown. The proposal to ladder credit and non-credit programs, should be pursued in order to expand the opportunities for lifelong learners. It is also suggested that the issues around the laddering of the credit and non-credit programs should be brought forward for discussion at the Senate Ad Hoc Committee to Review and Develop Lifelong Learning Opportunities. Any recommendations arising from these activities should be incorporated into an overall academic and fiscal plan for the Office of Continuing Studies.
6. With respect to staff, the Office of Continuing Studies is encouraged to continue to pursue its proposals in the areas of positive dialogue, professional development, and an annual review process.
7. Faculty members who are assigned Continuing Studies activities by their departments and who do not receive additional compensation for these activities, should have them considered as part of their normal teaching load for promotion and tenure purposes.

Centre for Distance Education (CDE)

8. The Centre should develop a strategic plan which incorporates the initiatives recommended by the External Review Committee including a review of enrollment targets, graduate distance programs aimed at working professionals, and the development of on-line/web-based courses. Continuing Studies is encouraged to follow through on their previous resolutions regarding the functions of the CDE and translate them into more detailed plans.
9. More flexible forms of funding should be devised to encourage innovation and new curriculum development.
10. The review of job specifications, classifications, retraining and skill development as well as organizational structural changes should be identified in an overall strategic plan.

Centre for Community and Professional Programs (CAPPS)

11. Continuing Studies is urged to coalesce recent planning exercises and discussions into a coherent plan for this Centre.
12. Immediate and longer-term solutions need to be sought in relation to issues of professional development, annual review, promotion and burnout. In particular, CAPPS should ensure that structures are put in place in order to provide long term support and development opportunities for its staff.

13. Any extension of the mandate and resources of the Teaching and Learning Technologies unit (Lohn Laboratory) must be considered within the context of an overall strategic plan for CAPPS.

encl.

c: C. Yerbury, Dean, Office of Continuing Studies

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Vice-President, Academic

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Waterhouse,
Vice-President,
Academic

FROM: Bill Krane,
Associate Vice President,
Academic

RE: External Review
Office of Continuing Studies

DATE: April 10, 2002

The report of the External Review Committee (ERC) for the Office of Continuing Studies was submitted in August, 2001 following the review site visit on May 14 -16, 2001. The response of the Office of Continuing Studies was submitted on November 15, 2001.

My comments on this external review and the submission from the Office of Continuing Studies are divided into three specific areas of focus as follows:

General

1. I support the ERC's recommendation that Continuing Studies develop rolling three-year business plans and budgets for each of its academic program centers and service units, as well as for its Office overall. These initiatives should assist decision-making with respect to the allocation of professional development funding and address concerns raised regarding chronic heavy workloads.
2. The recommendation that Continuing Studies acquire more space in Harbour Centre should be incorporated into an overall space and business plan for the Office. Some coordination with Faculties and academic support units may be required.
3. I strongly support the recommendation that Continuing Studies increase their efforts in the area of on-line learning. The development and application of on-line learning activities should be considered high priority in any future strategic plans of the unit. In addition, increased communication and collaboration with other campus units involved in e-learning activities such as LIDC and the Lohn Lab are strongly encouraged.

4. Regarding the recommendation that Continuing Studies provide continuing professional education programs in the area of Health Sciences, such activities should be coordinated with the newly established Institute of Health Research and Education.
5. The recommendation that the University consider offering undergraduate degree programs downtown is timely given the recent expansion by UBC in the area. With respect to the proposal to ladder credit and non-credit programs, I support this initiative since this can only serve to expand the opportunities for lifelong learners. If the laddering of credit and non-credit offerings could be achieved, our current cohort of downtown students would see a concomitant increase in their learning opportunities. It is also suggested that the issues around the laddering of the credit and non-credit programs be brought forward for discussion at the Senate Ad Hoc Committee to Review and Develop Lifelong Learning Opportunities. Any recommendations arising from these activities should be incorporated into an overall academic and fiscal plan for Continuing Studies.
6. The recommendations and concerns with respect to promotion, professional development opportunities, and workload of Continuing Studies staff appear to be valid. However, steps to address issues of this nature must be undertaken in the broader context of Human Resources policies (vis-a-vis performance reviews). If, through planning and budgeting exercises, more reasonable workloads could be achieved, support staff would be able to seek greater professional development opportunities. However, contributions would have to be acknowledged through existing university policies, which in turn may need to be reviewed in these contexts. Continuing Studies is encouraged to continue to pursue its proposals in the areas of positive dialogue, professional development, and an annual review process.
7. Continuing Studies should seek a greater level of coordination with Conference Services in the delivery of external events in order to more efficiently use University resources.

Centre for Distance Education

8. It is critical that the Centre develop a strategic plan which incorporates the initiatives recommended by the ERC including a review of enrollment targets, graduate distance programs aimed at working professionals, and the development of on-line/web-based courses. Continuing Studies is encouraged to follow through on their previous resolutions regarding the functions of the Centre and translate them into more detailed plans.

9. I agree with the recommendation that flexible forms of funding be devised to encourage innovation and new curriculum development. This is an issue of concern not only for CDE but also for other programs across the University. Many other Faculties, programs, and units are trying to remain current in terms of their content, adapt to new methods of delivery, and meet the needs of their students, their graduates, and the external market.
10. The review of job specifications, classifications, retraining and skill development as well as organizational structural changes will need to be identified in an overall strategic plan. Such planning will ensure that CDE has the staffing levels and infrastructure appropriate to support its initiatives and priorities. Discussion of these issues cannot take place in isolation of CDE's overall goals, plans, and mandates.

Centre for Community and Professional Programs

11. The future success and development of CAPPS will depend in large part on its formulation of an appropriate strategic plan. Continuing Studies is urged to coalesce recent planning exercises and discussions into a coherent plan for this Centre.
12. Issues of professional development, annual review, promotion and burnout appear to be of particular concern to this area. Both immediate and longer-term solutions need to be sought. In particular, CAPPS should ensure that structures are put in place which will provide long term support and development opportunities to its staff.
13. Any extension of the mandate and resources of the Lohn Laboratory must be considered within the context of an overall strategic plan for CAPPS.



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Continuing Studies – Office of the Dean

Memorandum

To: Dr. J.H. Waterhouse
Vice-President, Academic

From: Colin Yerbury, Dean
Continuing Studies

Re: Continuing Studies Response
To External Review

Date: November 15, 2001

The Office of Continuing Studies response to the Report of the External Review Committee is attached. Since the time of the Review in May, we have been addressing key issues raised by our self-study and in the reviewers' report. And these actions are noted in our response.

While this is a concluding step in the review process, what we have learned from the process will continue to guide our actions and will be integrated into the implementation of our Three Year Plan.

Our response reflects the consultative and consensus approach used while conducting our self-study.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Colin Yerbury".

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RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE CONTINUING STUDIES EXTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

GENERAL COMMENT

The office of Continuing Studies welcomes the External Reviewers' positive comments describing the high level of achievement attained by the Centre for Community and Professional Programs (CAPPs), the Centre for Distance Education (CDE), the Centre for Integrated and Credit Studies (CICS), and individuals within Continuing Studies. Our accomplishments are not ours alone; they reflect the commitment to lifelong learning and recurrent education that is part of the mission of the university as a whole and of individual faculty and staff members. The quality of our programs and facilities and the services provided to adult learners demonstrate this strong commitment.

Our response addresses the specific recommendations of the committee and certain other issues that emerged from the review.

1. **Recommendation One: Continuing Studies should develop rolling three-year business plans and budgets for each of its academic program centres and academic service units and for Continuing Studies overall.**

Continuing Studies agrees that there are benefits to be gained from the development of such plans and budgets, particularly in conjunction with our institutional three-year planning cycle. Formal planning will also serve to operationalize the three-year plan developed in the fall of 2000. As business planning has been primarily an informal process in Continuing Studies, our initial approach has been to develop some internal training initially in budgeting (October 2001). Additional training sessions that focus on other aspects of business planning are under development. We anticipate that business plans will be in place by the end of the fiscal year. Our response to this recommendation is also linked with #13, which relates to a strategic plan for CAPPs non-credit activities.

2. **Recommendation Two: Continuing Studies should acquire more classroom space in Harbour Centre.**

Acquiring additional space at Harbour Centre or elsewhere downtown would strengthen and consolidate SFU's strategic position as UBC and other educational

institutions move into the area. At the same time, we recognize the difficulty of adopting this recommendation unless we receive or generate substantial additional financial resources. The issue of classroom, laboratory, and office space is a university-wide issue, and Continuing Studies' requirements at both campuses should be part of the university planning process.

3. **Recommendation Three: Continuing Studies, working with the Faculties, should adopt online learning as an important modality for distance education undergraduate and graduate courses and for non-credit courses.**

We agree that online learning is an important modality. Areas of Continuing Studies, particularly the Centre for Distance Education, illustrate our ongoing efforts to put this recommendation in place. In CDE, all new credit courses and those coming forward for redevelopment or revision are reviewed, in partnership with the faculty member, to determine pedagogically sound ways to introduce instructional technologies. The modality used must reflect faculty members' personal orientation to their disciplines and their approach to the content of their courses in a teaching/learning context. This principle also applies to non-credit programming.

We do not agree with the reviewers' comment that "Continuing Studies has been slow off the mark to realize the opportunities inherent in web-technology for offering courses at a distance...." (page 7). The recognition of the need to use new technologies has existed for several years — as evidenced by the creation of a small lab in 1994 to explore what is now mainstream. That lab developed into what is now the Teaching and Learning Technologies unit (TLT, formerly the LohnLab). CDE recognizes online learning as an important delivery method and actively promotes its benefits.

Where we are today is not where we plan to be within the next few years, both in terms of the number of courses available online and also the nature of the online interface. The growing acceptance of online teaching among faculty members is helping the Centre to achieve its goal of maximizing opportunities for online teaching and learning. Increasingly, too, departmental chairs are responding to personal and student interests in promoting e-learning. Within this context, CDE has been influential in encouraging faculty to adopt online learning and also, in partnership with the academic units, in establishing priorities for the transition to online teaching at both the course and program levels.

Continuing Studies strongly believes that few courses can be delivered without print components and that course content written for web delivery must still be professionally edited and formatted. Based on several years' experience, the CDE is firm in its belief that these services constitute a critical component of a

course development process that is committed to the production of quality courses. The greater the extent SFU wants to become internationally known for its capacity to deliver exemplary on-line programs, the greater the need for the quality assurance services described here. The CDE's longstanding practice of returning all materials to the academic unit for review prior to the course's first offering is another way the Centre works in partnership with departments to ensure the development and delivery of quality courses.

It is also important for the Centre for Distance Education to make the university community more aware of its services and the expertise of its staff. To this end, a working group has been established to generate a promotion plan. Its introduction, combined with working collaboratively with the Learning and Instructional Development Centre (LIDC) in co-facilitating workshops and meeting regularly with Chairs, Directors, and individual faculty members, will take us forward.

