



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, September 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)

Open Session

Present: Andrew Petter, Chair

Abramson, Neil
Baharmand, Iman
Bartram, Lyn
Bird, Gwen
Birmingham, Elina
Brennand, Tracy
Budra, Paul
Burley, David
Chapman, Glenn
Chen, Larissa
Chong, Dion
Craig, John
Curry, Joanne
Driver, Jon
Easton, Stephen
Eikerling, Michael
Gajdics, Sylvia
Glässer, Uwe
Giardini, Anne
Hedley, Nick
Jermias, Johnny
Johnson, Joy
Kirkpatrick, Ted
Kropinski, Mary-Catherine
Laitsch, Dan
Leacock, Tracey
Lewthwaite, Jayme
MacAlister, David
Mac Namara, Aoife
Magnusson, Kris
McTavish, Rob
Mundy, Arjan
Murray, Catherine
Myers, Gordon
Najaf, Ali
Nanjundappa, Abhishek
Ng, Dorothy
O'Neil, John
Pappas, Panayiotis
Parkhouse, Wade
Paterson, David
Percival, Colin

Reich, Blaize
Ruben, Peter (for C. Cupples)
Somers, Julian
Spector, Stephen
Stefanovic, Ingrid
Szymczyk, Barbara
Tingling, Peter
Walker, Mark
Weng, Enoch
Yang, Kathleen
Yano, Brady
Zaranyika, Rudo

Absent:

Arzanpour, Siamak
Cupples, Claire
Hans, Prabhpal
Kessler, Anke
Marks, Laura
Nabbali, Essya Mabrouka
Percival, Paul
Shaw, Chris

In Attendance:

Blair, Alison
Hinchliffe, Jo
Liljedahl, Peter
Naqvi, Zareen
Ng, Rella
Rahilly, Tim
Wong, Jimmy

1. Approval of the Agenda

The chair recommended that agenda item 7.2 be changed from “Academic Amnesty Motion” to “Academic Accommodation Motion,” since the use of the word “amnesty” can create a false impression. The agenda was approved with that one change.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session on July 6, 2015

The minutes of the open session on July 6, 2015 were approved as distributed.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes**i) Question re: adding major to parchment from July 6 Question Period from Senator Yano**

At the July 2015 Senate meeting a question was asked concerning the addition of majors to the SFU parchment.

Mark Walker, Registrar, reported that in the time since the question was asked a country-wide survey had been conducted with other universities, and as a result of the findings, SFU will look to add the major to the parchment, and for graduate students, the field of study. A target of June 2016 has been set to make those changes.

ii) Question re: S.15-93 from July 6 re: repeating special topics courses

At the July 2015 Senate meeting a question was asked about the potential within Peoplesoft to provide better IT support to departments on how to track the repeating of special topics courses.

Mark Walker, Registrar, reported that the best thing to do in such cases is to either contact him, or Rella Ng (Associate Registrar), directly with the specific conditions, and they can then assist in what is, currently, a very manual process.

iii) Question re: S.15-99 from July 6 re: BUS 880

At the July 2105 Senate meeting a question was asked regarding the rationale for the change in S.15-99, and whether the change provided students with more flexibility when it appears that students are now required to enroll in BUS 880 no later than their second term.

Senate was informed that clarification was sought from Dr. Ian McCarthy, the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, and that it is meant to be that they will be enrolled no later than their second term in the program, and then thereafter, throughout the remainder of the program. The rationale behind the change has to do with timing and refers to when the management of the portfolio will be handed over from the cohort of the year before to the new cohort. It was opined that the incoming cohort will not be ready to manage the fund in the fall, so their goal is to have this course begin in the Spring semester. For 2015, students will be late enrolled.

4. Report of the Chair

On behalf of Senate, the Chair congratulated Kris Nordgren on his promotion to his new job as Assistant Registrar, Records and Registration. The chair then welcomed Steven Noel as new Senate Assistant and Electoral Officer.

The chair acknowledged the incredible work done by people throughout the University last week, when we marked our 50th anniversary celebration. We had nearly 240 charter alumni – students here when the university first opened its doors; 24 charter faculty/staff; approximately 1500 people who attended the kickoff; and up to as many as 2000 people for the evening event.

