

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY SENATE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, October 5, 2009 at 5:30 pm in Room 3210 WMC

Open Session

Present

Stevenson, Michael, President and Chair of Senate

Beale, Alison
Bezglasnyy, Anton
Brennand, Tracy
Chapman, Glenn
Chiu, Christina
Copeland, Lynn
Cormack, Lesley
Dow, Greg
Driver, Jon
Easton, Stephen
Francis, June
Geisler, Cheryl
Gibson, Eli
Gordon, Robert
Hiscocks, Graham
Janes, Craig
Laba, Martin
Lee, Shara
Leznoff, Daniel
MacGrotty, Alysia
Magnusson, Kris
Myers, Gordon
Nadison, Ada
Parkhouse, Wade
Patel, Ravi
Paterson, David
Percival, Colin
Percival, Paul
Peters, Joseph
Pierce, John
Pinto, Mario
Plischke, Michael
Rajapakse, Nimal
Russell, Robert
Sahinalp, Cenk
Scott, Jamie
Sahpiro, Daniel
Tabin, Yvonne (representing T. Nesbit)
Tiffany, Evan
van der Wey, Dolores
Warner, D'Arcy
Williams, Tony
Zeletzny, Joseph

Absent

Fizzell, Maureen
Funt, Elliott
Godson, Ali
Golnaraghi, Farid
Hannah, David
Harding, Kevin
Joffres, Michel
Krane, Bill
Li, Fiona
Louie, Brandt
Marshall, Beth
McArthur, James
Moubarak, Cristel
Noble, Cameron
O'Neil, John
Pavsek, Christopher
Ruben, Peter
Thompson, Steve
Underhill, Owen
Wakkary, Ron
Woodbury, Rob

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 September 14, 2009

Reference was made to the fourth paragraph on page 3. Opinion was expressed that although the Chair's statement was recorded correctly, it was somewhat incorrect and should be clarified. The Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards & Bursaries was aware last year at the beginning of the fiscal year that the scholarship budget would be overspent. Although the Chair felt that his statement was not inconsistent with the opinion expressed, the difference of view would be noted for clarification. In reference to the same paragraph, the Secretary of Senate was asked to make corrections to the grammar. A misspelling of Senator Francis' name on page 4 was also noted for correction.

Following the above-noted corrections and clarification, the Minutes were approved.

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

i) Paper S.09-114 – Report on Enrolment

The Vice-President Academic introduced the report by providing background information with respect to the situation which resulted in over enrolment for the current semester. Senate was advised that there were a number of unpredictable factors which affected the University's ability to estimate the targets, particularly the number of domestic and international students accepting offers and the number of returning students from the previous year.

Reference was made to Table 4 and inquiry was made as to the reason why the number of domestic students going into the Faculty of Science appeared to be lower than the target for Science. It was pointed out that the grade point cutoff between Health Sciences and Science was not harmonized. Therefore, students whose first choice was Science but could not get into Science entered Health Sciences instead. Since many of these students take the same Science courses the FTE course enrolments in Science were at capacity. In future semesters, the GPA cutoff in Science and Health Sciences would be harmonized which hopefully would correct some of the imbalance.

A concern was expressed about the impact of over enrolment on existing students who were already struggling to get the courses they need. Senate was informed that the increase in enrolment resulted in an increase of tuition fees. Some of this revenue would be allotted to Faculties in the Spring and Summer semesters in order to increase course capacity to help deal with the bulge in enrolment for this year. However, Senate was reminded that this bulge in enrolment will have to work its way through the system over the next several years so this will be an ongoing problem.

In response to an inquiry as to whether there were any plans to increase the entry GPA, Senate was informed that there were no current plans but the issue needs to be reviewed. A small change of even one percent can have significant impact on whether enrolment is under or over target so some modeling exercises need to be done before SCEMP can make any recommendation in this regard.

In response to requests for additional enrolment data on issues such as gender balance, anomalies by Faculty, and distribution on GPA averages and ranges, Senate was reminded that much of this information is already available on the web site of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP). The web site provides a wide range of updated information about students and their participation in various areas of the University, and Senators were encouraged to review the IRP web site for the information they were seeking.

Brief discussion took place with respect to GPA averages and grading. It was pointed out that there is a 'grading report' on the IRP web site which provides information about grading in different departments and Faculties. The data also provides a sense of what the trends are in the University.

