

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY SENATE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, September 14, 2009 at 7:00 pm in Room 3210 WMC
Open Session

Present

Stevenson, Michael, President and Chair of Senate

Bezglasnyy, Anton
Chiu, Christina
Copeland, Lynn
Cormack, Lesley
Dow, Greg
Driver, Jon
Easton, Stephen
Fizzell, Maureen
Francis, June
Funt, Elliot
Godson, Ali
Gordon, Robert
Hannah, David
Harding, Kevin
Haunerland, Norbert (representing M. Pinto)
Krane, Bill
Laba, Martin
Lee, Shara
Leznoff, Daniel
Li, Fiona
Magnusson, Kris
Mathewes, Rolf (representing M. Plischke)
Moubarak, Cristel
Myers, Gordon
Nadison, Ada
Nesbit, Tom
Noble, Cameron
O'Neil, John
Parkhouse, Wade
Patel, Ravi
Paterson, David
Pavsek, Christopher
Percival, Colin
Percival, Paul
Peters, Joseph
Pierce, John
Rajapakse, Nimal
Ruben, Peter
Russell, Robert
Scott, Jamie
Shapiro, Daniel
Thompson, Steve
Tiffany, Evan
van der Wey, Dolores
Wakkary, Ron
Warner, D'Arcy
Williams, Tony
Woodbury, Rob
Zelezny, Joseph

Absent

Beale, Alison
Brennand, Tracy
Chapman, Glenn
Geisler, Cheryl
Gibson, Eli
Golnaraghi, Farid
Hiscocks, Graham
Janes, Craig
Joffres, Michel
Louie, Brandt
MacGrotty, Alysia
McArthur, James
Sahinalp, Cenk

In attendance:

Anderson, Gail
Beauregard, Erick
Busumtwi-Sam, James
Gandesha, Samir
Guthrie, Larry
Hibbitts, Pat
Mezei, Kathy
Pochurko, Martin

Ross, Kate, Registrar and Secretary of Senate
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 July 6, 2009

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

The Chair welcomed the following to their first meeting of Senate in their official capacity as Dean: Kris Magnusson, Dean, Faculty of Education; John Pierce, first Dean of the new Faculty of Environment; Tom Nesbit, Interim Dean of Continuing Studies; and Cheryl Geisler, first Dean of the new Faculty of Communication, Art & Technology. The Chair also welcomed all Senators to the beginning of a new academic year.

Although a detailed report on enrolment was not available at this point, the Chair reported that both the domestic and international undergraduate enrolment was above expectations, and he wished to extend thanks to everyone from Student Services through to faculty and staff members in Faculties/Departments for the success of the recruitment cycle.

The Chair also extended a special note of thanks to the Student Society and to the student volunteers for their tremendous contribution in making this Fall's Orientation for new students such a success.

Commenting on recent press releases about the Provincial budget, the Chair reported that in comparison to many other public sectors, advanced education has been relatively well protected in that revisions to the earlier pre-election budget are minimal. The Chair pointed out however that advanced education is not entirely unaffected. Firstly, there has been a one-third cut to the ancillary capital budget which means that some urgent capital renovations and/or maintenance will not go forward this year, and secondly, there has been a global cut to student financial assistance, but again, the affect on university students at research institutions is not as great as at other post-secondary institutions. Because of the University's legal obligation to accommodate disabled students, cuts in this area will have to be picked up by the University. Cuts to the Michael Smith Foundation will affect funding for appointments and other research activities and collaborations at the research universities, and one of the biggest concerns is that transfers to post-secondary institutions will be frozen for the next three years which means that the costs of inflation will have to be absorbed through adjustments to expenses in the operating budget.

The Chair announced that consultations within the University will begin in the near future to address the difficulties of the budget cuts and how to respond to a freeze in funding over the next two to three years.

i) Paper S.09-96 – Annual Financial Report (For Information)

P. Hibbitts, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, M. Pochurko, Associate Vice-President, Financial Services, and L. Guthrie, Director, Accounting Services, were in attendance in order to respond to questions.

Senators were reminded that the financial statements for last year were greatly impacted by what happened to world markets. The market has improved and some recovery has already been made this year. It was pointed out that the other important factor to note is that the University has now received funding to pay off expenses from last year related to the Faculty Exit Program which also impacted last year's loss.

It was noted that the University's expenses were much larger than the University's revenue and that the University's balance sheet was very much out of line between its current assets and its current liabilities, and inquiry was made as to whether there was a liquidity problem. It was pointed out that the investment loss, together with the expense for the faculty exit program, mostly accounted for the difference between revenue and expenses and that attempts were being made to put the balance sheet in better shape. Senate was assured that there was no liquidity problem and that the basic operations of the University were in balance. It was pointed out however that the budget for scholarships, awards and bursaries was over spent last year which created a significant variance in this area of funding.