It was remarkable to see the degree of support for the university from the broader community, and that speaks well to our accomplishments over the past 50 years. The Chair noted we are in the midst of a fundraising campaign, which we hope will meet its target of \$250 million to support students, research, and our community endeavours. The chair reminded Senate that the 50th anniversary is also continuing throughout the year, with a number of exciting events and activities scheduled, of both an academic, and an entertainment and educational nature. It's exciting to see how people are using the 50th anniversary as an opportunity to share with the university community, and with the broader community, some of the things that we're doing that demonstrate the value of Simon Fraser University.

The chair noted that we continue to meet our enrollment targets. The task force on Flexible Education has completed its report, and that report will be discussed in Senate committees, and then come to Senate for consideration of its recommendations.

The chair reported that the implementation of a new system of student evaluation is proceeding steadily. The work being done on the evaluation of both courses and instructors is progressing, and reflects the effort that took place through Senate on behalf of the university over the past year or two.

The Chair reported that the Vice President, Research, will be launching a formal process of university-wide consultations to develop a new, updated Strategic Research Plan looking forward for the next five years. The SFU community is encouraged to engage in the process through an online survey, consultation sessions, and Twitter discussion. It focuses on some important questions around what kind of research-intensive university SFU should be, what areas of research make SFU distinct and have the potential to position us as a national or global leader, and how we can strengthen services, linkages and structures to better serve researchers and students at SFU. The feedback will be summarized at an open forum later this fall, and that, in turn, will provide the input for the development of a new research plan to guide the university over the next five years.

The Chair acknowledged the efforts being made to pull together the strengths that have emerged over many years at SFU in support of innovation and entrepreneurship. Under the leadership of our Vice President, Research, a plan has been developed, which will be unveiled formally as an SFU Innovation Strategy, pulling together our strengths, and seizing on how they might be further enhanced and mobilized in the future. This will take place on Thursday, October 1st. It's an exciting time because we, along with Ryerson University and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, were successful in earning a grant of over \$10 million from the Federal Government's Incubator and Accelerator Fund. This has resulted in us being able to open a new incubator/accelerator space in Harbour Centre, next to our current campus, with a focus on digital technology. We will announce the strategy at the same time as we open that space on October 1st. This is very important launch and will both shine a light on what we're currently doing and point the way to how we can do even more in assisting students, faculty and others to demonstrate our strength as an innovator and an innovation leader.

The Chair confirmed that CFI has awarded \$30 million to the SFU-led Advanced Research Computing Art Platform, which is managed by Compu Canada through ARC SFU. We, along with other universities, will be able to develop a high-performance cyber network that will enable big data research, connecting the scientific, social, health, and economic spheres. This is going to significantly increase our research computing capacity, and become an important part of

the grid of all universities. It means SFU is establishing itself as a leader in respect to computing services to all universities across the country.

The Chair acknowledged a \$6.5 million grant from CHR's inaugural Foundation Grants Program to Professor Robert Hogg to research health inequalities among vulnerable HIV-positive populations in BC and the rest of Canada. The recognition that was given to Professor Hogg through this grant will enable him to strengthen SFU's engaged research contributions to health scholarship. The Chair noted that we should be particularly proud of the leadership he's shown in this important area.

i) Annual Financial Report (For Information)

S.15-104

Senate received for information the Annual Financial Report. Alison Blair, Associate Vice President, Finance, and Jimmy Wong, Associate Director, Financial Services, were in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked concerning research expenses, comparing 2015 to 2014. It was noted that research expenses increased from \$100 million to \$116 million, while instruction expenses dropped from \$490 million to \$480 million, a drop of \$10 million. The question asked if this drop was real, or did it reflect a moving of amounts between accounts. Senate was informed that the drop related to a number of capital expenditures that were funded for academic areas, such as the classroom renewal, the Education building, a Physics lab, and a number of other capital projects that were funded from the VPA.