CAPPs' program directors are interested in the possibilities inherent in distance education and online learning. They are, however, concerned about development costs and the difficulty of amortizing costs over a number of years. We are using a strategic approach because not all programs lend themselves to an online or distance format. We are experimenting with online programming from which we can learn and developing workshops that will help program staff gain a greater understanding of distance education and online learning.

4. **Recommendation Four: Faculty members who are assigned Continuing Studies activities by their departments and who do not receive additional compensation for these activities should have them considered as part of their normal teaching load for the promotion and tenure process.**

We agree with this recommendation although it is beyond our control, except in a lobbying or advocacy role. We are also aware of the report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education (Smith 1991; 82,87) recommending that faculty be recognized for continuing studies and distance education activities as accomplishments for full value when seeking tenure, promotion, or merit pay. Continuing Studies is considering how we might survey departmental and faculty tenure committees to gauge their current thinking about appropriate credit for Continuing Studies activities.

5. **Recommendation Five: Continuing Studies should initiate annual performance reviews, including identification of performance expectations for the next year, for all support staff.**

While we support the spirit of this recommendation, our views about its implementation are somewhat mixed. We believe that there is a need for greater feedback and communication between supervisors and staff, and we are committed to an approach that is positively conducted.

Continuing Studies has developed a proposal that takes a positive dialogue approach and incorporates recommendation #15. It is currently under discussion with all professional and support staff and will be refined with their feedback. We also plan to extend the approach to professional staff. An essential element of the plan is training and coaching for all supervisors. A plan for management training for supervisors is also currently under discussion as part of our effort to enhance staff relations.

Overall, we believe our plans will also provide staff opportunities in succession and career planning.

6. **Recommendation Six: A clear statement of the purpose, objectives, and priorities of distance education at SFU should be developed by the Centre in consultation with the Faculties, and approved by Senate.**

At a retreat held in February 2001, the goal for the Centre for Distance Education was defined as follows:

"The Centre will be a leader in the development and delivery of high-quality educational products and services that are accessible and meet the educational needs of our students. Our staff will provide leading-edge resources and services to the University community by developing working relationships with other distance education professionals and engaging in academic research"

Staff attending the retreat reached a consensus on the core functions of the Centre: working with academic units and faculty members to identify programs to be made available for distance delivery and working in partnership with faculty members during the development of individual courses. Embedded in these goals is the commitment to maximize the potential of online learning (but not to insist on its use).

The reviewers correctly point out that the Centre works within certain constraints and that this unit, as well as others in Continuing Studies, "must have the full support of the Faculty to develop and deliver courses" (p. 7). They also point

out that "[t]he university needs to be clear about the potential roles for distance education and their priority... [O]ther than a statement in the Distance Education calendar about the flexibility such courses provide, we were unable to find a general mission statement or set of agreed priorities for distance education at SFU" (p. 14).

The CDE staff are clear about its goals for programming and delivery initiatives. Where academic departments share that vision, good work is being done. Where they do not, the challenge is far greater. It is worth noting that departmental support for distance education — regardless of its mode of delivery — can vary according to individual perspectives and priorities as faculty cycle through administrative positions. Bearing these attitudes in mind, the Centre supports the reviewers' call for more clearly defined University-wide expectations with regard to distance delivery.

In sum, the Centre develops and delivers academic courses and programs that have already been approved by Senate. It would be useful for the University to define its expectations regarding distance education and online activity.

7. **Recommendation Seven: The Centre should explore with Faculties the development of graduate distance programs aimed at working professionals.**

Although this recommendation is directed to the Centre for Distance Education, Continuing Studies supports the development of graduate programs for working professionals, whether delivered by distance or not.

8. **Recommendation Eight: The cap on distance education enrolments for students already admitted to the undergraduate program should be removed, although Faculties may wish to set a limit on the proportion of courses within a program that individual students may take at a distance.**

SFU does not distinguish between courses taken on campus and at a distance, which is an important access principle. Faculties and departments, however, do ensure a balance between face-to-face and distance course offerings by selectively choosing which and how many courses will be developed for distance delivery and then specifying the semesters when they will be offered.

There is no formal cap for distance education enrollment. The target enrollment is determined by the distance education budget as allocated by the University.

9. **Recommendation Nine:** A more flexible form of funding needs to be devised that encourages innovation and new developments in distance education within the undergraduate credit program, and reflects changes in the level of activity.

Continuing Studies agrees with this recommendation and supports any initiatives by the University.

10. **Recommendation Ten:** The Centre needs to make a much greater commitment to developing fully online distance education courses, rather than Web-enabled print courses. Web-based online courses should be the norm for all new distance course development.

The Centre for Distance Education acknowledges that the access concerns of the past do not represent current student realities. Therefore, it is now the norm (rather than the exception) for each course developed or revised to reflect some use of technology. Not all faculty members, however, wish to move in this direction. Knowing the academic unit's vision for online teaching is helpful and provides important information regarding the extent to which we can promote its use. As a minimum, mail-lists are incorporated into all courses offered through the Centre to facilitate student-to-student interaction.

As mentioned above, there are differences of opinion regarding the relative merits of Web-enabled and Web-based courses. We firmly believe that the "one size fits all" approach is not the way to proceed. It is important to us, as professionals, to continue to bring our knowledge of our particular context to the course development and delivery process at SFU.

11. **Recommendation Eleven:** The Centre needs to review current job specifications, especially for program directors and print support staff, to ensure that the skill sets of staff are in line with the future needs of the Centre. In particular, the Centre needs to look at the shift in skills that will arise from a reduction in print and an increase in fully online teaching. As a result, the Centre will need to provide strong professional development guidance and opportunities for some staff, and may need to hire new staff where skills are lacking.

Continuing Studies is aware of the need to ensure that all staff have the requisite skills to accomplish their unit's goals. Before any position is advertised, the job description is reviewed and revised to reflect current needs. Professional development for existing staff is ongoing throughout Continuing Studies.

12. **Recommendation Twelve:** The Centre needs to review its organizational structure to ensure that it reflects the increasing integration of program initiation, design, development and delivery.

We agree that a clear vision and strategic plan for CAPPs is necessary. It has been under discussion over the past year and the process is continuing in conjunction with business planning and the University's three-year plan. Flexibility and responsiveness to both the University and the community are essential elements of our planning that will ensure Continuing Studies will continue to be an important resource to departments and Faculties.

13. **Recommendation Thirteen:** CAPPs needs to develop a strategic plan to guide its program development during the next three years. This plan should reflect the interest and expertise of the unit, anticipated opportunities/needs as well as the University's overall direction.

A clear vision and strategic plan for CAPPs has been under discussion over the past year. There are some significant issues related to the range of programming and how a plan could accommodate this diversity without making it so broad that it is not useful. However, CAPPs is continuing this discussion, which is also tied to the business planning in individual program areas. Continuing Studies has been an

important resource to departments and Faculties pursuing innovative programs. The business planning process will strive to maintain the capacity for flexibility and responsiveness.

14. **Recommendation Fourteen: CAPPs should develop a consistent and clear policy regarding professional development for its staff and a process that is seen as fair and equitable across the sub-units. The costs for professional development should be considered as a business cost and factored into unit budgets.**

Continuing Studies supports the recommendation and prefers a single process and policy for all its staff. The Dean's Management Committee already has a procedure in place to accomplish this process and to ensure equity throughout Continuing Studies.

15. **Recommendation Fifteen: An annual review process for CAPPs support staff should be developed, communicated and implemented. Part of this process should include a discussion of professional development needs and opportunities for staff for the upcoming year. It should also include a discussion of the individual's career goals and potential career paths within the organization.**

This recommendation is an expansion of recommendation 5, which speaks directly to performance expectations. The performance planning and coaching system under development is designed to focus on current performance, work goals, professional development needs, and career goals.

- 16. Recommendation Sixteen:** The promotion process and criteria for promotion for program directors should be reviewed and, perhaps, redesigned to reflect the current organizational realities and goals of CAPPs. If research and publication are criteria for promotion, the time cost of this must be factored into the unit's business plan.

We are aware that the existing promotional process across Continuing Studies does not reflect current organizational realities and goals. We have recommended significant changes, and the new policy will go through the approval process in November 2001.

- 17. Recommendation Seventeen:** The issue of burnout should be addressed very soon. Within a cost-recovery environment, it is difficult to downplay the significance of financial performance; however, a healthy work environment is essential if financial goals are to be attained. Staff should be consulted regarding how this issue can be addressed within the unit.

As the office of Continuing Studies has grown, many staff members have assumed greater responsibilities and expanded workloads. Potential burnout is not confined to CAPPs or to program directors alone. We are working with all staff to determine where work overload exists and how it can be alleviated. We recognize that retaining qualified staff and attracting new employees depend on our willingness to address this problem. And doing so is a priority of the Dean's office.

- 18. Recommendation Eighteen:** The mandate and the resources of the Lohn Laboratory should be extended to promote the development of online non-credit courses.

Continuing Studies is pleased that the external reviewers responded favourably to the inter-unit initiative to share the expertise of the Centre for Distance Education and its Teaching and Learning Technologies unit with our colleagues throughout Continuing Studies. A pilot project, the online delivery of a popular technical writing course, will provide information that will be used to determine how best to conduct future projects. CDE has recently facilitated a workshop for CAPPs and CICS staff that focused on the transition from face-to-face to distance/online delivery. Others are being planned.

We appreciate the reviewers' recognition that the Centre's staff has the expertise to facilitate this transition. We also believe it is essential to "recognize that if the Lohn Laboratory {TLT} is to support both an expanded online program for credit distance education programs and for non-credit programs, its staffing would need to be increased" (page 9).

19. Recommendation Nineteen: Continuing Studies should commit resources to working with the Faculties to provide continuing professional education programs in the health sciences.

We are in favour of supporting the University's initiatives in the health field. Current health programming includes the Physicians' Executive Management Program and a new interpreters program for health professionals, both at the Harbour Centre campus. CICS staff are also exploring possible post-graduate education options in the health sciences. Contributing to the outreach activities associated with University initiatives is an important part of Continuing Studies' role within the University.

20. Recommendation Twenty: Continuing Studies should take the initiative to expand the focus on laddering between credit and non-credit programs, i.e., providing credit towards degree programs for related non-credit programs.

Continuing Studies agrees that adopting this recommendation would benefit our students. Other Canadian universities have been able to implement laddering between credit and non-credit programs (e.g. McMaster, Calgary), and we will take a leadership role in promoting this concept through the Ad hoc Committee to Review and Develop Lifelong Learning Opportunities at SFU.

21. Recommendation Twenty-one: Continuing Studies and the Faculties should undertake to provide selected degree programs downtown.

Continuing Studies will explore ways to encourage the Faculties to offer courses that will enable students to complete degrees (other than the BGS) at Harbour Centre. And we will review the current process of choosing which courses will be offered at HC. Many faculty do not choose to teach at HC, chiefly as a result of the severe lack of office space for office hours, class preparation, and other work.

