

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY SENATE

Minutes of a meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, November 5, 2007 at 5:30 pm in Room 3210 WMC

Open Session

Present:

Stevenson, Michael, President and Chair of Senate

Abdulwahab, Kamal
Agnes, George (representing J. Driver)
Atkins, Stella
Collinge, Joan (representing J. LaBrie)
Corbett, Kitty
Cormack, Lesley
Dagenais, Diane
Dickinson, Peter
Easton, Stephen
Fizzell, Maureen
Fox, Amy
Francis, June
Hannah, David
Harder, Derrick
Harding, Kevin
Hayes, Michael
Hemingway, Alex
Krane, Bill
Lee, Benjamin
Letourneau, Michael
Lewis, Brian
Liljedahl, Peter
Malcoe, Lorraine Halinka
O'Neil, John
Owen, Brian (representing L. Copeland)
Paling, Joe
Percival, Colin
Percival, Paul
Pinto, Mario
Plischke, Michael
Popadiuk, Natalee
Russell, Robert
Shaker, Paul
Shermer, Thomas
Smart, Carolyne
Smith, Don
Tiffany, Evan
Tse, Karen
Vaid, Bhuvinder
Wakkary, Ron
Warner, D'Arcy
Waterhouse, John
Williams, Peter
Williams, Tony

Absent:

Black, Sam
Brebner, Sarah
Brennand, Tracy
Gençay, Ramo
Gordon, Robert
Javed, Waseem
Laba, Martin
Lein, Adam
Li, Paul
Louie, Brandt
McArthur, James
Peters, Joseph
Thompson, Steve
van Baarsen, Amanda
Weeks, Daniel

In attendance:

Breden, Felix
Forsyth, Ian
Weinberg, Hal

Ross, Kate, Registrar/Senior Director Student Enrolment
Watt, Alison, Director, University Secretariat
Grant, Bobbie, Recording Secretary

1. Approval of the Agenda

In order to accommodate I. Forsyth who was in attendance as a resource person for Senate paper S.07-138, item 7.D.i was moved to follow item 6.A.i on the Agenda. Following this change, the Agenda was approved.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of October 15, 2007

The Minutes were approved as distributed.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

Reference was made to the discussion about student involvement on the Academic Advisory Committee of Fraser International College, and the understanding from the last meeting that students would not be members of the committee. The Vice-President Academic wished to clarify this issue by stating that the membership of the committee would include students.

In response to an issue raised at the last meeting about whether human rights and harassment policies at FIC were harmonized with those of SFU, the Vice-President Academic advised Senate that the contract between FIC and the University requires that FIC comply with the applicable laws of Canada and of British Columbia and with the policy regulations of SFU. Under the terms of the contract, the College is required to provide the University with evidence of its compliance when requested by the University.

In follow up to concerns expressed about dispute resolution with regard to complaints about compliance to policies and regulations, the Vice-President Academic advised that the following addition will be made to the terms of reference of the Academic Advisory Committee: *In the case of unresolved disputes related to academic matters such as academic dishonesty, academic appeals, disability accommodation, and academic freedom, the Academic Advisory Committee will review and facilitate resolution. In seeking resolution the Academic Advisory Committee will be guided by SFU's policies and regulations.*

Reference was made to the discussion concerning the involvement of departments, specifically the Department of English, with regard to course offerings for FIC. The Vice-President Academic advised Senate that he had examined this issue further and wished to provide Senate with the following information. In the contract between FIC and SFU, the University has agreed to provide transfer credit for articulated courses. Departments are not forced to develop courses for FIC but the University is required to provide transfer credit. Departments that participate in this process provide a course coordinator to assist FIC in locating an instructor, and provide equivalency audits and articulation for courses taught by FIC. The VPA office works with Faculties to determine which SFU courses will be required by FIC students so that they may receive transfer credit towards a degree program, and works with departments to identify departmental course coordinators. In the case of the English Department which initially voted not to participate in the process, the Department was informed by the Dean's office that they could not block articulation on non-academic grounds. The Department was presented with options on how articulation could take place, and the Department subsequently

chose to participate in the process. In response to an inquiry about the process, Senate was advised that if a Department did not participate in the articulation process, the Dean's office could provide the service by using appropriate staff in their office to determine levels of articulation and equivalency but the preferred option was for Departments to participate and make the determination themselves.