A question was asked if there was any indication that the government would increase funding support per FTE per year. Senate was informed that there has been a three year decrease in the amount provided from operating funding by government, while at the same time, there has been no increase in FTE funding.

A question was asked regarding non-credit courses and how 1/9 of our tuition is for non-credit courses and other student fees. Senate was informed it relates to the fees that we collect for things like Athletics & Recreation.

A question was raised about reputational risk and operational risk, and what steps are being taken to manage such risks. Senate was informed that all of the risks SFU manages are implicitly about protecting reputation and ensuring that the university's reputation is preserved. SFU has put an Enterprise Risk Management Plan in place that is currently being revised, with the Deans being involved in the process.

A question was asked as to why we wouldn't adopt the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) framework. Senate was informed that SFU does consider COSO in Enterprise Risk Management, but the ERM framework is now being widely interspersed into various organizations in different sectors, including our own.

A concern was raised about increased revenue in food services and MECS, while there has been increased cost to AV Services, IT Services, and MECS, which constitutes a substantial barrier to student-led initiatives and student union academic events on campus.

The chair welcomed Senator Aoife Mac Namara to Senate, who is also the new Dean of the Faculty of Communication, Art, and Technology.

5. **Question Period**

Three questions were asked by Senator Eikerling regarding an online media announcement that partners SFU with an online course provider called Kadenze:

- First, can the VP Academic confirm that the announcement, specifically the headline, is factually wrong and misleading, and that no agreement or partnership has been struck with Kadenze at the university level? What action has been taken to set the record straight and avoid potential damage to the university's reputation?
- Second, a course approval at the university is a regulated process that goes through university administrative levels, from the requesting department through to the Senate, as you all know. This should apply to internally-developed courses as well as to external courses, online courses offered for credit in SFU programs. What procedure was followed in this case, and what was the justification in case it deviated from the required process?
- Third part is, well, generally, it seems inevitable that online course offerings will become part of the university teaching curriculum. There are opportunities as well as potential pitfalls in this. What measures has SFU administration taken to navigate this challenge and develop a well-balanced approach to the integration of online teaching models?

Senate was informed that SFU has signed an agreement with Kadenze, not formed a partnership. This is a pilot project that plans to develop interactive software that will provide individualized feedback to students in the class, and will be offered through a special topics course. If enough interest is shown then it would move to the normal process to approve a new course through SCUS and Senate. Regarding online course offerings becoming part of the university teaching curriculum it was argued that about 10% of earned credits are already done through distance or online education. The students who take this course will be paying standard SFU tuition fees, and will be essentially treated as regular SFU students. The course will have an SFU number, and will have an SFU instructor/TA. It was noted that Senate would be receiving from SCUTL, the recommendations of the Task Force on Flexible Education on how to address new technologies and approaches to teaching.

A comment was made that this initiative provides an excellent opportunity for students to interact with each other across institutional boundaries, without some of the administrative or logistical barriers we currently face.

A concern was raised regarding privacy issues in terms of students being assessed through the online system. Senate was made aware there is the standard privacy issue in that no student information can be stored on a server outside of British Columbia. Thus, students who are taking this course will be told before they register for the course that they will be asked to sign a standard waiver that we would use for any interaction with servers outside of BC.

6. **Reports of Committees**

A) **Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)**

i) **Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Applied Sciences (S.15-105)**

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 Applied Sciences (School of Engineering Science).

ii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (S.15-106)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing programs in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Cognitive Science Program).

iii) Curriculum Revisions – Beedie School of Business (S.15-107)

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 Beedie School of Business.

iv) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Health Sciences (S.15-108)

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

v) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (S.15-109)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing courses and programs in the Faculty of Science (Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology; Chemistry; Earth Sciences; Molecular Biology and Biochemistry; Statistics and Actuarial Science).

B) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.15-110)**

Senate received a summary of the nominations, positions elected by acclamation, positions requiring an online vote, and outstanding vacancies for the Senate committees.

7. Other Business**i) Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Reports (S.15-111)**

Senate received the 2014/15 Grades Report, and the 2014 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report for information.