Given the over spending from last year, and the current financial constraints this year, inquiry was made as to the impact this would have on financial assistance to students. Senate was advised that the issue of scholarships, awards and bursaries will be given serious discussion and consideration during budget consultation and deliberations. Brief discussion took place with respect to the over spending of the scholarship budget. The Chair stated that acceptance offers on scholarships was greater than anticipated and the surplus on spending from the year before contributed to the variance. As a result, the University chose to run a deficit which could be corrected in the future rather than turn away scholarship students.

Reference was made to the decrease in endowment investment and the income stabilization reserve. It was noted that most endowments have conditions attached to support and benefit specific programs, and concern was expressed about the University committing to endowments which support targeted areas that may end up putting areas without endowment support at a disadvantage. Senate was reminded that the University was contractually bound by the terms of reference for endowments but that money from endowments represented a very small proportion of the total budget so this would not have serious affect on other areas. With respect to the income stabilization reserve, suggestion was made that the University may want to consider increasing funds to offset future fluctuations so that the fund doesn't get completely wiped out as it did last year. It was noted that the current focus was to bring the stabilization reserve fund back up to where it was and that some recovery had already been made. It was pointed out that increased funding to the stabilization reserve fund would have to come out of the

operating budget so there was a trade off between whether to build the reserve bigger or add income to the operating budget.

Referring to the differences between the amounts for revenue and expenses on page 9 versus the amounts shown on page 25, inquiry was made as to how they match up against each other. Senate was advised that the information on page 9 was a very high level of data consolidation which is broken down in more detail on page 25 and that there is an alignment between the two sets of information behind the scenes. The Chair suggested that anyone interested in a particular reconciliation contact Financial Services for further details.

Following discussion, the Annual Financial Statements were accepted by Senate.

5. Question Period

Inquiry was made as to why enrolments went over target, and request was made that a report showing head count and FTE numbers be provided at the next meeting. The Vice-President, Academic agreed to provide a report on enrolment at the next Senate meeting.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on International Activities

i) Paper S.09-97 – Change to membership and terms of reference of SCIA, and dissolution of the International Student Exchange Committee (ISEC)

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by J. Francis

Motion 1 and 2:

“that Senate approve the proposed changes to SCIA membership and terms of reference, effective immediately; and that Senate approve the dissolution of the International Student Exchange Committee (ISEC), effective immediately”

J. Busumtwi-Sam, Chair of the Senate Committee on International Activities, was in attendance in order to respond to questions.

In response to a request for a more detailed rationale, it was pointed that it was SCIA's primary responsibility to provide oversight for all formal exchange agreements and international activities. However, such agreements were currently only going to ISEC and once that responsibility was transferred to SCIA, ISEC was no longer needed. In addition, ISEC was meeting approximately twice a year to deal with routine administrative issues that could easily be dealt with by SFU International, and it was felt by both committees that it would be better to streamline and centralize the decision-making in SCIA.

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

B) Senate Committee on University Priorities

i) Paper S.09-98 – Dissolution of the B.C. Synchrotron Institute

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by D. Hannah

“that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the proposal to dissolve the B.C. Synchrotron Institute as a Schedule A Centre based in the Department of Physics within the Faculty of Science”

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Paper S.09-99 – Creation of the Centre for Research on Sexual Violence

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by R. Gordon

“that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the creation of the Centre for Research on Sexual Violence as a Schedule A Centre based in the School of Criminology within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences”

E. Beauregard, School of Criminology, was in attendance in order to respond to questions.

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iii) Paper S.09-100 – New Program: Certificate in Police Studies

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by R. Gordon

“that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors, the proposal for a Certificate in Police Studies in the School of Criminology within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences”

G. Anderson, School of Criminology, was in attendance in order to respond to questions.

In response to an inquiry as to whether a similar program offered by the Justice Institute of B.C. would have the same target audience, Senate was advised that the JIBC program was vocational rather than academic and would not be considered similar.

It was noted that the program was targeted to police officers and other members of the criminal justice system and inquiry was made as to how these off campus groups would be admitted to the program. Senate was advised that anyone wishing to take this program would apply to the University and be admitted through any of the normal admission categories so they would be SFU students but not necessarily in a degree program.

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iv) Paper S.09-101 – New Program: Master of Arts in Humanities

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by K. Harding

“that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors, the proposal for a MA in Humanities in the Department of Humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences”

S. Gandesha and K. Mezei, both from the Department of Humanities, were in attendance in order to respond to questions.

Question was called, and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

C) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studiesi) Paper S.09-102 – Faculty of Business Administration: Curriculum Revisions (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a revision to the eligibility calculation for admission of Category 2, 3 and 4 students, a revision to the honors requirements, and the extension of the SFU Business Broad Based Admission Pilot program for Fall 2010.

ii) Paper S.09-103 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Education (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved the reinstatement of two temporarily withdrawn courses in the Faculty of Education.

iii) Paper S.09-104 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a change to the upper division requirements and electives to reflect a revision from four streams to three streams.

