

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Continuing Studies – Office of the Dean

Memorandum

To: Senate

From: Colin Yerbury, Dean
Continuing Studies

Re: Senate submission – Criteria &
Guidelines for the Establishment
Of Certificates for Successful
Completion of Non-credit Courses

Date: December 1, 2003

The Senate Committee on Continuing Studies recommends the following motion:

Motion: “that Senate approve the revisions to the Criteria and Guidelines for the Establishment of Certificates and Diplomas for Successful Completion of Programs of Non-credit courses as set forth in S.04-5”

The Senate Committee on Continuing Studies, at its meeting of November 4, 2003, passed the following motion:

“that the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies approve the revisions to the Criteria & Guidelines for the Establishment of Certificates and Diplomas for Successful Completion of Programs of Non-credit Courses, and that the revised document be forwarded to Senate for approval.”

The attachment document entitled “Criteria & Guidelines for the Establishment of Certificates and Diplomas for Successful Completion of Programs of Non-credit Courses” is a revision of the Senate approved proposal (S.89-39) to establish recognized University certification for non-credit programs. Senate approved the original proposal on November 27, 1989, and the original documents are attached.

It should be noted that authority for approving non-credit certificate programs was granted to the SCCS by Senate:

Approval Process (amendment to Item # 5)

Programs being proposed as suitable for non-credit certificate granting status are to be submitted to the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies for consideration and approval. The program description will contain information on the content and duration of each course, the potential instructors and the evaluation methods. The Senate Committee on Continuing Studies will also be responsible for approving changes to programs and for approving the discontinuance of programs. The Committee will report program approvals and discontinuances to Senate annually.

(Approved by Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules, Fall, 2000)

(Approved by Senate, November 6, 2000)

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies, I would be pleased to respond to any questions that Senate members may have regarding the proposed changes to S.89-39.

Criteria and Guidelines for the Establishment of Certificates and Diplomas for Successful Completion of Programs of Non-credit Courses

1. Certificate programs are intended for non-degree holders while diploma programs are intended for students who have one or more degrees. A program should be initiated only if the subject matter is such that the University appears to be the most appropriate body to offer the instruction.
2. A program must have a clearly defined educational objective and rationale. The rationale should include a statement of required University resources, such as Library resources, an assessment of community needs and a survey of other similar programs at SFU and elsewhere.
3. A program must be under the direct and ongoing supervision of an academic department of the University or an Academic Program Steering Committee. Program activities must be reported annually to the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies.
4. Each program will be the specific responsibility of a department, school, Faculty, or centre. The department will be responsible for ensuring the academic rigour of the curriculum and the quality of instruction. In cases of interdisciplinary programs, responsibility may be shared or there should be an Academic Program Steering Committee. The majority of the members of the Committee should be appointed from the academic units most closely associated with the program.
5. Programs being proposed as suitable for certificate or diploma granting status are to be submitted to the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies for consideration and approval. A description of the course/s that make up the program must be submitted, including information on: the content and duration of each course; the proposed instructors; the means of evaluation; and required University resources, including Library resources.
6. The Senate Committee on Continuing Studies will also be responsible for approving changes to programs and for approving the discontinuance of programs. The Committee will report program approvals and discontinuances to Senate annually.
7. Programs must have an evaluative component and students will be expected to maintain satisfactory performance in each course to remain eligible for a certificate or diploma. This will enable the achievements of students to be recognized properly and recorded in ways that document progress, attest to standards, facilitate progression and mobility and serve as an encouragement to further learning.
8. Programs will consist of non-credit courses that may vary in length and format from standard university credit courses but will include a minimum of 120 contact hours in total (including face-to-face and/or on-line lectures, labs, seminars, and tutorials).

Approved by the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies, November 4, 2003
Editorial amendments: December 17, 2003
Subject to approval by SFU Senate.

Approved by Senate Nov 27/89

S.89-39

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: L. Salter
Chair, SCAP

Subject: Proposal for Certification of
Non-Credit Programs
Reference: SCAP 89-24

Date: November 9, 1989

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning/Senate Committee on Continuing Studies gives rise to the following motions:

Motion 1:

"That Senate approve and recommend approval to the Board of Governors as set forth in S.89-39 the proposal to establish recognized University Certification for Non-Credit Programs."

Motion 2:

"That Senate approve and recommend approval to the Board of Governors as set forth in S.89-39 the proposal for a Certificate Program in Telecommunications Engineering"

Proposal for Certification of Non-Credit Programs

Description:

The University offers, in addition to degree programs and certificate and diploma programs made up of degree-related courses, specialized programs of non-degree courses in areas of professional practice. The Program in Telecommunications Engineering for the British Columbia Telephone Company, developed by the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Continuing Studies in conjunction with the University of California at Los Angeles, is a notable example. The educational needs of some groups, such as the B.C. Telephone engineers, cannot be met by traditional university offerings. Their area of interest is too specialized to be met by existing university programs and the traditional 13-week format is unsuitable for both the curriculum and the working lives of practicing professionals. In most cases, such individuals have advanced degrees and neither seek nor need credit toward a university degree. Nonetheless, participants in such programs would like some recognition of satisfactory completion of programs which are academically rigorous and taught at a university level.

There is a strong desire on the part of students enrolled in such programs, and associated business and professional organizations, that the University formally recognize satisfactory academic performance. To this end, it is recommended that the University Senate approve the granting of certificates to participants in approved programs of non-credit courses who demonstrate academic competence at a level comparable to that acceptable in courses which are part of degree programs.

Rationale:

The existence of specialized programs, such as the Program for Telecommunications Engineering, has benefits for organizations, including corporations and government agencies; for the professions; and for the University. The organizations and professions benefit from being able to obtain high quality professional development programs. The University and individual faculty members benefit from close contact with practicing professionals working, in many cases, on problems of theoretical, as well as practical, interest.

Both working professionals and their employers say that university recognition is important in gaining financial support and acceptance for such professional development programs. Official recognition of academic competence contributes also to a sense of commitment on the part of students and a feeling of accomplishment on completion. University certification seems appropriate in cases in which instruction and evaluation procedures and curriculum content are academically comparable to other university programs.

Many universities in Canada, including the Universities of British Columbia and Victoria and three Alberta universities, already offer Senate approved certificates for programs of non-credit courses.

Criteria for the Establishment of Certificates for Successful Completion of Program of Non-degree Courses:

1. A program should be initiated only if the subject matter is such that the University appears to be the most appropriate body to offer the instruction.
2. A program must have a clearly defined educational objective and rationale. The rationale should include a statement of required University resources and community needs.
3. A program must be under the direct and ongoing supervision of an academic department of the University.

Proposed Guidelines for Certificate Programs of Non-degree Courses:

1. Each program would be the specific responsibility of a department, school, Faculty, or centre. The department would be responsible for ensuring the academic rigour of the curriculum and the quality of instruction. In cases of interdisciplinary programs, responsibility may be shared.
2. Programs being proposed as suitable for certificate granting status are to be submitted to the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies for consideration and, if accepted, forwarded by that Committee with its recommendations to SCAP and to Senate for approval. A description of the course/s which make up the program must be submitted, including information on: the content and duration of each course; the proposed instructors; and the means of evaluation.
3. Students would be expected to maintain satisfactory performance in each course to remain eligible for a certificate.
4. Programs would consist of courses which may vary in length and format from standard university credit courses but would include a minimum number of 120 contact hours in total (including lectures, labs, seminars, and tutorials).

June 15, 1989

Prepared by Mark Selman, Director, Extension Credit at Harbour Centre