



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

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

Open Session

Present:

Arzanpour, Siamak
Baharmand, Iman
Bartram, Lyn
Bird, Gwen
Birmingham, Elina
Brennand, Tracy
Budra, Paul
Burley, David
Chapman, Glenn
Chen, Larissa
Craig, John
Curry, Joanne
Driver, Jon
Easton, Stephen
Eikerling, Michael
Gajdics, Sylvia
Glässer, Uwe
Hedley, Nick
Jermias, Johnny
Kirkpatrick, Ted
Kropinski, Mary-Catherine
Leacock, Tracey
Lewthwaite, Jayme
MacAlister, David
Mac Namara, Aoife
Magnusson, Kris
McTavish, Rob
Menon, Carlo
Mundy, Arjan
Murray, Catherine
Myers, Gordon
Nabbali, Essya Mabrouka
Nanjundappa, Abhishek
Ng, Dorothy
Pappas, Panayiotis
Parkhouse, Wade
Paterson, David (Vice-Chair)
Percival, Colin
Percival, Paul

Peters, Joseph
Ruben, Peter (for C. Cupples)
Somers, Julian
Spector, Stephen
Stefanovic, Ingrid
Szymczyk, Barbara
Tingling, Peter
Weng, Enoch
Yang, Kathleen
Yano, Brady

Absent:

Petter, Andrew
Abramson, Neil
Cupples, Claire
Giardini, Anne
Hans, Prabhpal
Johnson, Joy
Kessler, Anke
Laitsch, Dan
Marks, Laura
Najaf, Ali
O'Neil, John
Reich, Blaize
Shaw, Chris
Williams, Tony
Zaranyika, Rudo

In Attendance:

Bhakthan, Manoj
Chu, Stephanie
Liljedahl, Peter
Nanji, Shaheen
Rahilly, Tim
Watson, Neil
White, Larry

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session on November 2, 2015

The minutes of the open session on November 2, 2015 were approved as distributed.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

Senator Parkhouse provided clarification on item S.15-131, brought for information to the November 4, 2015 meeting. Relating to the M.Eng in Engineering Science, a question was asked about the portfolio and the course option. Senate was informed that students are required to complete a portfolio, but students can choose to replace the portfolio with an elective MEng Project course, if they so choose. It was noted that the calendar language would be clarified on this point.

Senator Parkhouse provided clarification on item S.15-132, brought for information to the November 4, 2015 meeting. Relating to the PhD in SIAT, a question was asked about the units required to complete the program. Senate was informed that the last paragraph, due to its redundancy, has been removed from the calendar description and that the requirement of six additional units are within SIAT itself.

4. Report of the Chair

The Chair conveyed regrets from President Petter who, along with VP Research Joy Johnson, is representing SFU in Ottawa with representatives of government and granting councils. The President extends best wishes to Senate for the holidays and looks forward to seeing everyone rested and refreshed early in the New Year.

The Chair noted that SFU and Pacific Blue Cross recently partnered on the use of Big Data to improve healthcare delivery, decision-making, and outcomes. The new Pacific Blue Cross Health Informatics Lab – overseen by Professor Jian Pei, CRC in Big Data Science – will advance computational health research and provide a new venue for collaboration between industry and academia, especially in the area of health informatics. The lab will bring together faculty and student researchers from across the university, including those focused on the application of Big Data to business, health, communications and visualization, and security and privacy.

The Chair announced that from a field of over 550 nominees, Majid Bahrami, CRC in Alternative Energy Conversion Systems in the School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering, was selected for a 2016 Canada Clean50 Award in the research and development category. The award is presented to individuals whose work seeks to combat climate change and raises awareness of the benefits to Canadians of moving to a low-carbon economy. The citation mentions his collaborative work with industry to develop a wide range of sustainable energy solutions and his establishment of the world-class Laboratory for Alternative Energy Conversion.