22. **Recommendation Twenty-two: The Dean of Continuing Studies should determine why Continuing Studies' program units do not use the Conference Services office when organizing and sponsoring special events and conferences.**

The Conference Services unit was developed in the mid-eighties to assist program directors in Continuing Studies to support faculty-initiated academic conferences.

During the nineties, Conference Services strengthened and developed its own mandate to assist faculty and administrators in planning, managing, and evaluating conferences at both University campuses and at hotels and convention centres in both Vancouver and Whistler.

This is not to say, however, that Continuing Studies units should not seek advice from or use the expertise offered by the Conference Services unit, particularly when conferences are run outside the Harbour Centre campus or the Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

23. **Recommendation Twenty-three: Costs for professional development and maintaining an adequate level of staffing to preclude chronic overload working conditions should be factored into unit budgets.**

This recommendation is related to #14 and #17 and raises the same issues for Continuing Studies. Our strategic and business planning initiatives will address these.

24. **Recommendation Twenty-four: Continuing Studies should identify and implement the ways and means to encourage and support professional staff members to conduct research and to publish in the area of university continuing education.**

Continuing Studies supports this recommendation, though it is important to emphasize that Continuing Studies is not an academic unit or Faculty with research as a primary responsibility. We recognize the inherent difficulties in combining programming responsibilities with time for research and writing.

We believe that the M.Ed. program in Continuing Education currently under development should provide a strong basis through which this recommendation might be achieved. We also encourage staff to publish in academic fields other than university continuing education. The Dean's office is seeking ways to expand opportunities for staff to contribute to the field.

25. Recommendation Twenty-five: The new Student Information Management Information System being contemplated by Simon Fraser University should include applications appropriate to the work of Continuing Studies.

Continuing Studies units are participating in discussions and planning for the new Student Information Management System (SIMS). The new applications would ideally include non-credit activities.

GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING CAPPs

As the reviewers note, the entrepreneurial nature of CAPPs, the balancing of revenue-generating and non-revenue-generating programs, and the contributions of programs to general operations reduces our ability to develop new programs and take financial risks. This is an ongoing problem and we hope it will be alleviated, at least to some extent, by the fundraising initiatives underway as well as the strategic and business planning process.

The equitable treatment of non-credit students and instructors is also of concern. We are currently exploring the possibility of providing some kind of alumni status for non-credit students, and we will be reviewing arrangements with instructors.

We are exploring co-operation with other educational institutions in several areas. Recently, cross-institutional meetings have been held in the writing and publishing and non-profit fields. We are also engaged in ongoing discussions with UBC in relation to its move downtown.

We agree that compelling Harbour Centre staff to use the SFU Printshop when a downtown printer might be more timely and/or less expensive imposes unnecessary constraints on program areas.

OTHER MATTERS REGARDING CDE

Distance education students should be able to submit their assignments by email. The Centre has identified this as one of the topics to be explored during the current year. On the surface, this appears to be a simple recommendation to implement. However, there are a number of issues embedded in this suggestion that need to be examined. These include: possible implications for tutor-markers; the need to re-examine record keeping processes that ensure the safe receipt and return of all assignments; concern for viruses; and investigating equipment changes that will facilitate this transition.

The university should accept credit card payments for books required for distance education courses.

This suggestion will be explored.

Tutors for distance education courses should meet periodically to share ideas and discuss issues.

The Centre has made attempts in the past to bring tutor-markers together mid-term, but the response has not been enthusiastic. We are certainly willing to explore other possibilities.

Copyright for distance education materials is held by Continuing Studies. Faculty members who have prepared distance education courses should not only have responsibility for maintaining/upgrading the content but also be rewarded for this. Copyright for materials developed in partnership with the Centre for Distance Education is held by SFU (not Continuing Studies) in accordance with University copyright policies. This copyright is strictly limited to the entity produced (e.g. the study guide), not the intellectual content. Indeed, many faculty members have found commercial publishers for books based on materials originally developed for distance delivery.

We share the reviewers' opinion that responsibility for maintaining and upgrading content should fall on the course author. It is not unusual for the Centre to initiate a conversation regarding the need for revision and, on some occasions, to withdraw a course until revisions are completed. The academic unit, however, has the final say in all such cases.

Rewards for revising courses—and indeed for developing them—can take at least two forms: one, financial compensation, exists now; and two, recognition at time of tenure and promotion, is not within the Centre's mandate. However, we would strongly support a recommendation that the University acknowledge a faculty member's contribution to realizing SFU's renewed commitment "to reaffirm its reputation for being a uniquely innovative university in our pedagogical approaches and learning environments"(Vice-president, Academic's Three-Year Plan, page 18).

RESPONSE TO REVIEW – INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

The International Programs unit's response to the draft report and recommendations of the External Review of Continuing Studies reflects the brevity of the Committee's observations on its work. The report noted the active involvement of Continuing Studies in support of Simon Fraser University's policy for increasing internationalization. The reviewers did not make suggestions or recommendations for future development.

Work is currently in progress to develop a long-term plan for the International Programs unit, which includes issues such as workload for staff on international assignment. Many opportunities for different models of international programs and

Report of the External Review Committee



Continuing Studies

Simon Fraser University

**Tony Bates
University of British Columbia**

**Judith Potter
University of New Brunswick**

**Dennis Foth
University of Alberta**

August 2001

Report of the External Review Committee for Continuing Studies

Simon Fraser University

Executive Summary

Continuing Studies is in good health generally and, with some manageable adjustments, positioned to contribute in a substantial way to the realization of the university's recently approved strategic plan. Goal 6 of the strategic plan is of particular relevance to Continuing Studies:

*"Extend the university more fully into its communities, reach out more effectively to our diverse community of learners, and generate opportunities for lifelong learning."*¹

The report contains twenty-five recommendations and a number of suggestions. The majority of these are directed to Continuing Studies. A few of the recommendations involve Continuing Studies and the Faculties of Simon Fraser University. We note two of them here as they represent important and timely actions for the achievement of Goal 6:

Continuing Studies, working with the Faculties, should adopt online learning as an important modality for distance education undergraduate and graduate courses and for non-credit courses. (Recommendation 3)

Continuing Studies should commit resources to working with the Faculties to provide continuing professional education programs in the health sciences. (Recommendation 19)

¹ *Three-year Plan of the Vice-President, Academic 2001-2004 Flexibility and Responsiveness.* Approved by the Simon Fraser University Senate Committee on University Priorities on April 11, 2001.

Introduction

Lifelong learning and other forms of community engagement (e.g., contracted research, public service) have been an integral part of the mandate and development of Simon Fraser University since it opened its doors in 1966. The creation of the Continuing Studies unit in 1974 provided a structure to more flexibly and quickly respond to the needs of the community for engagement with the university and vice-versa, particularly in the area of lifelong learning. The outcome of Continuing Studies working together with the discipline-based Faculties to extend the intellectual resources and other academic services of the university to the community is both well-known and highly regarded among those who work in university continuing education throughout the country. We heard from academics, administrators, students and community representatives that Continuing Studies is well regarded within the university and within the Lower Mainland region. We expect it has a fine reputation also outside of the Lower Mainland, from the programs it delivers either face-to-face within the region or by distance education.

While past accomplishments and reputation are important for establishing credibility within academic institutions and the communities they serve, the questions put to the review committee by Continuing Studies and Simon Fraser University have, primarily, to do with the future. Specifically, is Continuing Studies well positioned with ideas, principles, values, structures and physical and human resources to contribute to the university's vision and goals?

The information for our review came from the report of a self-study carried out by Continuing Studies, which included their three-year plan. We also reviewed brochures and calendars provided by Continuing Studies, the Continuing Studies and Simon Fraser University websites, and the Vice-President, Academic's three-year plan document noted previously. We made a site visit May 14 –16, 2001, which included thirty-four individual and group interviews with university administrators, faculty members, community representatives, instructors, students, tutors, and academic/professional and support staff of Continuing Studies, and two receptions. We visited the places where Continuing Studies staff carry out their work: the West Mall Complex and the Halpern Centre on Burnaby Mountain campus and the Harbour Centre and Wosk Dialogue Centre in downtown Vancouver. Finally, each of the committee members brought their knowledge of Continuing Studies and Simon Fraser University to the review.

The committee was impressed with the forthrightness of comment and answers to our questions by the participants attending the meetings and the courtesies and hospitality

provided us. While many people deserve thanks for making the visit productive two deserve special mention: Dr. Brian Burch of the School of Criminology and Sue Roppel of the Office of the Vice-President, Academic. Brian helped keep us on schedule and provided important university context information when we needed it. While he was an important part of the review team he bears no responsibility for the content of the report and its recommendations. Sue looked after all of the administrative arrangements for our visit in a superb fashion and made us feel welcome long before we arrived as well during our visit.

The report is organized as follows: responses to the terms of reference that were provided us, commentary about each of the Continuing Studies' academic program centres and academic service units, and commentary about other issues. Recommendations are to be found throughout each of these sections. The recommendations are also listed at the end of the report.

I. RESPONSES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

As a component of all external reviews Simon Fraser University requested assurances that:

- **The quality of [Continuing Studies] programs is high, that curricula are appropriate, and the unit has measures in place to ensure their evaluation and revision in a timely and effective manner.**

Answer: Yes

Commentary: Continuing Studies has, since its inception, maintained a rigorous requirement of formative and summative evaluation of its courses and programs. The processes required for this have been maintained over the years and remedial measures applied as appropriate. We received much positive comment about the high quality of the programs from members of the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies, faculty members, community representatives and students. We note positively the recent creation of the Program Evaluation Unit to assist Continuing Studies directors and other members of the university community with program evaluations. We also note that Continuing Studies has won a number of peer-adjudicated national awards for its programs, including most recently an Award of Distinction for *The City Program* from the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (May 2001).

With respect to revision of materials we heard some concerns that the academic content of a few distance education courses, while of high quality, is dated. This is a matter to be addressed by Continuing Studies and the appropriate academic departments.

- The quality of [Continuing Studies] program development is high, that the unit's profile and visibility is appropriate for its mission, that staff collaboration and interaction provides a stimulating environment and that staff participate appropriately in the dissemination of knowledge.

Answer: Yes

Commentary: As with program evaluation Continuing Studies has maintained rigor in program development throughout its history. We neither heard nor saw any evidence that this has changed. With respect to profile and visibility of the unit being appropriate to its mission Continuing Studies is well known within the university and in the community for doing what it is supposed to be doing. There is no ambiguity about its mission. On the matter of staff collaboration and interaction with other departments of the university, academic and administrative, the rapport appears to be first class. We heard positive comments about this and no evidence to the contrary.

