



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Tuesday, May 19, 2015 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)

Open Session

Present: Andrew Petter, Chair

Arzanpour, Siamak
Birmingham, Elina
Brennand, Tracy
Budra, Paul
Bueckert, Chardaye
Burley, David
Chong, Dion
Chu, Colin
Craig, John
Curry, Joanne
Delgrande, Jim
Driver, Jon
Eikerling, Michael
Escarcha, Shirin
Gajdics, Sylvia
Glässer, Uwe (for N. Rajapakse)
Goldner, Elliot (for J. O'Neil)
Guttman, Julian
Johnson, Joy
Jozaghi, Ehsan
Laitsch, Dan
Leacock, Tracey
Leznoff, Daniel
Liljedahl, Peter (for W. Parkhouse)
Liu, Ting (Emma)
Magnusson, Kris
McTavish, Rob
Myers, Gordon
Owen, Brian (for G. Bird)
Pappas, Panayiotis
Percival, Colin
Percival, Paul
Quarmby, Lynne
Reich, Blaize
Simpkin, Madelaine
Spector, Stephen
Stefanovic, Ingrid
Szymczyk, Barbara
Tingling, Peter
Underhill, Owen

Absent:

Abramson, Neil
Antle, Alissa
Chapman, Brandon
Chapman, Glenn
Chapman, Nicholas
Cupples, Claire
Easton, Stephen
Elle, Elizabeth
Flodr, Sarah-Sophia
Giardini, Anne
Hedley, Nick
Kessler, Anke
Ossinsky, Dimitri
Paterson, David
Pilarinos, Athina
Ruben, Peter
Schellenberg, Betty
Shaw, Chris
Somers, Julian
Wallace, Brady
Wiese, Kay
Yoon, Paul

In Attendance:

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session on April 13, 2015

The minutes of the open session on April 13, 2015 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, on behalf of Senate, expressed appreciation to the following senators whose terms of office expire on May 31, 2015: Alissa Antle; Chardaye Bueckert; David Burley; Brandon Chapman; Nicholas Chapman; Colin Chu; James Delgrande; Elizabeth Elle; Shirin Escarcha; Kayode Fatoba; Sarah-Sophia Flodr; Ehsan Jozaghi; Ting Liu; Dimitri Ossinsky; Athina Pilarinos; Lynne Quarmby; Peter Ruben; Betty Schellenberg; Madelaine Simpkin; Paul Yoon.

The Chair noted that the call for nominations for faculty and student positions on Senate will close on May 25th. There are 12 faculty senator vacancies to be elected from the faculties of Applied Sciences; Communication, Art & Technology; Environment; Health Sciences; Science; and from the faculties jointly. There are two student vacancies, one in Education and one in Health Sciences.

The Chair reported on the federal budget, which includes enhancements in student assistance – extending eligibility for students in short-duration programs and reducing the threshold on what parents are expected to contribute to their child’s post-secondary education costs. The budget includes new investments for skills training, including support to expand the scope of the Mitacs Accelerate program that funds industrial research and development internships for graduate students and post-docs.

The Chair reported on research funding news. The Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) announced a six-year commitment of \$1.33 billion starting in 2017/18 to support advanced research infrastructure at universities, colleges and research hospitals. The Government of Canada has renewed its support for TRIUMF by providing an additional \$45 million in funding, which will result in a total of \$267 million over the next five years for the world-leading particle and nuclear physics research centre.

The Chair reported that the RBC Foundation made a \$1.3 million gift to fund the RBC First Peoples Enterprise Accelerator program, facilitated by RADIUS, the social innovation lab and venture incubator, in partnership with the EMBA in Aboriginal Business and Leadership program in the Beedie School of Business. In addition, \$300,000 of the gift will be allocated to provide \$30,000 per year in scholarships over the next 10 years, through the RBC Award in Aboriginal Business and Leadership, to enable Aboriginal undergraduate and graduate students to take advantage of SFU’s innovation and entrepreneurship programs.

The Chair reported that SFU ranked within the world’s top universities in half of the diverse subject areas of the QS World University Rankings, with Communication and Media Studies ranked third in Canada and Geography ranked seventh in Canada. In the 2015 Times Higher Education 100 Under 50, SFU’s score for research and citations rose slightly higher over 2014.

The Chair noted that Globe and Mail columnist Doug Saunders recently wrote that government should be investing more in universities. Saunders cites evidence that shows that those with a university degree are gaining increased value in terms of recognition by a number of indicators and that there will be job shortages in areas requiring university qualifications. The Chair noted that post-secondary funding in BC has been cut for the past three years.

