

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY SENATE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on  
Monday, December 1, 2008 at ~~5:30~~ 7:00 pm in Room 3210 WMC

Open Session

Present:

Easton, Stephen, Vice-Chair of Senate  
Arsenault-Antolick, Haida  
Bains, Aman  
Bart, Brad  
Bocking, Natalie  
Brennand, Tracy  
Chapman, Glenn  
Collinge, Joan  
Copeland, Lynn  
Cormack, Lesley  
Dow, Greg  
Driver, Jon  
Fergusson, Andrew  
Fizzell, Maureen  
Francis, June  
Gençay, Ramo  
Gibson, Eli  
Golnaraghi, Farid  
Gordon, Robert  
Hannah, David  
Harding, Kevin  
Hayes, Michael  
Joffres, Michel  
Jones, Colin  
Krane, Bill  
Laba, Martin  
Lee, Benjamin  
Letourneau, Michael  
Leznoff, Daniel  
MacDonald, Camille  
O'Neil, John  
Paling, Joseph  
Parkhouse, Wade  
Patel, Ravi  
Paterson, David (representing S. de Castell)  
Percival, Colin  
Percival, Paul  
Peters, Joseph  
Pinto, Mario  
Plischke, Michael  
Popadiuk, Natalee  
Russell, Robert  
Seal, Brent  
Shapiro, Daniel  
Shermer, Thomas  
Thompson, Steve  
Wakkary, Ron  
Warner, D'Arcy  
Williams, Tony

Absent:

Janes, Craig  
Liljedahl, Peter  
Louie, Brandt  
McArthur, James  
Pavsek, Christopher  
Stevenson, Michael  
Tapia, Earl Von  
Tiffany, Evan  
Vaid, Bhuvinder  
van Baarsen, Amanda  
van der Wey, Dolores

In attendance:

Bennet, Andrew  
Clague, John

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

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of November 3, 2008

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

There was no report from the Chair.

5. Question Period

Senate was advised that Student Senators had been approached by students from across the University concerned about the lack of tutorials, particularly in the Department of Psychology where it appeared all tutorials had been eliminated. Concerns were raised by Student Senators about the impact this change may have on the quality of undergraduate education. The Vice-President Academic indicated that this may reflect the current difficult budget situation but without further details from the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences or the Chair of the Department of Psychology he was not able to address this issue and indicated that he would report back to Senate at the next meeting.

A second issue arose concerning the lack of courses offered in the Summer semester, particularly in the Department of Political Science. Political Science students had been notified that there would only be four upper division classes offered due to lack of funding and concern was expressed about the effect this would have on graduation times. The Vice-President Academic stated that since the budgets for the next fiscal year have not yet been set, it is unlikely that courses were being cancelled on the basis of the budget situation.

A suggestion was made by the Vice-President Academic that future questions relating to course offerings should be backed up with some hard evidence, such as what courses are actually being affected and explicit details about the concerns.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on University Priorities

i) Paper S.08-120 – External Review – Department of Chemistry

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by M. Letourneau

“that Senate approve the recommendations from the Senate Committee on University Priorities concerning advice to the Department of Chemistry and the Dean of Science on priority items resulting from the External Review”

A. Bennet, Chair, Department of Chemistry was in attendance in order to respond to questions.

It was noted by a Senator that the report implied many problems at both the undergraduate and graduate level within the Department, particularly with respect to laboratory conditions, quality of courses offered, and the structure of the graduate program. Inquiry was made as to what efforts were being done to address these issues.

The Chair of the Department responded by summarizing the issues surrounding faculty levels and indicated that if more faculty were available the Department could eliminate the double numbering (graduate/undergraduate) course offerings. It was also noted that because of the way the Co-Op program operates at SFU, first and second year chemistry courses have to be offered three times a year at Burnaby and once a year at the Surrey campus. If the Department were able to reduce the frequency of these offerings, many more fourth year courses and graduate course (with different numbers) could be offered. Senate was advised that the graduate program produces high quality graduate students who last year won the highest number of awards at the National Chemistry Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. With respect to the issue of laboratory conditions and equipment, the Dean is developing a plan to deal with the situation over the next three years.

An opinion was expressed that established programs across the University have all been losing resources as funding has moved into more favoured strategic programs. The result is that across the board budget cuts year after year have harmed the older core disciplines. In addition, the older parts of the University infrastructure suffer proportionately more because there is no funding to refurbish buildings or laboratories. The Shrum Science Building which houses many of the Chemistry laboratories does not meet current standards and is considered to be unsafe by the reviewers. Most of the core programs in Arts and Science are underfunded and the administration is faced with balancing essential needs for expansion of new programs and adequately funding established programs.