With respect to participation in the dissemination to the public of the University's knowledge, including new discoveries and insights, Continuing Studies' staff excel. If, however, we ask whether Continuing Studies professional staff are actively engaged in research and the dissemination of knowledge obtained from discovery and practice about university continuing education *per se*, the answer is a few do and many don't. This said, we caution that this is a complex matter based on the responsibilities of the professional staff in Continuing Studies, the time available to them for their tasks and the nature of the cost-recovery environment in which most of them must work. We discuss this matter further in the *Other Issues* section of the report.

- [Continuing Studies] has a well-developed vision for the future and the long-term direction is appropriate.

Answer: Yes.

Commentary: Contrary to today's fashion of emblazoning one's vision statement in every advertisement, on the cover of every publication and on the back of every staff member's business card, Continuing Studies quietly articulates its long-standing vision of being a leader in creating a bridge between the university and the community through deeds rather than words. Within the context of contributing to the university's vision of becoming the leading comprehensive research university in the country with a distinctive reputation for teaching and learning, Continuing Studies has put a great deal of thought into its mission statement, what it believes (i.e., its values), and its goals. Based on the self-study report we are comfortable that the implicit vision and mission and long-term direction are clear and consistent with those about lifelong learning and community engagement as espoused by the university. What is less clear are the strategic initiatives,

action plans and timelines to achieve the goals and the key performance indicators and their associated benchmarks that will be used to assess whether and when they have been achieved. We believe that it will be worthwhile for Continuing Studies to take some time to consider and assign priorities to the initiatives it has already mapped out and those that will evolve as it moves forward. We are unclear, for example, of the relative priorities of developing programming focusing on dialogue for the *Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue*, international programming and online learning. We believe that the context for priority setting is the development of a rolling three-year strategic business plan and budget.

Recommendation 1: Continuing Studies should develop rolling three-year business plans and budgets for each of its academic program centres and academic service units and for Continuing Studies overall.

To be fair to Continuing Studies the recommendation for three-year strategic business plans and budgets to complement vision and mission and goal statements is relatively new within universities. Most university academics and administrators, including the members of this review team, are only now becoming familiar with them and how to adapt them to the academic enterprise.

- **[Continuing Studies] professional and support staff participate in the administration of the unit, and in providing service to the University and the community in appropriate ways.**

Answer: Yes

Commentary: Morale among the staff in Continuing Studies appears to be very good. Opportunities are provided for both professional and support staff to make their ideas and concerns known to the administration of the unit and to participate on committees of the unit and within the university. With respect to the latter the number and range of university committees with Continuing Studies staff membership is impressive. We applaud the Dean's once a week open door policy whereby any member of the staff can speak directly with him. As would be expected of a unit that engages the wider community directly in the provision of educational services there is a great deal of interaction with community groups. Many staff members also contribute their time and talents to professional organizations and to community organizations on a personal (i.e., not job related) basis.

- The culture of, and environment within [Continuing Studies], is conducive to the attainment of its objectives.

Answer: Yes

Commentary: Although employees of university continuing education units often feel marginalized and sometimes even believe they are undervalued by their colleagues in other parts of the university because they deal primarily with non-credit rather than degree credit programs, we found only a little evidence for concern here. This is likely because Continuing Studies has ensured throughout its history that all of its courses and programs must be sponsored by the appropriate academic departments. The unit has also done an excellent job of marketing its value-added services to the university, although as all who work in university continuing education know this is a never-ending task. Within the unit there is a good sense of shared values, although the reality of three large programming centres, and a number of other academic programming and academic service units distributed on two campuses takes its toll on getting to know fellow workers and understanding what everyone does.

The four years of leadership uncertainty experienced by Continuing Studies prior to the permanent appointment of the current Dean did result in a kind of isolationism by the individual units as each attempted to get on with its work without much in the way of overall guidance. However, the Dean has done an excellent job of stabilizing Continuing Studies and creating a milieu for dialogue and planning. In addition, the requirement of the self-study for this regularly scheduled review of Continuing Studies has come at a most appropriate time as it has brought people together to identify and inventory issues and to develop longer-term goals and the plans to achieve them.

The University and Continuing Studies also asked the review team to consider the following:

- **The degree to which Continuing Studies is strategically positioned to maintain and expand its programming niche in downtown Vancouver in light of UBC's expansion in the region.**

The University of British Columbia (UBC), as one of its six strategic initiatives, is in the process of establishing a greater presence in downtown Vancouver to more effectively engage itself with the community and *vice-versa*. Based on our understanding of UBC's programming plans and the space it has acquired, the committee believes that UBC's presence in the downtown area will complement rather than compete with Simon Fraser University's programming. In addition, Simon Fraser University's long presence in the area and credibility for quality programs will result in maintaining its current market share and in attracting new clients. Further, the establishment of the *Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue* is an innovation that will keep Simon Fraser University in the public

eye for some time to come. Finally, there are opportunities for Simon Fraser University and UBC to jointly develop and present programs in the downtown.

Longer-term responses to the UBC initiative will, of course, hinge upon the creativity and entrepreneurial mind-set of Continuing Studies' program directors and staff at Harbour Centre. The committee believes that the quality of the Continuing Studies program directors working out of Harbour Centre is excellent. As a result, the University is well-positioned to meet the lifelong learning needs of downtown clients with worthwhile and imaginative programs.

We did hear concerns that there is not enough classroom space at Harbour Centre to respond to all of the lifelong learning needs in downtown Vancouver that could be addressed by Simon Fraser University. We were told that the SFU presence in Harbour Centre could be expanded to meet these needs, as there are vacant floors in the building that could be leased and renovated.

Recommendation 2: Continuing Studies should acquire more classroom space in Harbour Centre.

- **The effectiveness of, and innovation in, the provision of Distance Education programming by Continuing Studies.**

That Continuing Studies, working with the Faculties of Simon Fraser University, has provided leadership internationally in the development of an effective program of print-based distance education courses over the past 30 years is indisputable. However, we believe Continuing Studies has been slow off the mark to realize the opportunities inherent in web-technology for offering courses at a distance for undergraduate and graduate programs and for continuing professional development courses. Our concern about adopting online learning is directed not only to Continuing Studies but also to the University because Continuing Studies must have the full support of the Faculties to develop and deliver courses. Further discussion of this important matter may be found in the *Centre for Distance Education* section of the report.

Recommendation 3: Continuing Studies, working with the Faculties, should adopt online learning as an important modality for distance education undergraduate and graduate courses and for non-credit courses.

- The success of Continuing Studies in developing and stimulating an interest in lifelong learning in varied communities of learners.

Continuing Studies has been successful over the years in stimulating interest in lifelong learning in mature students seeking degrees through study on a part-time basis, in people who are seeking professional development opportunities to enhance their careers, in organizations that have particular training needs for their employees, people who wish to study the arts and humanities for interest, and in special groups like older adults who access the university through the Seniors' Program. Being able to stimulate interest in lifelong learning in different demographic groups, however, is highly dependent upon the willingness of departments to endorse such programs and the willingness of faculty members to participate by teaching and or providing academic oversight to the programs. Part of the success, however, can also be attributed to the work of Continuing Studies staff to encourage and persuade faculty members to participate in these programs.

We do have some concern about the ability of Continuing Studies to sustain stimulating interest in varied lifelong learning programs on the part of faculty members when these same faculty members are under enormous pressure to do research and to publish. We heard anecdotes, and they are not unique to Simon Fraser University, that junior members of faculty are often *actively discouraged* from participating in lifelong learning activities because it will interfere with their career progress. This is understandable when the reward structure for faculty members is heavily weighted to research and publication and "traditional" teaching. To the extent that the University is serious about increasing lifelong learning and its engagement with communities through means other than the traditional it will have to reconsider the reward structure for promotion, tenure and salary increments for merit of its faculty members.

We believe that engagement in Continuing Studies activities by faculty members, especially when departments are fully compensated by Continuing Studies for time spent by their faculty on these activities, should be given equal weight for tenure and promotion considerations as undergraduate and graduate teaching. We suggest that the Vice-President, Academic ask department chairs, faculty deans, and tenure and promotion committees to consider this when making their recommendations and decisions about promotion and tenure.

Recommendation 4: Faculty members who are assigned Continuing Studies activities by their departments and who do not receive additional compensation for these activities should have them considered as part of their normal teaching load for promotion and tenure purposes.

- **The effectiveness in developing opportunities and delivering credit and non-credit programming to meet lifelong learning needs.**

Recognizing a lifelong learning need and actually doing something to effectively meet that need requires knowledge of how to do it (process), content (faculty members and/or community experts) and a dedicated staff to deliver the program. Simon Fraser University, through its faculty members and Continuing Studies, has been particularly good at doing this over the years. We have no reason to believe that it won't continue.

One area that requires consideration is the laddering of non-credit courses into certificate and diploma programs and of certificate and diploma programs into degrees (and *vice-versa*, although hardly anyone ever talks about how a degree program can be a prerequisite for a non-degree diploma). Recognizing appropriate work done in non-credit courses and programs for a degree program not only benefits the student but also the university as it does not need to duplicate the provision of instruction for these students. This matter is considered further in the *Centre for Community and Professional Programs* section of the report.

- **The potential for the appropriate pedagogical use of educational technology for Continuing Studies programming.**

Continuing Studies can readily apply new educational technologies to its non-credit programs, as there is expertise and experience in the Centre for Distance Education, especially the Lohn Laboratory. Many lifelong learners will benefit from the flexibility of 'mixed mode' teaching that combines a reduced face-to-face teaching load with online learning. Furthermore, many more of the current non-credit programs would benefit from being available to a wider audience in a fully distance education format.

We believe that the Centre for Distance Education, and the staff of the Lohn Laboratory in particular, should be working with the non-credit program directors in the same way as they do with the Faculties for credit distance education programs. However, it should also be recognized that if the Lohn Laboratory is to support both an expanded online program for credit distance education programs and for non-credit programs, its staffing would need to be increased. It will be important to develop an appropriate business model for non-credit online activities that reflects the full cost of such activities. Nevertheless we believe that this is an important and relevant direction for non-credit programming.

As part of the terms of reference the review team was asked to address a number of additional questions. There is some redundancy in our responses to some of these questions with the preceding commentary. However, we felt this to be a small price to pay in our efforts to provide a thorough response to the questions asked.

A. Programs

We reviewed the calendars and brochures of the programs of Continuing Studies as well as the website. Based on this, plus our knowledge of some of the programs written up in the *Yearbook of Exemplary Practice* of the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education, we believe that Continuing Studies programs are of high quality. Moreover, they are of sufficient range, breadth and orientation that they meet can meet the needs of most students who access Simon Fraser University for lifelong learning opportunities. Mechanisms are also in place to get feedback from students regarding the quality and delivery modes.

There does appear to have been a reluctance, however, to adopting online learning technology for both distance education credit courses and non-credit courses. We note, however, that Continuing Studies has identified online learning as a major new initiative in its self-study report and urge them to accord this activity high priority.

B. Professional and support staff

The quality of the professional and support staff appear to be appropriate for Continuing Studies current set of responsibilities. Twelve of the 26 professional staff have doctorates and ten have masters degrees, which provides a very solid academic core for the unit. Concern was expressed by some members of the support staff that some directors did not appear to have appropriate management skills, particularly in the area of staff supervision.