The Chair noted that this year's SFU Public Square Community Summit – entitled "We The City" – took place in the first week of November. The summit focused on the theme of city building. It featured 16 events in three communities, involved 1400 volunteer hours, drew almost 3,500 participants, and engaged thousands more via webcasts and media. The summit's major public event was a forum on the role of arts in the city at the Downtown Centre, with Candy Chang, Teju Cole, and Buffy Sainte-Marie, moderated by Mo Dhaliwal.

The Chair informed Senate that the 2015 Aboriginal Peoples edition of the SFU News has been published, summarizing progress that has been made over the past year on Aboriginal programs and initiatives. It was noted that copies had been distributed to each Senate station.

The Chair reminded Senate of a communiqué sent earlier in the day, stating that SFU is required by BC Hydro to close the SFU Burnaby campus during daylight hours on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 as a result of the power outage. It was noted that the closure was until noon, and not the entire day.

5. **Question Period**

Senator Murray asked the following question:

What, if anything, is SFU considering the university can do to support the pending resettlement of Syrian refugees in the Lower Mainland?

Tim Rahilly, Associate Vice-President, Students, provided a handout to Senate and responded to the question. It was noted that this is an emerging situation, with federal, provincial, and local governments working to find a solution. As to an institutional response, efforts will be made to expand the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) student program. SFU did welcome two Syrian refugees this year, and will be adding more. Normally, SFU takes three to four, but we are intending to increase that number. After speaking with members of the SFU community, it became apparent that SFU can best provide assistance by sharing its accumulated expertise with other organizations. We are looking to collaborate with community organizations and school boards to assist in resettlement. Since providing assistance will cost money, a strategy will have to be put in place to ensure our efforts do not detract from the services we already offer.

Senator Murray thanked the Associate Vice-President, Students and highlighted several initiatives undertaken at home and overseas and hoped SFU would look at increasing the number of refugees accepted. Senator Murray also pointed out that an ad-hoc working group would be meeting at the Vancouver campus on December 14th, focusing on the growing inequality gap with respect to access to education and skills training in BC.

A question was asked about the plan to accept an additional two WUSC students per year and which year is being referred to in the handout and if this marks an overall increase in funding. Senate was informed that September is the target date and WUSC has been informed of our desire to increase our intake. The financial commitments are from the university, with students supporting the program.

6. **Reports of Committees**

A) Senate Committee on Continuing Studies (SCCS)

i) Annual Report (S.15-134)

Senate received the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies annual report for information.

Larry White, Director, Non-Credit Programs, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked if there is in fact a greater concentration of Continuing Studies students living in Vancouver, as opposed to the surrounding areas. Senate was informed that the

Vancouver campus does attract the greatest number of students, given that it attracts people at the end of their work day, is central to transportation, and has the most mature program portfolio based on its twenty-five year history.

B) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

i) Name Change – Centre for Governance and Sustainability (S.15-135)

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by S. Spector

“That Senate approve the name of the Centre for Governance and Sustainability be changed to the Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability.”

Stephanie Bertels, Associate Professor, Beedie School of Business, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A comment was made that this is the second request for a name change for this centre. Senate was reminded that a function of Senate committees is to ensure that information is being shared between respective parties, and that sometimes what one faculty or department does can affect another.

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) External Review of the Faculty of Education (S.15-136)

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by K. Magnusson

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Faculty of Education that resulted from its External Review.”

A question was asked to explain the \$12 listed under renovations in the Education Building when the total was \$35, 200, 012. Senate was informed that the \$12 was a number that failed to be edited out of the final report.

A question was asked about the “emerging value” of the Bachelor’s Degree mentioned in the report. Senate was informed that the major occupational path is found in the Professional Development Program, where people prepare for professional practice in the K-12 school system. There’s also a wide variety of other forms of educational engagement that can lead to employment opportunities for graduates of the PDP program. These include pathways in international education, Indigenous education, educational technology, and community based educational services.

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iii) External Review of the Department of Gerontology (S.15-137)

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by J. Craig

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Gerontology that resulted from its External Review.