With regard to the possibility of a new chemistry building, Senate was advised that the ten year capital plan contains provision for the construction of such a building. Depending on Government priorities, this might possibly be completed by 2013. It was suggested that if the Government were aware of the considerable safety issues of the existing facilities, they might be encouraged to change their priorities and fund a new building.

Further discussion ensued concerning issues such as faculty teaching load, graduate student support, operation of the Co-op program, and the safety issues referred to in the report. The Dean of Science assured Senate that hiring in Chemistry is one of the two highest priorities in the current and upcoming fiscal year.

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

- ii) Paper S.08-121 – Report from the Faculty of Environment Interdisciplinary Programming Committee

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by M. Plischke

“that Senate accepts that the proposed programming for the Environment Faculty satisfies the condition of the motion approved by Senate 7 April 2008 that established that Faculty”

J. Clague, Department of Earth Sciences and Chair of the Faculty of Environment Interdisciplinary Programming Committee, was in attendance in order to respond to questions.

A point of order was raised about the wording of the motion. It was noted that the motion appeared to be inconsistent with the support documentation which refers to the Faculty being provisionally approved with final approval being contingent upon certain conditions.

Discussion took place concerning the intent of the April 2008 Senate motion and revisions to the wording of the motion were suggested. Finally the Chair proposed that the phrase, *'that established the Faculty'* be struck from the motion, a solution that was acceptable to all concerned.

The Vice-President Academic provided background information about the committee process and stated his belief that the motion passed by Senate in April 2008 approved the establishment of the new Faculty on condition of further approval by Senate of the proposed programming. The report before Senate focuses on the proposed programming. SCUP passed two motions reaffirming support for the new Faculty and for the programming proposed by the Committee. The blueprint document describes a governance structure for the new Faculty and provides a timeline for the development of some of the proposed programming. The motion presented to Senate by SCAR essentially states that the proposed programming satisfies the condition of the motion approved by Senate in April 2008 and that the April motion established the Faculty because the establishment was conditional on approval of the programming.

Senate was reminded of some of the issues raised at Senate in April 2008 with regard to the establishment of the new Faculty and views were expressed that the report addresses some but not all of these concerns. Although the Committee did an excellent job and developed an excellent framework for an Environment Faculty, concern lingered about adding a new Faculty at a time of budget deficits, cutbacks to faculty and staff, insufficient funding for graduate students, and course reductions. A question was posed as to whether the new Faculty can realize its potential despite the budgetary reality, and although there is support for the concept of an Environment Faculty, there are serious concerns about investing money in a proposal which may not be sustainable.

A suggestion was made that the funds which were earmarked for the new Faculty could be used elsewhere to create more classes or hire more teaching resources thereby addressing some of the existing concerns. In response to concerns about funding, Senate was reminded that opportunities currently exist in the environmental area to attract new funding and that any relief that is obtained in one sector will provide trickle down effects in other sectors.

It was pointed out that the start up cost for the new Faculty is relatively low. Its creation is expected to galvanize individuals and units in terms of producing synergies and will capitalize and bring together the strengths in this area that currently exist within the University in different Faculties. The University must move forward even in difficult financial times and this is an incredible initiative for SFU which should go forward.

Although there was promise for future development, disappointment was expressed that nothing was being done to improve the environmental science program immediately. It was pointed out that the Committee had insufficient time to reformulate the program but, in the timeline proposed by the Vice President Academic, it was one of the first items to be dealt with.

A concern was expressed that the proposed programming was not possible by the participation of the units within the new Faculty without a considerable number of courses being taught outside the new Faculty. The programming appeared to be set up in an interesting way for an ideal Environment Faculty without considering the people in the Faculty and what they have to offer or how they would be most interested in putting their programming forward.

Given the concerns about funding and whether or not there is sufficient money to create the new Faculty or whether funding should be directed to alleviate some of the existing deficiencies and problems, the following amendment was made:

Amendment moved by C. Percival, seconded by J. Paling

*"that the following be added to the end of the current motion: and advises the Board that Senate considers the creation of the Environment Faculty and associated programming to be a lower academic priority than the integrity of current programs"*

In response to a request that the Chair rule on the admissibility of the amendment, the Chair ruled the amendment was in order.