5. Question Period

i) A question was submitted by the student caucus of Senate regarding the recent student satisfaction ratings published in MacLean's magazine, with specific reference to declining international student satisfaction at SFU. The student caucus felt that international student undergraduate tuition increases are contributing to this issue. They provided the case of the University of Edinburgh, whose international students faced similar financial hardship. With pressure from international students, the university fixed international student tuition fees for the duration of a student's normal degree.

The student caucus proposed that if SFU was to fix tuition fees for international students in a similar manner it would meaningfully improve the international student experience and SFU's international student reputation. The student caucus posed the following question to Senate:

"Will SFU consider and be open to dialogue regarding this proposed change?"

Senator Driver responded to the question, and clarified that the Board of Governors, and not Senate, is responsible for setting tuition fees. Senate was informed that the international student fee changes were first announced in Fall 2012 during the budget consultation process and that it was made clear that this was a three-year planned increase. This information was presented at subsequent budget consultations in 2013 and 2014. In 2014, the student societies asked SFU to reconsider the final year's increase. There was a dialogue on this request between the Vice-President Academic and the student society, and the matter was discussed further at the Board of Governors; however, at the March 2015 meeting the Board approved the final year's increase.

In terms of the issue of financial hardship, Senate was informed that 25% of the increased revenues have been committed to support international students: a bursary fund for international students, and increased staffing levels in Student Services and improved programs that support international students. Senate was informed that the tuition fee increases over the past three years have brought SFU in line with other comparable universities in British Columbia.

In terms of grandfathering or guaranteeing fees for the duration of a student's program, Senator Driver made the following points: guaranteeing fees does not mean the costs will remain constant because international exchange rates fluctuate; SFU would have to set international fees at a higher level to provide a guarantee fee (noting that the University of Edinburgh's international undergraduate fees are set at between \$28,000 to \$37,000 per year, with no provision for financial assistance); SFU would incur additional administrative costs and increased staff workloads to maintain a system where individual students pay different fees from one another; and the provincial government does not permit grandfathering of domestic fees, so there could be situations where domestic students may see tuition fee increases, whereas international students would not.

Senate was informed that as a result of representation from the student societies, particularly the SFSS, a new policy for consultation around student fees has been negotiated and will be implemented for the next budget consultation.

A comment was made that section 37-1(o) of the University Act states that Senate has the power “to make recommendations to the board considered advisable for promoting the interests of the university”, and so Senate is empowered to advise on any matter, including those under the jurisdiction of the board.

A comment was made that SFU had at one time grandfathered international student fees and that it is possible to manage such a system.

A comment was made that international exchange rates are an externality beyond SFU’s control and does not add to the discussion.

A comment was made that there is a disconnect between the cost of the service and the service that is provided, such as in the Beedie School of Business where there are additional costs for international student support, but it is not clear if the additional tuition revenue is flowing to Business. Senate was informed that if the international tuition is higher the faculties would get an increase in the resources they receive.

The Chair noted that the Board of Governors does take the representations of the student societies very seriously and did make some of the changes, which Senator Driver mentioned in his response.

ii) Three questions were submitted by Senator Leznoff regarding the proposal to provide land in Discovery Park for a private chiropractic college in exchange for funding and expansion to Athletics and Recreation facilities. Senator Leznoff asked the following:

1. *Has the university entered into an agreement as a result of the consultation?*
2. *If so, when can we expect to see a new building at Discovery Park and when will an extension to the gym be constructed?*
3. *If so, how will the university ensure that the chiropractic school is not associated with SFU, in order to minimize the substantial reputational damage of being associated with a profession based on much less rigorous evidence than other areas of healthcare?*

In response to the first question, the Chair informed Senate that the Board of Governors approved SFU and Collegiate Infrastructure Solutions (CIS) entering into a letter of intent, whereby SFU will provide a 65-year ground lease to CIS in exchange for a 50,000 square foot recreation and athletics facility. In July 2014, the University executed the letter of intent with the developer, CIS.

In response to the second question, Senate was informed that the BC Chiropractic Association (BCCA) is currently working with the province to determine programs, accreditation, and funding. Planning and design will commence when the agreement between the BCCA and the developer, CIS, is completed, at which time SFU would resume the letter of intent.

In response to the third question, Senate was informed that the language in the letter of intent prohibits the BCCA from suggesting any affiliation with SFU, with the expectation that this language would be reflected in any subsequent lease agreement that is negotiated.