We heard no concerns that the support staff were not equal to their responsibilities. A few professional and support staff noted that some support staff had qualifications far beyond those needed for their jobs and that they were indeed doing tasks appropriate to a higher job classification.

We did hear much commentary from staff and people external to the unit that many professional and support staff were working "flat-out" and over-extended. To the extent this is so it may suggest that the number of staff in some areas may be too few for the tasks at hand. We also heard that one small program may be overstaffed for its responsibilities.

The professional staff appear to be doing well in program development which, for many, is their prime responsibility. If teaching is meant to include more than program development, and curriculum development for distance education courses, then teaching is largely an extra for the majority of professional staff. The same appears to be true for

research other than that required for program development (e.g., market analysis, curriculum testing) and program and instructor evaluation. It appears that professional staff, by and large, are simply too busy with their program and management responsibilities to do much in the way of teaching, research and publication. The matter of research and publication is discussed further in the section *Other Issues*.

The Dean and senior directors are very supportive of professional development, a fact appreciated by all staff. We heard, however, that while the support is there staff are often unable to take advantage of professional development opportunities because they are simply too busy with their work to do so. This appears to affect some units more than others. In addition, because of the nature of revenue generation in the units, some units are better able to budget for professional development than are others.

Succession planning is identified as an issue in the Continuing Studies self-study report. However, we were not apprised of any concrete plans to groom people for some of the positions that will become available as a result of retirements during the next few years.

A major concern of the reviewers is that there is no systematic annual review of the performance, and the identification of performance expectations for the next year, of support staff. We heard that this is a matter common to the University, not just Continuing Studies. We believe that annual performance reviews, coupled with open discussion between employees and supervisors about the expectations for the year are both welcomed by the employees and are an important management tool. In discussions with support staff we learned that managers and directors are likely to be uneven in their skills to undertake these performance reviews. These are learnable skills and Continuing Studies would seem to be uniquely positioned to arrange for such continuing professional education for its managers and directors.

Recommendation 5: Continuing Studies should initiate annual performance reviews, including identification of performance expectations for the next year, for all support staff.

C. Administration

The size of the administration and its support staff appears to be appropriate. We heard no complaints about "the administration". In fact, there appeared to be a good feeling among most staff members about "the administration".

The majority of professional and support staff felt there was an openness about the work and management of Continuing Studies, that all employees were valued, and that there is a mechanism for concerns to be heard. These observations were reinforced by the views of faculty members and administrators external to the unit.

D. Connection of the unit within and outside the university

The current buzz term in marketing and fund raising is "relationship building". A long-standing Continuing Studies value has been to foster strong relationships within its own ranks, with the academic departments and administration of the university and with the students and communities it serves. We see no evidence of erosion of this value and indeed find continued emphasis on maintaining and building these relationships. We understand that thought is being given to creating some sort of alumni status for non-credit students, an initiative that we believe is very appropriate.

E. Future directions

In general, the future directions that Continuing Studies has identified in its self-study are appropriate for the times. However, we believe that the unit must identify priorities within their list of initiatives, ensuring that these priorities also take into account those of the University. Technology-enhanced learning and health sciences continuing professional education programming are cases in point. We also believe that the best way to think through priorities and the timelines and resources required to achieve them is to establish strategic business plans, a matter we have already commented on.

II. PROGRAM CENTRES AND ACADEMIC SERVICE UNITS

Continuing Studies has three major centres through which most of its programs are developed and delivered. A major part of the site visit was devoted to these operations. In this section we provide some commentary on these centres and offer a number of suggestions and recommendations.

Centre for Distance Education

Introduction

The Centre for Distance Education has one of the largest enrolments in distance education programs amongst Canadian universities. It has a total of 12,569 course enrolments equivalent to 1,390 FTEs. It has a strong reputation for providing high quality programs and services to its distance education students.

However, in the last few years there has been a period of uncertainty in the management of the unit, affected by broader changes in the senior management of Continuing Studies as a whole. Although the current Director has many years of experience working in the unit, she is only recently confirmed in her appointment as Director.

Now, therefore, is an appropriate time for a review of its activities, and these comments should be seen in the overall context of a well-established and successful unit.

Role and purpose of the unit

All universities are facing strong pressures for change. Nowhere is this greater than in distance education. The sudden and massive surge in Web-based online learning is impacting not just distance education but also campus-based teaching. While there is still a clear division between 'pure' face-to-face teaching and distance education, the mixing of face-to-face teaching with Web supported learning is resulting in a 'middle ground' where there are elements in course design, online teaching, and student support that are common with distance education.

Originally, distance education programs were developed for truly distance students, those who could not access the campus because they lived too far away. While there is no doubt an important if small proportion of SFU distance education students who fit this profile, in recent years across all Canadian campuses distance education has been increasingly used to provide greater flexibility for part-time and increasingly full-time students who are generally considered as campus students.

The demand from this more traditional student constituency for distance education programs is due to a number of factors. More and more students are working their way through university, through part-time jobs. This can result in clashes with time-tabled face-to-face classes. Distance education provides a more flexible alternative, allowing students to combine study and part-time work more easily.

Perhaps an even more important factor is that there has been a gradual increase in enrolments over the last 10 years without the same proportional increase in faculty. As a result it has been necessary to cap face-to-face classes or sections. This means that students have to wait for face-to-face courses, increasing their time to graduation. Distance education can provide an alternative, quicker way to program completion for the traditional campus-based student.

Lastly, there is a rapidly growing new market for post-secondary education: the mid-life career professional who needs to up-grade and retrain. These potential students have often been through the post-secondary education system, often at graduate level, but now need further education and training as the knowledge base of their jobs continues to change. Lifelong learners are an obvious market for distance education courses, and they are also a target group that can and will pay the full cost of continuing professional education. Furthermore, with online learning they need not be restricted to the geographical location of the university. Such potential students have good access to Internet technology and are prepared to search for the institution that will best serve their needs.

These general points are made to show that distance education can serve multiple purposes. The university needs to be clear about the potential roles for distance education, and their priority. However, other than a statement in the Distance Education calendar about the flexibility such courses provide, we were unable to find a general mission statement or set of agreed priorities for distance education at SFU.

Recommendation 6: A clear statement of the purpose, objectives and priorities of distance education at SFU should be developed by the Centre in consultation with the Faculties, and approved by Senate.

This will provide guidance for both the Centre and for the University as a whole in addressing some of the recommendations raised in this report.

Range of programming

The Centre offers an impressive range of undergraduate credit, certificate, diploma and non-credit distance education courses. The ability of students to take distance courses from UBC and the University of Victoria, and transfer the credits into their SFU program, also widens the range of choice for SFU students at the undergraduate level. There may be scope for adding some more graduate programs where there is strong demand (see Recommendation 7 below), but the main priority in the undergraduate program would seem to be maintenance and updating of existing courses, some of which are quite old.

SFU does not currently offer graduate programs at a distance. Given the growing demand for applied masters programs for continuing professional education, this may be an area of possible expansion, especially if such programs can be designed to fully cover their costs from student fees or employer sponsorship. This type of course could lend itself to national or international delivery, and to partnership or collaboration with other universities for the development and local delivery of such programs.

Recommendation 7: The Centre should explore with Faculties the development of graduate distance programs aimed at working professionals.

Capping of distance education enrolments

Staff in the Centre for Distance Education told us that each year they turn away many hundreds of SFU students applying for distance education courses. The university has maintained a cap at 12,000 distance education course enrolments since at least 1995-96. The reason we were given for this is that SFU each year exceeds its government allocation of FTEs. Thus, more distance education student enrolments would not be fully funded.

However, this argument does not take into account the demand for distance education from those already admitted to the university, or the marginal cost of each additional

distance education enrolment. We were told that face-to-face classes are often full, so refusing admission to students to distance education courses as well merely slows down the time to graduation for these students. Once a distance education course is developed, the cost of delivering that course to a single student is more or less covered by the student tuition fee. There should be no net cost to the university in removing the cap on those already admitted, and the benefit to the students would be considerable.

Another possible argument for capping distance students is to ensure an appropriate ratio of face-to-face teaching. This, however, could be met on a program by program basis. For instance students may be limited to, say, no more than 50% of their courses within an undergraduate degree program being taken in a distance education mode².

Recommendation 8: The cap on distance education enrolments for students already admitted to the undergraduate program should be removed, although Faculties may wish to set a limit on the proportion of courses within a program that individual students may take at a distance.

Funding arrangements

The Centre for Distance Education receives a fixed grant of \$3,203,129 for the distance education program for 1,390 FTEs. This averages approximately \$2,300 per FTE, or \$255 a three course credit, almost identical to the tuition fee. This compares with a budget at UBC for distance education of \$2,950,000 for 600 FTEs, an average of approximately \$4,842 per FTE. It can be seen that the rest of the university is a net beneficiary of the funding arrangements for distance education at SFU. The relatively low cost of serving distance education students frees up funds for other areas of the university.

On the other hand, this method of funding combined with the cap on enrolments is a major impediment to progress and change within the Centre for Distance Education. The current strategy encourages the maintenance of what exists, rather than encouraging the development of new initiatives. Indeed, there appears to be very little funding available, if at all, for new course development since the fixed grant covers primarily the delivery costs of the unit. (Funds in the order of \$125,000 a year for new distance course development used to come to SFU through the Open University Planning Council, but the Ministry cut this source of funding some years ago).

An alternative method of funding would reflect the economics of distance education, which differ markedly from those of face-to-face teaching. There are two kinds of costs:

² At the moment only a Bachelor of General Studies Degree is available entirely by distance education at Simon Fraser University although, we were told, students may combine SFU distance education courses with distance education courses from other institutions and obtain a degree from British Columbia's Open Learning Agency. Whether degrees other than the BGS should be available entirely by distance education at Simon Fraser University and, if not, what the proper ratio of distance education and face-to-face courses should be in degree programs, is beyond the scope of this review.

the fixed costs of developing a course, which are independent of the number of students; and the variable costs of course delivery, which increase with student numbers. In many Canadian distance education units and organizations, where tuition fees are controlled by government, the cost of delivery (mainly the fees of instructors) is more or less covered by the tuition fee, while development costs are funded from base grant. This enables the institution to add more distance students without additional cost to the institution once the fixed costs of course development have been paid. However, it also means linking funding of distance education to the number of distance enrolments.

We do not wish to recommend a specific formula for funding for distance education at SFU. However, there are three issues that do need to be addressed:

- the first is the relatively low level of funding overall in relation to the level of activity. This means priority has to be given to maintaining and supporting existing courses.
- the second is that there is little or no money or incentive for new developments - new courses or new ways of working. Either some economies will need to be made in the Centre's current operations, or new or additional sources of funding will need to be found.
- funding needs to be linked to changes in levels of activity. This can be done in a number of ways, e.g., by linking base funding to the number of FTEs served, by allowing the unit to retain distance education tuition fees, or by setting FTE targets or strategic objectives for which extra funding is earmarked.