An opinion was expressed that this was a hostile amendment and it was not a good idea to send to the Board a major initiative which would bring considerable attention to SFU and at the same time tell the Board that Senate considers it a low priority. The wording of the amendment implies that the proposed new Faculty is not equal in academic priority and should only move forward after all other issues in the university have been addressed and opinion was expressed that it was not appropriate to forward such a recommendation to the Board.

It was noted by a Senator that creating a new Faculty simply because of funding opportunities raises an issue of academic freedom by taking away the University's ability to determine its own academic priorities.

It was further stressed that even in tight economic times, the University should move forward smartly and strategically and the creation of the new Faculty provides a unique opportunity to do so.

Question was called on the amendment, and a vote taken.

AMENDMENT FAILED

Brief discussion took place with respect to the proposed name of the new Faculty and the Vice-President, Academic provided background information. Senate was reminded that the constituent members of the new Faculty will develop the name and bring it forward for approval by Senate and the Board of Governors. A concern was expressed that

including the word sustainability in the name would take the Faculty into a number of other areas including Business Administration and Economics.

It was pointed out that the proposed programming implies the status quo with the constituent units providing complementary programs. Concern was expressed that this was not the intent and suggestion was made that Senate should provide a clear statement that new program development is expected with the approval of this motion.

Amendment moved by P. Williams, seconded by M. Pinto

*“that Senate accepts that the proposed programming for the Environment Faculty, including a strong commitment to new program development at both the undergraduate and graduate level, satisfies the condition of the motion approved by Senate 7 April 2008”*

The Chair ruled that discussion and vote on the amendment was in order.

Opinion was expressed that the amendment may disadvantage existing programs. It was noted that the amendment strengthens the motion and provides direction to the units as to Senate's expectations about program development.

Question was called on the amendment,  
and a vote taken.

AMENDMENT CARRIED

An amendment to add at the end of the motion that the name of the Faculty be the Faculty of Environment and Sustainability was ruled out of order by the Chair.

Brief discussion followed in which issues such as the interdisciplinary programming and whether an institute would be the best place to house such programming were raised.

The Vice-President Academic provided the following summary response to some of the concerns and issues raised during debate.

Firstly, on behalf of Senate and the University, he expressed thanks and appreciation to the programming committee for their hard work in producing such a useful and interesting report, and a special acknowledgement was extended to John Clague, Chair of the Committee.

With respect to programming, programs will initially stay the same. There are students in the programs expecting to complete their degrees and there are strong valid disciplines represented that are of considerable value to students and to the research activities of the University. However, that does not mean that new programs will not be developed. There are suggestions for development in the document and units will also have their own ideas about how they wish to develop. Environmental Science is expected to be one of the first priorities with respect to development.

In response to issues raised about the structure of the Faculty, Senate was assured that while it will be governed internally and have a committee structure like every other Faculty, it will be unique in the sense that it will require considerable collaboration

outside the Faculty with units on campus to deal with policy issues and interdisciplinary programming.

The use of the term institute which is quite prominent in the report is somewhat misleading. SFU tends to use the term institute for very specific functions and the programming committee, when referring to an institute, was considering a structure completely different than existing institutes for housing interdisciplinary programs as they develop.

Regarding the issue of funding, the Vice-President Academic felt that it would be imprudent if the University refused to move forward with new initiatives because of budget concerns. The relatively small amount of funding which is required for the start up of the new Faculty will pay off for the units and students that are going to be associated with the Faculty, and for the other areas that will interact with the Faculty.

Question was called on the main motion

as amended, and a vote taken.

MAIN MOTION, AS AMENDED, CARRIED

B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

i) Paper S.08-122 – New Early Learning Specialization (ELS) within the Bachelor of General Studies, Faculty of Education

Moved by B. Krane, seconded by R. Patel

“that Senate approve the Early Learning Specialization program in the Faculty of Education”

A suggestion by P. Percival to change the wording of the motion as follows was accepted:

- “that Senate approve the Early Learning Specialization *stream in the Bachelor of General Studies Program* in the Faculty of Education”

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION, AS AMENDED, CARRIED

ii) Paper S.08-123 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Education (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new courses and minor changes to existing courses in the Faculty of Education.

