

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY SENATE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, July 9, 2007 at 7:00 pm in Room 3210 WMC

Open Session

Present:

Stevenson, Michael, President and Chair of Senate

Abdulwahab, Kamal
Black, Sam
Brebner, Sarah
Copeland, Lynn
Dickinson, Peter
Driver, Jon
Ester, Martin
Fizzell, Maureen
Fox, Sasha
Francis, June
Gencay, Ramo
Gordon, Robert
Hannah, David
Harder, Derrick
Harding, Kevin
Haunerland, Norbert
Hayes, Michael
Hemingway, Alex
Javed, Waseem
Jones, John (representing B. Lewis)
Laba, Martin
LaBrie, John
Lein, Adam
Letourneau, Michael
Liljedahl, Peter
MacLean, David
Mathewes, Rolf (representing M. Plischke)
Percival, Colin
Peters, Joseph
Pierce, John
Pinto, Mario
Thompson, Steve
Tiffany, Evan
Tse, Karen
Vaid, Bhuvinder
Van Baarsen, Amanda
Wakkary, Ron
Warner, D'Arcy
Waterhouse, John

Kiai, Mehran, Acting Registrar/Senior Director, Student
Enrolment

Watt, Alison, Director, University Secretariat
Grant, Bobbie, Recording Secretary

Absent:

Brennand, Tracy
Corbett, Kitty
Dagenais, Diane
Easton, Stephen
Krane, Bill
Malik, Hamza
McArthur, James
Percival, Paul
Popadiuk, Natalee
Russell, Robert
Shaker, Paul
Shermer, Thomas
Smart, Carlyne
Smith, Don
Weeks, Daniel
Williams, Peter
Williams, Tony

In attendance:

Anderson, Gail
Barton, Andrew
Burley, David
Dench, Sarah
Fairey, Elaine
Khan Hemani, Rummana
Johnston, Nancy
Moore, Donna

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of June 11, 2007

The Minutes were approved as distributed.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

4. Report of the Chair

On behalf of Senate and the University, the Chair acknowledged the service and expressed appreciation to the following Deans whose terms of office will be ending on August 31, 2007: David MacLean, Faculty of Health Sciences, and John Pierce, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The following Senators will also be leaving Senate at the end of August and, on behalf of Senate, the Chair expressed thanks to Norbert Haunerland who will commence appointment as Associate Vice-President Research, effective September 1, 2007; and Martin Ester who will commence a Study Leave.

5. Question Period

There were no questions.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on University Priorities

i) Paper S.07-84 – Centre for Forensic Research

Moved by J. Waterhouse, seconded by A. van Baarsen

“that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the creation of the Centre for Forensic Research as a Schedule A Centre within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences”

Brief discussion took place with respect to the criteria for a Schedule A Centre versus a Schedule B Centre.

The question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Paper S.07-85 – Report on Undergraduate Curriculum Implementation (For Information)

S. Dench, Director, University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was raised as to why there were no WQB courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Senate was advised that since the curriculum and course development were still

in progress, it was decided to wait until all faculty hires were completed and the curriculum was in place before any courses were certified. Expectations are that certification will be resolved within the next few months.

Reference was made to a statement in the third paragraph on the last page of the report which suggested that FAL and FAN courses should provide integral credits rather than additive credits and therefore count towards a student's degree. An opinion was expressed that since the courses exist to provide remedial material for students not adequately prepared from high school, they should not count towards a university degree. It was pointed out that the courses are counted in a student's CGPA and since there were already a number of courses in Physics, Math and Chemistry which provide upgrading for students coming from high school and count toward the degree requirements, it was felt that this suggestion needed to be monitored and evaluated.

On behalf of Senate, the Chair extended thanks and appreciation to Sarah Dench for her pivotal role with respect to curriculum development.

B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

i) Paper S.07-86 – Student Success Program – Special Exemptions from Undergraduate Academic Standing and Continuance Policy

Moved by J. Waterhouse, seconded by K. Harding

“that Senate approve that exemptions be made to existing Standing and Continuance policies as follows:

1. At the end of the first enrolled semester subsequent to being placed on Academic Probation, International and Faculty of Applied Sciences students with both a SGPA and CGPA below 2.00, rather than being Required to Withdraw (RTW), will be invited to enroll in the “Student Success” program. If they choose this option, then their academic standing will be changed to Continuing Academic Probation (CAP). Students who do not take up the program will remain RTW, and will be required to meet the normal readmission requirements.
2. At the end of Semester One of the “Student Success” program, if both the SGPA and CGPA are below 2.00, a student will only be RTW if they have not completed the prescribed non-credit modules. This is the only exception to the current evaluation policy for students enrolled in the program. At the end of Semester Two, the current evaluation policy will apply to all students.
3. A student enrolled in the “Student Success” program will not be permitted to exceed 9 credit hours of regular course enrollment, with the exception of students whose CGPA >2.00 at the end of Semester One. These students will be in Good Academic Standing.