Recommendation 9: A more flexible form of funding needs to be devised that encourages innovation and new developments in distance education within the undergraduate credit program, and reflects changes in the level of activity.

There are also major opportunities for cost-recovery and profit generating activities in distance education. This could be a very useful way of funding new distance programs in the area of continuing professional education. However, this will not help the issue of stagnation within the undergraduate credit program.

We then re-iterate Recommendation 6 that the university as a whole revisits the purpose and function of distance education at SFU. If distance education is seen as enabling some of the University's main strategic goals, it may need to re-examine both the level and the method of funding.

Course design and the Lohn Laboratory (Teaching and Learning Technologies)

We were asked to comment on whether the Centre should be moving more aggressively into online course design and delivery.

The Centre, of course, does not control its own destiny with regard to course design. It depends on the interests and co-operation of faculty in the academic departments. If faculty are unwilling or uninterested in moving to fully online courses, it is difficult for the Centre to force them to do so. There has also been a period of uncertainty with regard to the management of the unit. This has caused somewhat of a leadership vacuum over the last couple of years. There have also been concerns about student access to the technology.

Nevertheless, even taking all this into consideration, we were surprised at how cautious or slow the Centre has been in moving into online learning.

It is helpful to differentiate between (a) fully Web-based courses with print support, and (b) Web-enabled print-based courses. Students in fully Web-based courses may still need to read a substantial amount of support printed material in the form of textbooks or collections of journal articles, but the Web site is the core of the course, and fully exploits the presentational, informational and interactive features of the Web. In Web-enabled print-based courses, the specially designed distance education printed text is the core of the course, but there may be added online discussion forums, an e-mail or list serve component, and/or some links to Web sites.

We found it difficult to ascertain exactly what has been done with regard to the design and development of online courses in the Centre. Our understanding is that to date, four fully Web-based online courses have been developed, in the sense that the Web is the core of the course, while a larger number of print-based courses are Web-enabled.

Web-based courses have very strong pedagogical advantages for distance education students compared with print-based courses. The most important is the opportunity for group interaction at a distance, allowing for the development of critical thinking skills, discussion and analysis, through well designed asynchronous discussion forums. Web-based courses though also allow access to the vast resources of the Internet, and also enable content to be changed or up-dated more easily and cheaply than through print. Web courses can combine graphics and text, and increasingly audio, video and multimedia. In science and engineering, students can do simulations and be tested online.

The university has a huge investment in the current inventory of print-based distance education courses. These courses were designed to 'work' as well as face-to-face courses. They cover the same curriculum and students take the same examination as for the parallel face-to-face classes. If the print-based courses are well designed (and we are sure they are), then they should be equivalent in effectiveness to the face-to-face classes.

This raises a question about the strategy of adding Web components to courses designed to stand alone as print-based courses. This adds cost to the course design process and extra work for students, without any substantive benefit as reflected in grades. Research suggests that adding on Web features to print based courses leads to a perception of 'reduced' rather than 'added' value by students. On the other hand, courses designed from

scratch as Web-based courses, with print support, tend to be more effective (Ruhe and Qayyum, 1999).

The somewhat ambiguous relationship of the Lohn Lab to the Centre has also inhibited greater development of online courses within the Centre. In our view the Lohn Lab is essential to the future of the Centre, but it needs to be better integrated within the work of the Centre. We suggest how this might be done in the section on Organization.

Recommendation 10: The Centre needs to make a much greater commitment to developing fully online distance education courses, rather than Web-enabled print courses. Web-based online courses should be the norm for all new distance course development.

To do this, though, some major changes will be needed in the Centre. Money for new course development needs to be found, either by internal re-allocation of resources within the Centre, or more realistically, by an increase in base funding. Some of the staff in the Centre will need to upgrade their online design and technical skills. The Centre (indeed the university as a whole) needs to settle on an off-the-shelf Web-based course management system (e.g. Blackboard or WebCT) as a standard for its courses. The Centre through the Lohn Lab needs to increase its technical support for students. Above all the Centre needs to market the value of online distance courses to the faculty.

Organization and staffing issues

We support the Centre's team approach to course design, involving academic/subject specialists from the Faculty working with an instructional designer, and drawing in other specialists, such as multimedia designers from the Lohn Lab, as needed.

However, we found some confusion about the role of program directors in the Centre. Some were trained and practiced course designers, while others had more general academic or publishing backgrounds, but not necessarily instructional design or online learning skills.

While program directors in other Continuing Studies areas have control over their programs and choice of curriculum, program directors in the Centre for Distance Education act more like brokers between the academic department and the work of the Centre, providing technical and educational design and project management skills. Several complained that the criteria for promotion for program directors, while appropriate for other program areas in Continuing Studies, did not reflect the different role played by Program Directors in distance education.

The Centre also needs to look at the balance of staff across its different areas of activity. The very large inventory of existing print-based courses will continue to need substantial maintenance, but some of the print support staff may need to move into other roles within the Centre, such as web programming.

We also found the organization of the Centre rather fragmented. In particular the division of course design and development activities between instructional design/program development/teaching technology was difficult to understand and seems to work against integration of distance education activities.

Recommendation 11: The Centre needs to review current job specifications, especially for program directors and print support staff, to ensure that the skill sets of staff are in line with the future needs of the Centre. In particular, the Centre needs to look at the shift in skills that will arise from a reduction in print and an increase in fully online teaching. As a result, the Centre will need to provide strong professional development guidance and opportunities for some staff, and may need to hire new staff where skills are lacking.

Recommendation 12: The Centre needs to review its organizational structure to ensure that it reflects the increasing integration of program initiation, design, development and delivery.

Organization might be based more on integrated teams working in specific academic areas, for instance.

Conclusion

It is sometimes harder for an organization with a long history of success than an organization in crisis to respond to changing circumstances. The Centre for Distance Education has provided a highly cost-effective service for distance students for over 30 years. However, the external world is rapidly changing, and the impact of the Internet on distance education cannot be too strongly stressed. If SFU is to retain its reputation as an international leader in distance education some major structural changes are needed.

The most important actions, with respect to mission, funding, and growth, will need to be taken at a senior management level within the university as a whole. At the same time, there is much the Centre can do for itself to increase its value to students and the university in general.

Centre for Community and Professional Programs (CAPPS)

Introduction

Data which inform this summary were collected from two primary sources—the self-study by Continuing Studies which was prepared for the review; and interviews with key stakeholders which occurred during the period of May 14-16, 2001 on both the Burnaby and Harbour Centre campuses of Simon Fraser University.

Specific to the non-credit portfolio of Continuing Studies, the primary interview participants included: David Mitchell, Warren Gill, Nancy Petersen, Harbour Centre Program Directors, Ann Cowan, Interdisciplinary Studies Program Steering Committee, Continuing Studies Administrative staff, Harbour Centre services staff, Harbour Centre support staff, CAPPS community partners, CAPPS instructors, and CAPPS students.

This summary addresses the non-credit Continuing Studies offerings, and, as such, deals almost exclusively with the work of the Centre for Community and Professional Programs. Components of CAPPS include:

- Advanced Interpreter Program
- Business Program
- City Program
- Community Education Program
- English Language and Cultural Program
- Interdisciplinary Program
- Labour Program
- Non-Profit Program
- Professional Programs
- Science Program
- Writing and Publishing Program

Findings

- *Quality of programs*

Review discussions indicated no concerns regarding quality of the non-credit Continuing Studies offerings. That all non-credit programs are linked with academic units seems to provide reassurance of quality control. The nature of these partnerships tends to find the academic unit providing content expertise with Continuing Studies providing infrastructure—e.g. business planning, linking players, management assistance. Evaluation processes are generally in place, although the concern was raised that not all non-credit faculty receive student evaluation feedback.

- *Quality of program development, unit profile and visibility, environment, dissemination of knowledge*

Recognition by peers through the annual Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) awards process indicates the quality of the work carried out through the Continuing Studies non-credit units. In 2000, for example, Continuing Studies won two CAUCE marketing awards—Major brochure (Writing and Publishing Program) and Poster (With a Little Help from our Friends). In 2001, CS received two marketing awards—Poster (Culture, Community and Nation Conference) and Thematic Marketing Materials (English Language and Culture Program) as well as a program award for The

City Program. In addition, in 2001, a Continuing Studies staff person, Nancy Petersen, won the CAUCE Graduate Student Research Award.

- *Vision and direction*

The unit appears to have reached some stability after a period of disarray and there seems to be a trust that the Dean is providing leadership and sense of direction. Within this environment of overall stability, the non-credit programming unit, Centre for Community and Professional Programs (CAPPS) does not appear to have a clear vision for future offerings. Current offerings demonstrate a good mix—business, community, limited arts, but no long-term direction is evident.

It was observed on several occasions that some of the university's stated priorities, e.g. health initiatives, are not reflected in the current offerings or projected plans.

Recommendation 13: CAPPS needs to develop a strategic plan to guide its program development during the next three years. This plan should reflect the interest and expertise of the unit, anticipated opportunities/needs as well as the University's overall direction.

- *Staff participation in unit administration, service to university and community*

Continuing Studies staff appear generally satisfied with their ability to have their voice heard within the unit. Several members, for example, offered comments about being pleased with representation on the Dean's Advisory Council. Likewise, the Dean's practice of holding a drop-in hour each week on both campuses draws popular support. Staff seemed pleased with the process of preparing and sharing the self-study developed for the review.

On the concern side, several staff indicated a gulf between the Burnaby and Harbour Centre units and felt that better integration between and within the campuses would have positive results.

- *Culture and environment of the unit*

Although morale seems generally high, a number of concerns were raised regarding the environment in which non-credit staff work.

First, there is a perception that opportunities for professional development are uneven. Staff are acutely aware of the need for each program to be self-supporting and believe that the availability of professional development for them depends on how their programs have performed financially.

Some concern about the performance review process was also expressed. Program directors appear to have a clear performance review process but support staff do not. Participants in the interviews indicated that there has been discussion about an annual review for support staff but that it has not yet been implemented.

Some staff feel that their expertise is not fully recognized or appreciated. Due to market forces, they believe that Continuing Studies has been fortunate in hiring staff with qualifications, skills and knowledge beyond the level of position. Many indicated that they have voluntarily taken on additional responsibilities. They would, therefore, like to know that the potential for advancement from within is possible—and they are not convinced that this is consistently the case.

Promotion processes for program directors came under criticism. Several staff felt that, given current workloads and expectations, the criteria for promotion (especially regarding research) were simply untenable and that, since these criteria were developed at a time when program directors were attempting to join the faculty, they need to be revisited. The concern was also voiced that succession planning is not evident.

Finally, it was widely noted that staff are overloaded and perceive themselves to be close to burnout—not a healthy situation for staff or the organization. Financial pressures, i.e., functioning in a cost-recovery environment, appear to be the most significant contributing factor.