An inquiry was made as to whether objections such as those expressed by the English Department would be part of the review process when the time comes for Senate to evaluate FIC and make a decision on contract renewal. Senate was advised that there would be no restrictions on the information brought to Senate for review and debate.

With regard to an inquiry at the last meeting about the use of corporate names in endowed professorships and chairs, Senate was advised that there are approximately 24 professorships or chairs that have been approved by Senate, six of which are named for corporations. Senate was also informed that information concerning the breakdown of corporations and donations was available from the office of University Advancement.

4. Report of the Chair

On behalf of Senate, the Chair welcomed the following two new Senators and thanked them for undertaking service to Senate: Dr. Stella Atkins, Faculty member, Faculty of Applied Sciences, and Joe Paling, Student member, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

5. Question Period

A question was raised by M. Letourneau as to why the Library did not make spousal cards available for students, especially graduate students. Senate was advised that this issue had not been raised for consideration by the Senate Library Committee but it could easily be pursued. At the request of the Chair, M. Letourneau agreed to follow the issue up.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Research Ethics Board

i) Paper S.07-132 – Annual Report (For Information)

F. Breden, Chair of the Research Ethics Board, and H. Weinberg, Director of the Office of Research Ethics, were in attendance in order to respond to questions.

The Annual Report of the Research Ethics Board was received by Senate for information.

D) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules

i) Paper S.07-138 – Policy Revisions – I.10.09 Retention and Disposal of Student Exams or Assignments, and T.20.01 Grading and Reconsideration of Grades

I. Forsyth, University Archivist was in attendance in order to respond to questions.

Moved by J. Waterhouse, seconded by K. Harding

“that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the revision of Policy I 10.09 and the revision of T 20.01 effective immediately”

It was noted that students were required to submit grade appeals or requests for reconsideration of a grade within a ten day time period but there was no equivalent requirement on the part of the university to respond in a timely manner. Because this concern had been raised with the University Archivist prior to the meeting, the policy had been re-examined and a minor revision to language to assure an equitable timeliness on the part of the university would be made. The revised language would appear in Section 2.5 of Policy T 20.01 as a new article at the start of that section which would simply state that each of the levels of authority that are involved in a request to reconsider a grade would respond in a timely manner, normally within ten days. Senate was also informed of some minor editorial revisions to Section 2.2.5 and 2.6.1 to correct inconsistency in language and to ensure both of those sections state and mean the same thing. These revisions were satisfactory to K. Harding who had raised this issue.

In response to an inquiry as to why documents must be kept for one year, Senate was advised that public bodies are required by law to retain personal information for a minimum of one year after its date of last use whenever that information is used to make a decision that affects the rights of an individual. Graded examinations and assignments are deemed decisions that directly affect the interests of a student.

Discussion turned to the issue of returned exams and assignments without the original markings of the instructor. Senate was advised that the issue of authenticity and reliability of the record being returned by the student was not addressed in the existing policy. The complaint that gave rise to the proposed changes was a different issue. However, it would be entirely appropriate to insist that the record that is returned by the student must be the original one that was marked, graded, and annotated by the instructor, and if Senate felt this should be explicitly addressed in the policy it could be done. It was suggested that T 20.01, 2.4.1 could cover this issue although it might not be sufficiently specific.

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

i) Paper S.07-133 – Changes to admission requirements for BC 12 students and transfer students

Motion 1

Moved by B. Krane, seconded by M. Fizzell

“that Senate approve in principle that the maximum allowable difference between a final BC English 12 high school mark and provincial exam be set on an annual basis in relation to the standard deviation of the

differences. SCUS will determine the annual maximum allowable difference upon receiving a recommendation from Student Services”

Several concerns were expressed about the wording of the motion and the lack of clarification as to the intent and consequence of the motion if passed. There were no objections to a suggestion by P. Percival to revise the motion as follows, and the revisions were accepted as a friendly amendment:

“that Senate delegate to SCUS the authority to annually set for admission purposes the maximum allowable difference between a final BC English 12 high school mark and provincial exam”

It was suggested that references to receiving a recommendation from Student Services and to the standard deviation of the differences, were not matters of policy that needed to be included in the motion, but were merely practical ways to proceed and issues that would be dealt with by SCUS under delegated authority.