And that these exemptions be reviewed by the end of the Spring 2008 semester”

R. Khan Hemani, Director, Academic Advising and Student Success, Nancy Johnston, Senior Director, Student Learning and Retention, and Elaine Fairey, Director, Student Learning Commons, were in attendance to respond to questions.

A Senator suggested that failure in a student's initial W or Q course was a good indicator of whether remedial help was needed and asked why these students were not being targeted. A suggestion was also made that students should be able to enter this program before they become RTW. It was pointed out that there are a variety of potential indicators that could have been used but the RTW factor had been chosen for this pilot program. At the end of the pilot a full evaluation will be done and recommendations will come forward on future directions.

A question was raised about the choice of the two groups included in the study, RTW students in the Faculty of Applied Sciences and RTW International students, and whether the choice of these two groups would skew the results. R. Khan Hemani indicated that these two groups were chosen because these are fairly diverse groups, and because they contain a large number of high school students.

Discussion focused on data from SFU and other universities with respect to academic probation. Some data implied that a considerable number of high school students appear to go on academic probation within two years of admission, and an opinion was expressed that that seemed to suggest that high schools were not adequately preparing students academically for university. An inquiry was made as to whether any outreach strategies were taking place in this regard. Senate was advised that both academic and non-academic factors affect the performance of high school students and discussions were taking place with colleagues and high school councilors about these issues.

It was noted that the data with respect to the percentage of students on academic probation for the different admission categories demonstrates that admission averages have an impact on academic performance, and an opinion was expressed that the high percentage of students on academic probation was a consequence of recently decreased admission requirements and served as a signal that admission requirements should not be arbitrarily lowered. Senate was advised that the grade point average for BC 12 admissions for SFU as a whole has been steadily increasing since 2000, but lower minimum admission averages had been implemented in some Faculties. However, the lowering of the minimum admission gpas has had no observable impact on student retention or graduation rates.

In response to a question as to whether or not the language barrier was a source of difficulty for international students, Senate was advised that transition issues were greater than this and that language was an issue for both international and domestic students. Senate was advised that ESL supervisors were being hired for the Learning Commons and should be available to assist students by the Fall semester.

Reference was made to past discussions at Senate in which students advocated for increased services of this kind, and D. Harder, on behalf of the students, expressed

appreciation for this initiative and extended congratulations to the staff in Student Services who have worked to bring this forward.

The question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

The Chair acknowledged the energy and professionalism of staff in Student Services who are dealing with very serious issues of enrolment management and thanked those in attendance with respect to this matter.

- ii) Paper S.07-87- Admission Requirements – Applicants from other Canadian Provinces

Moved by J. Waterhouse, seconded by C. Percival

“that Senate approve that Canadian High School Admission Requirements mirror the requirements from leading universities in each province, and use five or six courses for admission”

D. Moore, Associate Registrar, Admissions was in attendance to respond to questions.

If requirements were changed and made easier for students in a particular province, a concern was expressed that this would then make it easier for students from that province to gain admission to SFU. Senate was advised that since admission requirements would be based on a ‘leading university’, standards would be assured.

The question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

- iii) Paper S.07-88 – Curriculum Revision – Faculty of Applied Sciences (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved minor changes to an existing course in the School of Interactive Arts and Technology.

- iv) Paper S.07-89 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved the deletion of numerous courses not offered for at least six semesters.

- v) Paper S.07-90 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Business Administration (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved minor revisions to lower division requirements and existing courses in Business Administration.

vi) Paper S.07-91 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Health Sciences (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved minor revisions to lower division requirements and existing courses in Health Sciences.

vii) Paper S.07-92 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved minor revisions to programs and existing courses in Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and Biological Sciences. SCUS also approved, under delegated authority, changes to breadth requirements for the Faculty of Science and the Environmental Science Program.

C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee

i) Paper S.07-93 – Curriculum Revision – Earth Sciences PhD Program (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved changes in calendar language to clarify the PhD entry requirements and program transfer from the MSc to the PhD program.

ii) Paper S.07-94 – New courses – Department of Mathematics (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved five new graduate courses in Mathematics.

iii) Paper S.07-95 – Cohort Special Arrangements Master of Arts Program in International Studies (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority and in accordance with the rules approved by Senate for Special Arrangement Programs, approved a Cohort Special Arrangements Master of Arts Program in International Studies as a pilot program to begin in Fall 2007 for a maximum of three years. Eleven new graduate courses associated with the program were also approved by SGSC under delegated authority.

iv) Paper S.07-96 – Revised Graduate Student Appeals Procedures – Graduate General Regulation 1.8.2 – Unsatisfactory Progress (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a revised procedures for appealing decisions under Graduate General Regulation 1.8.2 – Unsatisfactory Progress. The revised procedures include new guidelines concerning documentation for appeals, and are effective immediately.

v) Paper S.07-97 – New Stream in the PhD Program, Faculty of Education (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a new stream – Languages, Cultures, and Literacies – in

the PhD Program in the Faculty of Education. Six new graduate courses associated with the new stream were also approved by SGSC under delegated authority.

D) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules

i) Paper S.07-98 – Annual Report (For Information)

The Annual Report of the Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules, covering the period 1 June 2006 to 31 May 2007, was received by Senate for information.

E) Senate Nominating Committee

i) Paper S.07-99 – Elections

Senate was advised that no further nominations had been received. Dan Weeks was therefore elected by acclamation to the Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules, and the vacancies on the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies and the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning would be carried forward to the next meeting of Senate. The results of balloting for the International Student Exchange Committee resulted in the election of Michael Favere-Marchesi for term of office to May 31, 2009.

7. Other Business

i) Paper S.07-100 – Boycott Motion

Moved by S. Black, seconded by M. Hayes

“that Senate authorize the Chair of Senate to express disapproval on behalf of Senate of the contemplated boycott of Israeli academic institutions by the University and College Union of the UK.

Senate recommends that the Chair of Senate’s statement appear on the University’s web site in a prominent and accessible position”

The Chair explained that generally it was not SCAR’s intention to bring forward political motions to Senate but SCAR felt that since this motion focuses on the question of academic freedom, it was appropriate for presentation to Senate.

A lengthy discussion took place on these points.

- A question was raised about whether the Faculty Association ought to take a position on this matter, rather than Senate, or whether SFUFA’s views could have been made known prior to the debate. The Chair noted that he had not received any indication from the President of SFUFA or its Executive that it opposed Senate dealing with this.

- Several matters were raised about the intention of the wording, what was meant by “authorize”, what was being authorized, how such a statement would be publicized, etc. Some Senators felt it was unusual for Senate to be asked to support a statement without knowing exactly how it would be expressed. It was stated that the intention of

the motion was to provide the President with a mandate from Senate, but that it was deliberately drafted to allow the President to exercise his judgment and discretion.

- In the debate, there appeared to be no disagreement that this was primarily a matter of academic freedom, but there were concerns that the wording created difficulties in interpretation. Senators debated whether this was a principled stand against academic boycotts and whether or not they were justified in all cases. And if it was a principled stand, why was there a need for reference to the UK union's proposed boycott about which no detailed information was available.

- Some Senators felt that they had been given insufficient time to consider the motion and to become more informed about the issues. One Senator noted that the boycott was being considered by the University and College Union of the UK, and wondered whether Senate action should await the outcome of the UCU deliberations. Senators also discussed the various potential interpretations of Senate approving or defeating the motion.

In an effort to clarify the intention of the motion, an amendment was moved by E. Tiffany, seconded by S. Black

“that the first sentence of the motion be amended as follows: *On the grounds that it violates academic freedom*, Senate authorizes the Chair of Senate to express disapproval on behalf of Senate of the contemplated boycott of Israeli academic institutions by the University and College Union of the UK”

In discussion on the amendment, it was suggested that specific reference to Israeli/Palestinian circumstances might also need to be deleted since the amendment refers to an absolute principle.

The question was called on the amendment, and a vote taken.

AMENDMENT FAILED

Because a variety of procedural questions had been raised, the Chair provided a detailed analysis of procedural options available to Senate.

Moved by A. Hemingway, seconded by W. Javed

“that the motion be tabled to the next meeting of Senate”

The question was called, and a vote taken.

MAIN MOTION TABLED

Senator Black indicated that he was not prepared to bring the motion back to the next meeting. It was noted that SCAR would determine further action on the motion.

Secretary's note: President Stevenson issued a statement on the proposed boycott following the Senate meeting. (attached).

8. Information

The date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of Senate is Monday, September 17, 2007. There is no meeting scheduled in August.

Open Session adjourned at 8:15 pm and Senate moved directly into Closed Session.

Alison Watt, Director, University Secretariat

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STATEMENT ON PROPOSED BOYCOTT OF ISRAELI UNIVERSITIES

In response to the call of the University and College Union of the UK for consideration of a boycott of Israeli universities, I wish to state my clear disapproval of such a move. An academic boycott conflicts with the free exchange of ideas and research that is central to the mission of universities, and violates the principle of academic freedom. Such action might be justifiable in response to a state's action which stripped its universities of academic freedom, and to complicity in such action on the part of its university administrations and faculty. Clearly, complexities and ambiguities surround empirical arguments of this kind, as recent discussion in the Senate of Simon Fraser University has indicated. However, whatever one's position on other issues in that country or region, I do not believe that such criticisms can be made of the state of Israel, and Israeli universities share our commitment to the fundamental value of academic freedom. I call for all who subscribe to this value to oppose the proposed boycott of Israeli universities.

Michael Stevenson, President & Vice-Chancellor, July 9th, 2007