

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

MEMO

ATTENTION: Senate

FROM: Jonathan Driver, Vice-President, Academic & Provost

RE: Process to Review Agreement with Fraser International College

DATE: September 15, 2009

A review of the operations of Fraser International College, and their impacts on Simon Fraser University, must be undertaken prior to the end date of the current contract term. The term of the current contract ends March 31, 2011.

At the March 2006 meeting of Senate at which the academic affiliation with IBT Ltd (now Navitas), the parent company of FIC was proposed, the following commitments were made as part of the motion to approve the agreement with FIC.

By June 2010, the Vice-President Academic will prepare a report for Senate with a recommendation on whether the FIC affiliation agreement should be renewed in March 2011. The report will address the following issues:

1. *The academic performance of students who transfer from FIC to SFU;*
2. *The number of students who transfer to SFU, their country of origin, the programs into which they transfer, and the number who transfer to other institutions;*
3. *Actions taken by SFU to increase its own international student recruitment and increase undergraduate student retention;*
4. *An analysis of increases to Departmental workloads resulting from academic oversight of FIC;*
5. *Any concerns that FIC instructors have regarding working conditions;*
6. *The use of funds received by SFU as a consequence of the FIC affiliation.*

The commitment was made that the report containing the information above would be provided to Senate in sufficient time so that the findings would form part of the overall discussion about renewal of the relationship with the College.

As part of its regular business, the SFU-FIC Academic Advisory Committee produces

annual reports to Senate, expecting that information included in the reports would form a key part of a larger report, prior to contract renewal. Thus far, two annual reports (reflecting the 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 academic years) have been produced and forwarded to Senate. A third annual report will be produced in Fall, 2009.

Although a detailed process for review of the academic aspects of the SFU-FIC relationship has not yet been finalized, in addition to addressing the questions above, the review will include:

- data on enrollments, retention, transfers and graduation rates;
- feedback from FIC students (current, and transferred to SFU);
- data from a survey of FIC instructors;
- evaluation data from SFU departmental Course Coordinators;
- feedback from SFU's participating departments; and
- a summary of feedback received from consultations with the SFU community (consultations to be led by the Vice-President Academic and the Associate Vice-President Students and International in fall 2009).

SFU has lengthy and positive experience with the process of regular external review of academic units. The ER is a useful model to adopt for the review of the relationship with FIC. Adapting and utilizing this model, with external and internal reviewers working with terms of reference related to the questions above, would provide my office and Senate with an objective review of how the relationship with FIC is working. A document paralleling a department "self-study" would be prepared by staff of the VPA's office prior to the review, supplemented by survey data and information collected from community consultations, Institutional Research and Planning, SFU International, Student Services, FIC, and from academic units involved in offering courses at FIC. SFU and FIC would need to reach agreement regarding the composition of the review team.

It is anticipated that the review process would take place early in the 2009- 2010 academic year, thereby allowing sufficient time for the necessary information to be collected and compiled for discussion at Senate no later than June, 2010.

Draft Terms of Reference for the Review

The purpose of the external review process is to examine the extent to which:

- The quality of FIC's teaching is high and there are measures in place to ensure standards are maintained at SFU levels or better;
- The quality of the student experience at FIC is high, and students leave FIC well prepared for study at SFU;
- FIC is meeting the recruitment objectives agreed to with SFU in the affiliation agreement;

- The qualifications and working conditions of FIC instructors are comparable to those of SFU sessional instructors;
- There are adequate resources and facilities provided to support teaching, including laboratory equipment, computing, and preparation space;
- The involvement of SFU instructors in quality assurance processes is reasonable in terms of work load;
- SFU academic units involved with FIC are satisfied with the relationship, the processes, and the funds provided to the department by the VPA office.

The Review Committee will address the specific questions required by Senate, assess the academic and administrative linkages between SFU and FIC, and comment on strengths and weaknesses, on opportunities for change and/or improvement, and on quality and effectiveness including safeguards for academic standards.

The Review Committee should make essential, formal, prioritized recommendations that address major issues, with reference to the resources available and to the objectives described in the SFU-FIC partnership agreement.

Review team members will be chosen according to the following principles:

- Faculty members with expertise in international education or international issues
- No administrative role at SFU at the level of Chair or higher
- No previous involvement with Fraser International College or Navitas Education Ltd.
- A minimum of three reviewers, with at least one internal and one external reviewer

In summary, Senate can expect to receive the following documents when it considers the recommendation from the Vice-President Academic concerning the advisability of renewing, modifying, or not renewing the relationship between SFU and FIC:

- Three annual reports to Senate
- A self-study document containing data relevant to a review of the SFU-FIC relationship
- The instructions to the external review team
- The report of the external review team
- A response to the external review from the Vice-President Academic