D) Senate Graduate Studies Committeei) Paper S.09-105 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Health Sciences (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved minor revisions to existing courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

ii) Paper S.09-106 – Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course and a change to the course work requirements.

C) Senate Nominating Committeei) Paper S.09-107 – Elections

The Secretary reported that no further nominations had been received so the names as shown on Senate Paper S.09-107 were declared elected by acclamation. Outstanding vacancies would be carried forward to the next meeting of Senate.

7. Other Businessi) Paper S.09-108 – SFU Academic Vision, Outcomes and Vice-President Academic Goals for 2013 (For Information)

Referring to the bulleted list on page 4, it was noted that some points start with a noun, others with an action verb and suggestion was made that the items listed should be grammatically consistent.

The Vice-President Academic introduced the document by explaining that the document went through a fairly public consultative process and that the final report before Senate was a result of that process. Since the planning process itself is mandated by Senate, it was felt that it would be useful to bring the document to Senate's attention and let Senate know that there had been a slight deviation from the normal practice. Rather than beginning the planning process at the departmental level, which would then go through the Faculty to the Vice President Academic, the process started with consultation that resulted in some general goals and visions for the next three years. Departments and Faculties were now being asked to take these general statements into consideration as they begin to prepare their individual plans for the next few years.

Concern was expressed about the term 'relevant' in the last point on page 8 under the section 'Outcomes 2013'. It was pointed out that the term was of concern to a lot of faculty, especially those teaching in humanistic disciplines where relevance is not necessarily apparent, and the term was felt to be potentially threatening to those disciplines especially in times of budget constraints. It was suggested that a vision statement should have included a statement that defends and advocates the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

With regard to the public consultation process, it was pointed out that junior faculty were only given two or three days notice prior to the public meeting so it was very difficult for a lot of faculty to attend. However, one of the most important things brought up which was very important for all junior faculty who attended the meeting, was that there was no mention under the review of pedagogy on page 7, of face to face instruction with real students in real classrooms. It was felt that the academic vision of SFU should reaffirm its commitment to small classes and suggestion was made that the VPA be more emphatic about SFU's commitment to these principles of pedagogy.

J. Driver explained his belief that research by faculty members need not necessarily be applied research but faculty should be able to justify its value for society in general. With respect to in person education, it was pointed out that this type of instruction currently dominates the University. Section 4.1 simply was there to provide support for faculty

and/or departments who want to experiment with new teaching methods. This was not an attempt to determine what the pedagogy should be for the University.

It was noted that the term interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary appear throughout the document and opinion was expressed that the University should be working towards interdisciplinary programming in order to preserve resources and maximize their use in innovative ways. Currently there are administrative roadblocks and it was hoped that during the planning process units would not only look at their own research strengths but also research strengths that could be build upon with other units across the university.

The Vice President Academic stated that there was considerable interest among the Faculties for more collaboration and sharing of resources and skills and that consideration was being given to find ways of rewriting policies to make the sharing of activities across the University easier.

Although there was ample opportunity for students to participate in the broad vision, there appeared to be a problem in the creation of the three-year plans in some departments where students were not given an opportunity for input. An opinion was expressed that when reference to students and their best interest are included in planning statements, the University may be doing itself a disservice when opportunity for student input is not provided. It was pointed out that most departments have graduate and undergraduate student representation on curriculum committees and there would be opportunity for input as plans unfold and curriculum is reviewed. Opinion was reiterated that students should also be part of the initial planning process, not just after a plan has been developed and is under review.

Reference was made to the recent circulation of the Strategic Research Plan and suggestion was made that the research plan should have some connection to the academic plan and it was hoped that attempts would be made to connect the two. The Chair stated that this same issue has been brought forward with respect to other planning documents such as the President's plan, financial planning and the strategic enrolment plan, and the need to bring these activities into a more coherent interface was acknowledged by the Chair.

Brief discussion continued with respect to the term relevance, and applied research versus other research. The Vice-President Academic stressed the fact that the document was before Senate for information only; that other than the grammatical corrections mentioned earlier, the document would not be rewritten, and academic plans for the various units and for the University as a whole will be developed as a result of taking the general statements from the document into consideration.

8. Information

The date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of Senate is Monday, October 5, 2009.

The Open Session adjourned at 8:25 pm, and Senate moved directly into Closed Session.

Kate Ross
Registrar and Secretary of Senate