A question was asked whether there was a legal reason of confidentiality for not communicating the approval of the letter of intent to the University community. Senate was informed that the letter of intent is the start of negotiations; there are still further details to be negotiated, including the timeline for the proposed project. Until those details are worked out and there is certainty that this project is moving forward and under what terms, it would not be prudent to make an announcement.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

i) Revised Membership for Electoral Standing Committee (ESC) (S.15-68)

Moved by D. Leznoff, seconded by P. Percival

“That Senate approve the revised membership for the Electoral Standing Committee (ESC) effective immediately.”

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

B) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

i) Annual Report (S.15-69)

Senate received for information the Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) Annual Report for 2014-2015.

C) Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL)

i) Annual Report (S.15-70)

Senate received for information the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL) Annual Report for 2014-2015.

Senator Pappas was available to respond to questions.

A question was asked why watches are being disallowed during exams and what problem was being addressed by this new rule. Senate was informed that this was a recommendation that came to SCUTL through the Academic Integrity committee due to the introduction and technological advances such as the iWatch and similar devices. The recommendation allows instructors to ban all communication devices from an exam, including new devices like the iWatch, but it is up to the individual instructor's discretion to do so. If the instructor disallows all watches during an exam, they will have to ensure students have access to live time information.

A question was asked whether glasses might be banned in light of technology such as the Google Glass. Senate was informed that the University faces major challenges in the years to come to maintain the integrity of examination procedures and that SCUTL will need to keep on top of technological advances and to make recommendations to address them.

A comment was made that there are tracking devices that can determine if individuals are accessing the internet and where they are in a room. The suggestion was made that SFU should be purchasing these inexpensive devices for large-scale exams.

A comment was made that SFU needs to look at teaching, learning, and its methods of examining, rather than attempting to beat technology.

A comment was made that instead of focusing on the issue of connectivity, the University should consider what it can do to create a culture of honesty, noting that a large-room exam with hundreds of students may not be the best forum to engage in assessment.

D) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

i) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Applied Sciences (S.15-71)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing courses and an existing program in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science; School of Engineering Science).

ii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (S.15-72)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing courses in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication).

iii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Health Sciences (S.15-73)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to an existing course in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

iv) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (S.15-74)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, added new courses and made revisions to existing courses and programs in the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences; Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology; Chemistry; Earth Sciences; Mathematics).

Senator C. Percival raised a point of order regarding SCUS's approval of changes to the number of credits required for an honours degree, following the approval by Senate in January 2014 that the university-wide requirement for an honours degree be reduced from 132 to 120 units. It was noted in the January 2014 minutes that *“additional changes to the Calendar language could be brought forward in future, and any changes to specific program requirements would require approval and review by Senate.”* It was further noted that the terms of reference for SCUS state that SCUS shall *“under delegated authority, review and approve, where appropriate, all proposed new courses, course deletions, course changes and program revisions of a minor nature”*. It was then suggested that the changes to the honours programs in S.15-70 were of a major nature, and that SCUS did not have the delegated authority to approve these changes. The Chair was asked to rule that the change in number of credits required for honours degrees has not been approved.

Senator Myers, the chair of SCUS, informed Senate that it was his understanding that, following the approval by Senate of the university-wide requirement for honours degrees in January 2014, SCUS would have the delegated authority to approve the changes in individual honours programs, which are consistent with the new requirement.

A comment was made that the change in the number of credits required for a degree program is a major change in the program and that SCUS does not have the authority to do that.

The Chair noted that there was a difference in recollection and understanding as to the meaning of the motion that Senate approved in January 2014, and he asked Senator Myers to review the motion with SCUS and to report the results of that discussion back to Senate.

A comment was made that if a committee exceeded its authority it is for the Chair of Senate to rule that the committee's authority has been exceeded, not for the committee itself to rule on whether it has exceeded its own authority.

In response to the point of order, the Chair noted that Senate was following the order of this meeting. The Chair stated that the item before Senate was for information, not a decision; if that information discloses what some members believe is a procedural defect and others believe it is not a procedural defect, then, in the absence of a full body of information to inform that debate and discussion, the Chair was not in a position to make a ruling, nor was Senate in a position to make a decision. He further stated that the information and arguments for both sides go back to SCUS, to review the minutes and appropriate policies, for deliberation. If a disagreement still remains, then the issue should be brought back to Senate for debate, discussion and decision.

A comment was made that the issue could be forwarded to SCAR for discussion. The Chair noted that if the issue was controversial at SCUS, then it may be forwarded to SCAR for a decision on whether it is necessary to bring it back to Senate with an accompanying motion.

7. Other Business

8. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, June 8, 2015.

Open session adjourned at 6:37 p.m. and Senate moved into the closed session.

Mark Walker
Registrar and Executive Director, Student Enrolment