Recommendation 14: CAPPS should develop a consistent and clear policy regarding professional development for its staff and a process that is seen to be fair and equitable across the subunits. The costs for professional development should be considered as a business cost and factored into unit budgets.

Recommendation 15: An annual review process for CAPPS support staff should be developed, communicated and implemented. Part of this process should include a discussion of professional development needs and opportunities for staff for the upcoming year. It should also include a discussion of the individual's career goals and potential career paths within the organization.

Recommendation 16: The promotion process and criteria for promotion for program directors should be reviewed and, perhaps, redesigned to reflect the current organizational realities and goals of CAPPS. If research and publication are criteria for promotion then the time cost of this must be factored into the unit's business plans.

Recommendation 17: The issue of burnout should be addressed very soon. Within a cost-recovery environment, it is difficult to downplay the significance of financial performance; however, a healthy work environment is essential if financial goals are to be attained. Staff should be consulted regarding how this issue can be addressed within the unit.

- *Strategic position with respect to the University of British Columbia (UBC)*

Surprisingly little concern was expressed about the UBC move downtown during the consultations. In fact, most participants welcome this initiative and believe that it will have positive impact on the downtown core. The market is large enough for both Simon Fraser University and UBC to build on their strengths.

General intentions emerged regarding programming collaboration, especially in the area of the Arts, although no specific plans seem to be in motion. There is an expectation that a competitive model will likely develop in Business areas but that both universities have traditional strengths, e.g., UBC with executive management and Simon Fraser University with applied programs. Cooperation can also take place with regard to facilities as well since the properties operated by the two institutions have quite different characteristics.

Many staff feel that Simon Fraser University's ability to create new programming initiatives in the downtown area is severely restricted by a lack of space at Harbour Centre.

The issue of the involvement of Conference Services in the downtown initiative seems quite unclear.

- *Innovation in provision of distance education programming*

Distance education, and in particular online learning, is under-utilised in the non-credit offerings of Continuing Studies. The one non-credit program that is available online, *Geographic Information Systems*, appears to be well-regarded but more efforts need to be made in this direction. This, of course, requires resources and the perception, at least, is that the Continuing Studies' resource for online development, the Lohn Laboratory, is focussed only on credit courses. Given the demand for a variety of types of educational products to be available online, Continuing Studies needs to address the issues of the mandate of the Lohn Laboratory.

This matter has also been addressed in the *Centre for Distance Education* section of the report.

Recommendation 18: The mandate and the resources of the Lohn Laboratory should be extended to promote the development of online non-credit courses.

- *Stimulating interest in lifelong learning in communities of interest*

Within Simon Fraser University, although the President has made official pronouncements about the importance of lifelong learning and Simon Fraser University's

role working with its communities, the extent to which the academic units have bought into the concept seems to vary. For some, it appears to be a question as to whether Simon Fraser University can be all things to all people. There is certainly work to be done in making lifelong learning a university-wide priority.

In the non-credit area, the model at Simon Fraser University is mixed, i.e., much activity is centralized through Continuing Studies but some Faculties provide non-credit programming outside of Continuing Studies. The question must be asked regarding the best model for achieving what Simon Fraser University seems to be proposing, i.e., that lifelong learning and community involvement be an integral part of the presence of the institution. The impact achieved through a strong centralized unit that can provide the infrastructure, e.g. community-based research, needs assessment, program planning, development and implementation, evaluation, and experience with forming partnerships is undeniable. But buy-in from the academic units is essential and cannot be wholly mandated. For a centralized Continuing Studies model to flourish in these days of scrounging for resources requires that there be strong and consistent support and encouragement from the central administration. It also requires that Continuing Studies demonstrate to the academic units the value of centralized services and that Continuing Studies share net revenues with the academic units.

As stated above, it was observed on several occasions that some of the university's stated priorities, e.g., health initiatives, are not reflected in the current or planned non-credit offerings. Some concern was also expressed that Continuing Studies not "rest on its laurels" and indeed it must ensure that it continues to be "leading edge."

An exciting development at Simon Fraser University this past year has been the creation of the Institute for Health Research and Education. As a result of this initiative and other ongoing activities and initiatives related to the health sciences in the departments and faculties of Simon Fraser University, Continuing Studies has a major opportunity to assist the University in developing a major continuing professional education program for health care professionals. We urge Continuing Studies to consider providing support to this University initiative immediately.

Recommendation 19: Continuing Studies should commit resources to working with the Faculties to provide continuing professional education programs in the health sciences.

From consultations with community partners, it is clear that the downtown venue is very important for outreach, although space costs in Harbour Centre can be problematic, in particular for the non-profits. A two-tiered rate system, in which those organizations that can afford it should pay more than those that can't, was suggested.

The space cost issue is, we believe, symptomatic of conflicting roles that appear to be emerging for Harbour Centre: revenue generation to pay the bills and, perhaps, to create some investment capital for other ventures, and the needs of the community. There is

nothing inherently wrong with the notion that those who can afford to pay more should do so if it supports other worthy community lifelong learning initiatives. We believe this concern should be addressed in the context of the development of the Continuing Studies three-year strategic business plan (Recommendation 1).

Several community and faculty partners also expressed the concern that the program directors and support staff are overloaded and don't have sufficient time for consultations with them.

- *Developing opportunities to meet lifelong learning needs*

Continuing Studies is undeniably an active organization in developing opportunities and delivering non-credit programming. Specific areas, however, require attention. An important example is that of opportunities for the laddering of programs between the great credit/non-credit divide for the benefit of lifelong learners. Some initiatives have begun in this regard but it is one that requires more focus.

Mechanisms for laddering include transfer credit, which is a well-established process between universities, colleges, and university-colleges for undergraduate degree programs and which could readily be applied within Simon Fraser University for certain activities of Continuing Studies. Another model to consider is prior learning assessment.

Recommendation 20: Continuing Studies should take the initiative to expand the focus on laddering between credit and non-credit programs, i.e., providing credit towards degree programs for related non-credit programs.

The downtown site is a tremendous boon in providing opportunities for lifelong learning and in bringing Simon Fraser University into the community. It is estimated that approximately 70,000 people per year (students and community members) access Harbour Centre. As a result Continuing Studies may have a larger profile externally than it does with the internal (i.e., university) community. However, as indicated earlier, space constraints at Harbour Centre limit the programming opportunities there.

- *Potential for use of educational technologies*

The potential for using educational technologies in non-credit programs is immense. The expertise exists within Continuing Studies but has not been extended to the non-credit side of the house. The reviewers saw no interaction between the CAPPS and the Lohn Laboratory. Some non-credit instructors indicated that they had done some online development on their own, but that no assistance was provided.

Centre for Integrated and Credit Studies

The Centre for Integrated and Credit Studies at Harbour Centre has responsibility for working with Faculties on the new cohort-based BGS degree programs for mature students (Liberal and Business Studies, Justice and Public Safety Leadership) and the administration of stipends for the undergraduate programs of courses offered by the Faculties at Harbour Centre. It is also responsible for the non-credit languages, including the Goethe Zentrum, and culture and arts courses. The proposed Weekend University would, we understand, be developed and administered by this centre.

By all accounts the two integrated studies programs are highly successful from the perspective of the students and the faculty members involved. We did not meet with any of the employers of students in these programs but assume that they are satisfied with the programs also. Students did express a concern that there were too many team projects in the curriculum. Both the students and faculty observed that they believed the program could be marketed better to other employers, including government departments.

With respect to the non-credit offerings it was not clear to the review committee how credit and non-credit offerings were integrated for the benefit of students.

Staff of the English as a Second Language indicated that they felt somewhat isolated from the rest of Continuing Studies in Harbour Centre.

Of concern to the committee is the fact it is not possible to earn an undergraduate degree in any discipline at Harbour Centre other than for the BGS degree in the two integrated studies program described above. We find this surprising given that more than 200 undergraduate courses are offered at Harbour Centre annually. With respect to need for degree completion programs we heard that there is a market of mid-career/mature learners for them, which would also seem to be substantiated by the interest in the integrated studies program. The weekend university proposal is, we understand, a response to meet these needs.

Many reasons are given for the current lack of degree completion opportunities at Harbour Centre. These include (a) departments finding it inconvenient to offer all of the courses required for undergraduate degrees at two campuses, (b) faculty members resistance to teaching downtown and (c) insufficient classroom space. While we did not have an opportunity to investigate the seriousness of these concerns the committee is of the view that that the university will better serve the public by providing additional complete degree programs downtown.

Recommendation 21: Continuing Studies and the Faculties should undertake to provide selected degree programs downtown.

Other Academic Program and Service Units

Conference Services

Conference Services provides administrative and marketing support for academic and administrative units of the university that wish to sponsor special events and conferences. By offering these services through a central office the academic and administrative units of the university generally benefit from the centre's expertise and the economies of scale inherent in a unit specializing in these activities. However, the committee heard that at least some of the Continuing Studies programs operating out of Harbour Centre do not avail themselves of this service when sponsoring special events and conferences. It was not clear to the committee why this is so.

Recommendation 22: The Dean of Continuing Studies should determine why Continuing Studies' program units do not use the Conference Services office when organizing and sponsoring special events and conferences.

International Program Unit

Continuing Studies has been involved in a number of international projects over the years to good effect. In an effort to strengthen and further develop Continuing Studies efforts in this area, and in keeping with the university's desire to enhance the international sophistication of its students, a director has been hired for this unit. Current activities include developing a vision for the unit, determining how best to sustain international projects, and developing an interface with the university's international program office. Some staff from the Centre for Distance Education expressed concerns about being occasionally assigned to international projects at the expense of other work in distance education. We were told that at some time in the future it would be desirable for the International Program Unit to have an office at Harbour Centre.

Evaluation Unit

This unit is new. We applaud its creation to assist sometimes otherwise harried program directors in carrying out proper evaluations of courses and programs and the fact that this unit is also available to others at the university for program evaluation.

University Seniors Program

Continuing Studies and the university has had a long and valued tradition of providing programs of interest and challenge for older adults. The primary concern expressed regarding the program was the availability of classroom space for classes, and its cost, at Harbour Centre. Efforts are being made to address these and other sustainability concerns through the establishment of an endowment fund.

The committee did note that this program reports directly to the Dean rather than to one of the senior directors at Harbour Centre. Given the responsibility of the Centre for Integrated and Credit Studies for non-credit arts and languages programs perhaps some thought should be given to moving this program into that portfolio in order to free up the Dean for other initiatives.

North Growth Management Program Unit (Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue)

This unit, headed by the Associate Dean of Continuing Studies, develops programs for the university's new *Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue*. The Centre is an exciting concept and Continuing Studies has a major role to play in assisting to create the credit and non-credit programs that will focus on dialogue. This said, it was unclear to the committee the extent to which the *Wosk Centre* is integrated with Continuing Studies and the extent the *Wosk Centre* may be a financial burden for Continuing Studies. We were not provided with any financial information about the *Wosk Centre* although we were told that it is expected to operate on a cost-recovery basis two years from now.