Brief discussion ensued about whether or not the purpose of the motion was to restrict admissions or if there were other possible outcomes. Senate was advised that the motivation for bringing this forward to Senate was to assist Student Services and provide some guidance in terms of applicants where there was a substantial difference between the two marks that would likely call into question the ability of the student to successfully undertake university studies. In other cases, there may be the need for some other intervention such as tutoring in order to assist the student.

In response to a suggestion that the issue be referred back to SCUS to provide greater clarity as to the wording of the motion and the rationale, the Chair inquired if the matter was urgent. Senate was informed that since this would take effect in Fall 2008, there was no urgency for resolution at this meeting. There were no objections to the following motion which was moved by P. Percival:

“that the motion be referred back to SCUS to provide greater clarity as to the wording of the motion and the rationale”

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION TO REFER CARRIED

Motion 2

Moved by B. Krane, seconded by C. Percival

“that Senate approve that the admission criteria for applicants transferring from all recognized colleges and universities be as follows: Applicants in good standing from other recognized universities and colleges may be admitted upon completion of at least 24 credit hours of transferable work with a minimum 60% (2.0) average”

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Paper S.07-134 – Undergraduate Curriculum Changes – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course deletions, new courses, revisions to program and degree requirements, and changes to existing courses in the following areas: English, History, Humanities, Linguistics, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology/Anthropology, Latin American Studies, and Women's Studies.

Reference was made to the large list of course changes in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology which seemed to suggest that all of their courses were having changes of title and prerequisite. An inquiry was raised as to whether there was some common element in the change for these courses. Senate was advised by a member of SCUS that it might be because one or two of the lower division courses that had previously been part of the prerequisite requirement were no longer offered.

Secretary's note: The title changes were mainly to make the "S" or "A" designations more easily understood for each course, and the majority of the prerequisite changes were minor changes to clarify and reflect current practice in the department. In addition, the information on Senate paper S.07-134, 8(f) should show 30 courses with a change of title and prerequisite, and 33 courses with a change of prerequisite rather than a total of 63 courses having a change of title and prerequisite.

In response to an inquiry about the title of a new course – WS 317 – Senate was advised that there were no typographical errors in the title of the course and that the wording contained commonly used terms.

C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee

i) Paper S.07-135 – Graduate Curriculum Change – Chemistry (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved the deletion of CHEM 802.

ii) Paper S.07-136 – Graduate Curriculum Change – Geography (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a change in course requirements for the MA program.

iii) Paper S.07-137 – Graduate Curriculum Change – Philosophy (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved changes to the application procedures to reflect internet access, changes to clarify the uses of directed studies and degree completion courses, and a change to the degree requirements for the MA program.

E) Senate Nominating Committee

i) Paper S.07-139 – Elections

Senate was advised that additional nominations had been received resulting in the election by acclamation of Stella Atkins to the Senator at-large position on the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies; and the election of Joe Paling to the Undergraduate Student position on the Diverse Qualifications Adjudication Committee. However, it was pointed out by K. Harding that another nomination (Ben Lee) had been submitted for the undergraduate student position on DQAC, and inquiry was made about this position.

The Secretary of the Senate Nominating Committee apologized for this oversight and confirmed that two nominations had in fact been submitted for DQAC and that an election would have to be held. Since the election could not take place at the meeting, Senators were advised that an on-line vote would be organized for this ballot.

Secretary's note: Subsequent to the meeting, Joe Paling withdrew from the election and Ben Lee was declared elected by acclamation to the Diverse Qualifications Adjudication Committee.

The remaining vacancy for the Senate Committee on International Activities would be carried forward to the next meeting.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Information

The date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of Senate is Monday, December 3, 2008.

Open Session adjourned at 6:15 pm and Senate moved directly into Closed Session.

Alison Watt
Director, University Secretariat