Post Meeting Note: Clarification was made that the discussion on grades related to information on averages for high school grades which was not currently available on the IRP website.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Library Committee and Library Penalties Appeal Committee

i) Paper S.09-109 – Annual Report (For Information)

Senate received the 2008/2009 Annual Report of the Senate Library Committee, including a report from the Library Penalties Appeal Committee, for information.

B) Senate Graduate Studies Committee

i) Paper S.09-110 – Faculty of Applied Sciences – Curriculum Revisions (For Information)

Senate's attention was drawn to the first bullet in the document. It was noted that the specific name of the program – Computing Science – which was essential information was missing from the documentation. In addition, opinion was expressed that this item was a major change to a program and should have been brought to Senate for approval. The Dean of Graduate Studies advised Senate that consultation about this issue with SCUP had determined that this was a repackaging of existing courses which did not require approval and therefore it was forwarded to Senate for information. P. Percival wished to register his disagreement on the point.

Following the above-noted discussion, the curriculum changes to Computing Science approved by the Senate Graduate Studies Committee under delegated authority were received by Senate.

ii) Paper S.09-111 – Faculty of Education – Curriculum Revisions (For Information)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved curriculum changes to existing courses and programs in the Faculty of Education.

C) Senate Nominating Committee

i) Paper S.09-112 Revised – Elections

Senate's attention was drawn to the revised Senate paper which had been distributed prior to the start of the meeting. The Secretary reported that additional nominations were noted on the paper and that an election was required for an undergraduate student to DQAC. An online ballot would take place following the Senate meeting. All other names as shown on Senate Paper S.09-112 Revised were declared elected by acclamation. Outstanding vacancies would be carried forward to the next meeting of Senate.

Post-meeting note: The online ballot resulted in the election of Anna Shoemaker for the Undergraduate Student position on the Diverse Qualifications Adjudication Committee (DQAC) for term of office to May 31, 2010.

7. Other Business

i) Paper S.09-113 – Process to Review Agreement with Fraser International College (For Information)

The Vice-President, Academic introduced the paper by providing brief background information. In March 2006 Senate approved the academic affiliation with FIC and required the Vice-President, Academic to prepare a report due in June 2010 prior to renewal of the affiliation. A list of review topics requested by Senate are outlined in the document before Senate, as are a number of additional issues which the VPA felt needed to be addressed. The review process was also described in the document. Essentially, an external review analogous to the process used for external reviews of academic departments will be used. The review will be initiated by a self study which will primarily be prepared by the Vice-President Academic's office and the review team will then be given the self study and a set of terms of reference. Expectations are that the review will be sent to Senate by next June or earlier, and the list of documents which Senate will receive are listed in the last paragraph on page 3.

Clarification was requested with respect to what was meant by the specification that members of the review team must have expertise in international education, and by the condition that members have no previous involvement with FIC. Senate was advised that the specification for expertise in international education was deliberately vague and could relate to a number of things such as people involved in recruitment of international students, or people doing research on international students in North America. With regard to the condition about no previous involvement with FIC, the intent was to have people on the review team that are as far removed from the relationship with FIC as

possible. Ideally it would not include faculty members in departments that have a lot of interaction with FIC and would not include anyone in any kind of administrative or oversight position.

Concern was expressed that excluding faculty from departments that are closely associated with FIC, eliminates people with the most expertise in areas where the majority of students are coming from. It was pointed out that academic units involved with FIC will be consulted with regard to their relationship and experience with FIC so the opinion and experience of these units will be given serious consideration in the review process.

Support was expressed for modeling the review process on the external review process of other academic units, and the Vice-President, Academic was complimented on what appears to be a very sound approach to this review.

Returning to the issue of qualifications for review team members, the Vice-President, Academic wished to seek the advice of Senate on having non-faculty as members of the review team. He explained that in anticipation of getting the process started, he had begun looking for potential members and, going outside the University, had been referred to individuals who are not faculty members but are heavily involved in international post secondary education. The document before Senate specifies that the review team would consist of faculty members. Senate's advice was sought on the advisability of including non-faculty individuals who have a professional interest in international education, such as a Director of the Office of International Students at a university, or someone who works for a major national or international development agency. Following a brief discussion, it was determined that the majority view of Senate was that the review team should consist of faculty members.

8. Information

The date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of Senate is Monday, November 2, 2009.

The Chair reminded Senators of the upcoming Convocation ceremonies on October 8th and 9th, 2009 and encouraged as many Senators as possible to attend.

The Open Session adjourned at 6:09 pm, and Senate moved directly into Closed Session.

Kate Ross
Registrar and Secretary of Senate