As with all new, evolving endeavours major amounts of time must be invested in the start-up phase. Some faculty members and senior administrators expressed a concern about the workload being carried by the Associate Dean.

Program Information

This unit is the marketing and public information arm of Continuing Studies. It assists all Continuing Studies program units with marketing expertise and other areas of the campus also. The unit has been in the forefront of adopting and adapting new communications technologies for marketing and information giving purposes. The committee notes the high quality of the work of the unit over the years as evidenced by the number of marketing awards it has received from the *Canadian Association for University Continuing Education* and other organizations.

III. OTHER ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE REVIEW

- Professional development and work-loads

As noted elsewhere in this report it is difficult for the staff of Continuing Studies to engage in professional development activities because of the demands of the cost-recovery treadmill. In addition, we heard numerous concerns of staff who are working flat-out and beyond. All of us are aware that errors and health problems can and do occur when staff are working in overload conditions for long periods of time.

Professional development is a legitimate cost of doing business as are the overheads incurred for "lost-time" for projects and programs that are researched and developed but which are not implemented or fail. If cost-recovery is being attained through unreasonable staff workloads then this also needs to be considered in cost of doing business. If activities cannot support reasonable staff workloads and provide for appropriate and timely professional development then consideration should be given to dropping these activities.

Recommendation 23: Costs for professional development and maintaining an adequate level of staffing to preclude chronic overload working conditions should be factored into unit budgets.

- Scholarship about university continuing education

One of the problems facing professional staff in university continuing education is finding the time to do scholarly work, either in their discipline of initial academic interest and training (e.g., English, psychology, history, educational administration, business) or in the field of university continuing education *per se*. The never-ending demands of creating new programs and managing existing ones, contributing to the governance of the unit and the university and contributing to professional continuing education associations, fill and often exceed the 50-60 hour work weeks common to many continuing education professionals. While it is true that most professional staff members, particularly those with responsibility for the development and delivery of programs, are actively engaged in market analysis research and program evaluation research, the results of this work are rarely made known beyond the confines of the unit because there is no time to do so. It is also true that a few members of the professional staffs of university continuing education units do maintain an active program of research and publication in university continuing education or in their disciplinary area. These are exceptional people or people who do, in fact, have some time within their portfolios of responsibility to engage in such work. Most professionals do not have such time.

Interest in the practice of university continuing education is growing as universities embrace concepts of lifelong learning, knowledge management, technology-enhanced learning and new forms of community engagement. One example is the area of distance delivery, in which academic staff members frequently raise question about whether the quality of learning outcomes of such things as correspondence courses and web-based courses are as good as, better than, or worse than the same material presented in the more familiar face-to-face situation. In addition, and with specific reference to Simon Fraser University, the *Wosk Centre for Dialogue* brings all sorts of interesting researchable questions about dialogue, learning and the public good to mind.

As members of a university community that highly values research and publication professional staff in Continuing Studies are experiencing frustration in their ability to do these things. In addition, the important knowledge that these people have gained as a result of working in the field is rarely transmitted to other university continuing education professionals.

In an effort to begin to address this question Continuing Studies has, in its three-year 2001-2004 plan, identified the possibility of research semesters and sabbatical leaves as ideas to consider. We support this although we would note that serious research and publication is normally an ongoing process, not necessarily amenable to producing results in short periods of time. Consideration might also be given to actually writing into professional staff contracts an expectation of, say, 20% time for research and publication, with concomitant performance expectations. We would note that in either case (leaves and/or proportionate time) the cost for research and publication must be factored into the business plans in the same manner as for professional development.

Support for research and publication in the area of university continuing education will also be a requirement for the proposed Masters in Continuing Education that Continuing Studies has identified as an initiative in its three-year 2001-2004 plan.

Recommendation 24: Continuing Studies should identify and implement the ways and means to encourage and support professional staff members to conduct research and to publish in the area of university continuing education.

- **Management Information Systems**

Continuing Studies is currently using multiple databases and information systems throughout its operation, many of which are nearly obsolete. There is clearly a need for improved systems to support the business and student care environment of Continuing Studies. We were told that the university is near to making a decision about a new integrated Management Information System (MIS) to serve the entire campus. We suggest that the overall MIS should include a Student Information System which integrates both credit and non-credit students (important for tracking alumni, monitoring the movement between credit and non-credit, etc.) and which permits online application

and registration. Other components necessary to Continuing Studies include financial tracking and human resource management.

Recommendation 25: The new Management Information System being contemplated by Simon Fraser University should include applications appropriate to the work of Continuing Studies.

- **Entrepreneurialism**

It is the observation of the reviewers (reinforced by some interviewees and by the financial data received) that the nature of entrepreneurialism within Continuing Studies needs to be clarified and supported. There appears to be an imbalance between the burden felt by many staff regarding the expectation to be cost-recovery and the incentives to units to increase their revenue generation. The sense that financial accountability affects the ability to be creative is widespread, as is our earlier documented concern about professional development opportunities being limited by earnings.

Although the reviewers were assured that each program in the non-credit area operates under a clear business model, we did not see these firsthand. From our discussions, we had some concerns that all costs are not being accounted for.

The need for an appropriate Management Information System to support the entrepreneurial model of activity must again be reinforced. At present, the variety of systems under usage would appear to challenge a business model. We were also advised about some policy constraints. For example, Harbour Centre staff are expected to use the Burnaby campus print shop when more timely and less costly services are available downtown. Such policies militate against an entrepreneurial climate.

- **Legitimacy of non-credit activities**

Not unlike other Canadian universities, the question of the legitimacy of non-credit occurs at Simon Fraser University. Interviewees raised concerns regarding non-credit students being treated as “real” students (again, a common Management Information System may be helpful here) and non-credit instructors being treated as “real” instructors in terms of such things as remuneration and getting student feedback.

Other Matters

Interviews and emails received related to the review resulted in a number of additional comments and suggestions by participants which weren't easy to categorize in terms of the themes pursued in this report. We commend them to the attention of Continuing Studies management.

- There should be gym facilities, showers and accessible day-care services for people who work at Harbour Centre.
- SFU faculty who teach at Harbour Centre do not have to pay for parking. Other instructors have to pay for parking. Continuing Studies should reimburse instructors for their parking costs or at least provide some subsidy.
- Distance education students should be able to submit their assignments by email.
- The university should accept credit card payments for books required in distance education courses.
- There should be better cooperation among the universities and colleges and university-colleges in providing courses in downtown Vancouver.
- Copyright for distance education materials is held by Continuing Studies. Faculty members who have prepared distance education courses should not only have responsibility for maintaining/upgrading the content but also be rewarded for this.
- Tutors for distance education courses should meet periodically to share ideas and discuss issues.

IV. SUMMARY LISTING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Continuing Studies

1. Continuing Studies should develop rolling three-year business plans and budgets for each of its academic program centres and academic service units and for Continuing Studies overall.
2. Continuing Studies should acquire more classroom space in Harbour Centre.

Continuing Studies and Faculties

3. Continuing Studies, working with the Faculties, should adopt online learning as an important modality for distance education undergraduate and graduate courses and for non-credit courses.

Faculties and University

4. Faculty members who are assigned Continuing Studies activities by their departments and who do not receive additional compensation for these activities should have them considered as part of their normal teaching load for promotion and tenure purposes.

Continuing Studies

5. Continuing Studies should initiate annual performance reviews, including identification of performance expectations for the next year, for all support staff,

Centre for Distance Education – Continuing Studies

6. A clear statement of the purpose, objectives and priorities of distance education at Simon Fraser University should be developed by the Centre in consultation with the Faculties, and approved by Senate.
7. The Centre should explore with Faculties the development of graduate distance programs aimed at working professionals.
8. The cap on distance education enrolments for students already admitted to the undergraduate program should be removed, although Faculties may wish to set a limit on the proportion of courses within a program that individual students may take at a distance.
9. A more flexible form of funding needs to be devised that encourages innovation and new developments in distance education within the undergraduate credit program, and reflects changes in the level of activity.

10. The Centre needs to make a much greater commitment to developing fully online distance education courses, rather than Web-enabled print courses. Web-based online courses should be the norm for all new distance course development.
11. The Centre needs to review current job specification, especially for program directors and print support staff, to ensure that the skill sets of staff are in line with the future needs of the Centre. In particular, the Centre needs to look at the shift in skills that will arise from a reduction in print and an increase in fully online teaching. As a result, the Centre will need to provide strong professional development guidance and opportunities for some staff, and may need to hire new staff where skills are lacking.
12. The Centre needs to review its organizational structure to ensure that it reflects the increasing integration of program initiation, design, development and delivery.

Centre for Community and Professional Program (CAPPS) – Continuing Studies

13. CAPPS needs to develop a strategic plan to guide its program development during the next three years. This plan should reflect the interest and expertise of the unit, anticipated opportunities/needs as well as the University's overall direction.
14. CAPPS should develop a consistent and clear policy regarding professional development for its staff and a process that is seen to be fair and equitable across the subunits. The costs for professional development should be considered as a business cost and factored into unit budgets.
15. An annual review process for CAPPS support staff should be developed, communicated and implemented. Part of this process should include a discussion of professional development needs and opportunities for staff for the upcoming year. It should also include a discussion of the individual's career goals and potential career paths within the organization.
16. The promotion process for program directors needs to be reviewed and, perhaps, redesigned to reflect the current organizational realities and goals of CAPPS. If research and publication are criteria for promotion then the time cost of this must be factored into the unit's business plans.
17. The issue of burnout should be addressed very soon. Within a cost recovery environment it is difficult to downplay the significance of financial performance; however, a healthy work environment is essential if financial goals are to be achieved. Staff should be consulted regarding how this issue can be addressed within the unit.
18. The mandate and resources of the Lohn Laboratory should be extended to promote the development of online non-credit courses.

Continuing Studies and Faculties

19. Continuing Studies should commit resources to working with the Faculties to provide continuing professional education programs in the health sciences.
20. Continuing Studies should take the initiative to expand the focus on laddering between credit and non-credit programs, i.e., providing credit towards degree programs for related non-credit programs.

Centre for Integrated and Professional Studies – Continuing Studies and Faculties

21. Continuing Studies and the faculties undertake to provide selected undergraduate degree programs downtown.

Conference Services – Continuing Studies

22. The Dean of Continuing Studies determine why Continuing Studies program units do not use the Conference Services office when organizing and sponsoring special events and conferences.

Continuing Studies

23. Costs for professional development and maintaining an adequate level of staffing to preclude chronic overload working conditions should be factored into unit budgets.
24. Continuing Studies should identify and implement the ways and means to encourage and support research and to publish in the area of university continuing education.

Continuing Studies and University

25. The new Management Information System being contemplated by Simon Fraser University should include applications appropriate to the work of Continuing Studies.