A discrepancy between the course title for EDUC 332 on Senate paper S.08-122 and Senate paper S.08-123 was noted. Senate was advised that the correct title appeared on paper S.08-123. The Chair indicated that the title would be corrected on paper S.08-122.

iii) Paper S.08-124 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Applied Sciences (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new courses, and/or changes to program requirements and existing courses in the following areas: Engineering Science, Communication, and Computing Science.

iv) Paper S.08-125 – 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 prerequisite changes for courses in the Explorations Program.

v) Paper S.08-126 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Health Sciences (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course deletions, new courses and changes to existing courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

vi) Paper S.08-127 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new courses and changes to program requirements and existing courses in the following areas: Earth Sciences, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Statistics and Actuarial Science, and Management and Systems Science.

C) Senate Committee on Continuing Studies

i) Paper S.08-128 – Annual Report (For Information)

Discussion ensued as to why no information on the Weekend Program NOW which was in its formative stages during the period covered by the report was not included. Senate was advised that decision was made not to include information in the 07/08 report because registration had not yet taken place. Information with respect to current applications and anticipated enrolment for the Spring semester was available to interested Senators. It was suggested that since the mandate of the Committee was to deal with the development of continuing education, both credit and non-credit, items such as the development of the NOW program should be included. Senate was assured that such information would be included in future reports.

Reference was made to the last page of the report wherein it appeared that enrolments in both certificate and diploma programs had decreased by approximately 10%. Senate was advised that although some may have actually dropped, it was more likely due to factors such as programs starting and ending in different reporting periods, the ebb and flow of interests within communities and the marketplace, and a shift made by Continuing Studies in their approach to marketing.

Following discussion, the 2007/08 Annual Report of the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies was received by Senate.

D) Senate Library Committee

i) Paper S.08-129 – Annual Report (For Information)

The 2007/08 Annual Report of the Senate Library Committee was received by Senate for information.

E) Senate Nominating Committee

i) Paper S.08-130 – Election

Senate was advised that one nomination was received to fill the existing vacancy on the Senate Undergraduate Awards Adjudication Committee and C. Loewe is elected by acclamation as the Undergraduate Student Alternate. This concludes the work of the Senate Nominating Committee as all committee positions are currently filled.

7. Other Business

i) Paper S.08-131 – SFU Library Annual Report (For Information)

In response to a concern which was expressed about the cost of producing the Library's annual report, Senate was advised that the document is used not only to report to Senate but to advise donors that their contributions to various funds have been well spent and as a recruitment tool to help raise funds for the Library.

Reference was made to first starred footnote of the first table on page 21 and clarification was requested as to whether the amount mentioned was in fact a dollar amount or a number amount. Senate was advised that dollar sign was incorrect and the figure represented the number of volumes.

It was noted that the tables on pages 21, 22 and 23 implied that there were substantial decreases in electronic subscriptions, collection use and library services. With respect to electronic subscriptions, Senate was advised that the past methods for counting electronic subscriptions were inconsistent and adjustments have been made towards a more consistent method; and, in fact, there were no reductions in a real sense. The use of the Library is actually increasing but being used in different ways. L. Copeland indicated that it would probably be useful in future reports for Senate to receive an explanation as to what the numbers mean to the Library.

Following discussion, the Annual Report of the SFU Library was received by Senate.

ii) Paper S.08-132 – Revision of Policy GP 24 Fair Use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (For Information)

Referring to page 5, section 2.6 on protective measures, inquiry was made how this would effect the operations of the Student Society. It was pointed out that the policy is meant to apply to services that are provided centrally through IT Services and anyone using those services are subject to and governed by the specifications in the policy.

Clarification was requested with respect to Section 2.2.1 regarding decision criteria and who decides as to whether to disclose a user's activity and personal information. Senate was advised that this would be subject to review by staff with expertise in this area in the Office of Legal Affairs.

A concern was expressed that these revisions should have been sent to the Student Society before being presented to Senate and the Board. It was pointed out that announcement of the policy prior to presentation to Senate/Board was distributed to all members of the university community with a request for input.

Reference was made to agreements signed by the Simon Fraser Student Society and the University and suggestion was made that the policy can not be applied to the independent operations of SFSS. It was pointed out that there is overarching policy that relates to the signed Memorandums of Understanding and if, for example, data provided by the University was being misused, the University has the right to investigate the use of that data.

Following discussion, the revised policy was received by Senate.

8. Information

The date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of Senate is Monday, January 12, 2009.

The Open Session adjourned at 9:35 pm, and Senate moved directly into Closed Session.

Alison Watt  
Director, University Secretariat