Zareen Naqvi, Director, Institutional Research and Planning, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A concern was raised about the awarding of high grades in certain courses, notably MSSE 180. Senate was assured that there is a quality control system in place for reporting grades.

A question was asked if statistics were available on how many empty seats there are in required courses when, at the start of term, those courses were considered full. Senate was informed that the IRP does have a project in place to look at this issue. Things seem to be improving but more consultation needs to occur with faculties. Senate was assured that course availability is a top priority. It was noted that last year the Associate Vice President, Academic, and the Registrar, began a consultation process with the chairs and directors of departments and schools who determine the class maximum enrolments and do the course planning. A number of things are being worked on, including better quantitative tracking, though the progress has been slow.

A comment was made on the reporting that 11% of students work 30 hours or more per week on a paid job. It was pointed out that the current bursary system does not support students who are

taking part-time course loads, even though these students may be the most in need of additional funding. A comment of support was offered to Health & Counselling Services, who through policy review and redevelopment have offered assistance in enhancing health and wellness within SFU. Senators were encouraged to get in touch with HCS to help facilitate wellness among students and staff.

A question was asked concerning low satisfaction rates among users of ESL/EAL services, and what is being done to address this. It's reported that 26% students use these services, yet only half are satisfied with the service received. Senate was informed that the Centre for English Language Learning, Teaching, and Research has an initiative underway and will continue to keep Senate apprised of their programs. They also have the opening of the new CELTR Centre this month. It was noted that satisfaction levels are worth tracking, to determine if satisfaction rises as more programs become available.

A question was asked whether service satisfaction ratings had been broken down across campuses. It was suggested that Surrey faces service access challenges. Senate was informed that this is an issue faced by most universities with multiple campuses. Though it would be desirable to break it down by campus, it is difficult to identify students as belonging to any one particular campus, unless they belong to a very specific program. It may be more advisable to look at a student's major program, but we wouldn't be able to track students based on how much time they spend on each campus.

A suggestion was made regarding the comparison between averages over time, and between different academic groups in the IRP report. It was noted that statements seemed to be based on a straightforward interpretation of means, even when a variance of factors could be used in the comparison. It was suggested these additional factors should be considered, along with additional statistics in support of statements about highest/lowest.

ii) Academic Accommodation Motion (S.15-112)

Moved by E. Weng, seconded by C. Percival

"In recognition of the Simon Fraser Student Society's commitment to ensuring that all members of the Society are able to attend and participate fully in the upcoming Annual General Meeting taking place on September 22nd from 3:00pm - 5:00pm, Senate encourages all instructors to accommodate, without academic penalty, any students who communicate in advance their intention to participate in the Annual General Meeting."

A lengthy discussion ensued with most expressing favourable support for the motion. The following comments of support were made: the student societies have taken a great initiative to try to make improvements in the life of the campus. It is good that the students have taken this initiative, because it's good for the general education of the students, and their professional and personal development; the request of the motion to instructors is to encourage them to accommodate students, without coercion; for federal elections, we're required to provide four hours of uninterrupted time for people to vote. Offering the accommodation encourages students to recognize the importance of making their own decisions; we should try to lower the amount of barriers we have to participating in the democratic system; the reason the SFSS decided to hold this vote at its Annual General Meeting was to give students a platform to voice their opinions in person, and to provide all students with the opportunity to make an informed decision, rather than have an online vote.

Some concerns about the motion were raised and are as follows: that this motion will be used as a repeated process to address student participation. Student participation is very important, but this is not the right process, especially for the long-term; that if this motion is worthy of student action, then those who choose to attend the meeting should face the consequences; is there way the Student Society can coordinate with the Registrar to schedule open time for their Annual General Meeting to encourage attendance.

Senate was informed that this meeting represents the final attempt of the SFSS board to move forward with the Build SFU project. A negative vote on the debenture question, for either the stadium, the sub, or the by-law addition will stop the project.

Question was called and a vote taken on the motion

MOTION CARRIED

8. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, October 5, 2015.

Open session adjourned at 8:15 p.m. and Senate moved into the closed session.

Mark Walker
Registrar and Executive Director, Student Enrolment