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iv) External Review of the Department of Psychology (S.15-138)

Moved by J. Driver, seconded by K. Magnusson

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Psychology that resulted from its External Review.”

Neil Watson, Chair – Department of Psychology, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked about the Educational Goals and Assessment Action Plan and if merely completing a course is a sufficient indicator of achieving educational goals. Senate was informed that departments are just now learning how to approach Assessment and Educational Goals. The belief here is that it's the combination of a clear description of the objectives of the course, coupled with the successful completion of the course that will provide evidence that the information that was intended to be conveyed by the course was assimilated by the student, and will ultimately lead to meeting the goals set out for the overall degree program.

A question was asked about the Department of Psychology not considering the viability of the Cognitive Science Program, leaving it up to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Senate was informed that historically, Cognitive Science has been a separate program in FASS. This year the Dean's Office asked the Department of Psychology to take on the administrative aspect of the program, but currently the department has had no hand in determining the long-term viability of the curriculum.

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

v) 2014/15 Centres and Institutes Renewal Applications (S.15-139)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on University Priorities, acting under delegated authority, reviewed and approved the renewal of seventeen research centres for a five year term.

vi) Centre and Institute Report 2014/15 (S.15-140)

Senate received the Centre and Institute Report for 2014/15 for information.

C) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)**i) N Grades (S.15-141)**

Moved by G. Myers, seconded by S. Easton

“That Senate approve the following Calendar language changes effective Summer 2016:

From:

N Grades

The letter grade N (incomplete) is given when a student has enrolled for a course, but did not write the final examination or otherwise failed to complete the course work, and did not withdraw before the deadline date. An N is considered an F for purposes of scholastic standing.

A student receiving a grade of N must re-enrol for the course and participate in the course again, completing course requirements approved by the instructor, to achieve a different evaluation.

To:

Letter grade N (incomplete) is given when a student has enrolled for a course, but did not write the final examination or otherwise failed to complete the course work, and did not withdraw before the deadline date. An N is considered an F for purposes of scholastic standing.

To achieve a different evaluation, and subject to the repeat policy it is expected that a student who receives a grade of N will repeat the course for credit.

Rationale:

To make the old language consistent with practice and the fact that occasionally an N Grade should be changed without repeat of the course.”

A concern was raised that the new language leaves students with little option but to repeat the course, yet if they had already repeated a course several times they would then be without options as to their N grade. Senate was informed that University practice is that N grades get changed for reasonable grounds. Because the current language states a student must re-take the course, it does not meet current practice. The change is also intended to discourage students from requesting to complete individual parts of the course rather than repeating the complete course.

A question asked if we use the word “normally” in other University policies, why that language was not used here. Senate was informed that “normally” is used in “big P” policies, as opposed to the calendar. The language, specifically the words “expected” and “will” was chosen to provide instructors with a clear indication that, except under very special circumstances, students need to re-take the course.

It was noted that when a DE grade is given, one week into the beginning of the next semester, it automatically changes to a N grade and that this current definition of N does not fix the problem presented by students taking undergraduate theses. In undergraduate theses, it is not uncommon for the student to take longer than one semester to complete it. This either forces the student to register for another semester, or give them a DE grade, and then letting them complete the remaining semester. The new definition of N does not fix this problem, especially when the N is stated as automatically shifting to an F grade, which has significant impact on students applying for graduate positions elsewhere. Previous suggestion had been to use the IP grade, but the calendar still states that the IP grade can only be used by Education. Senate was informed that a change to IP grades will be coming forward to Senate shortly.

It was suggested that this N grade policy not apply until the IP policy is also passed, because if the N grade policy comes in before the IP policy, we are in a situation where students may end up needing to get their N grade fixed. Senate was informed that we still have DE grades, which must expire after the first week of class. Thus, in circumstances where the DE grade doesn’t allow for enough time, an extension can be requested.

A question was asked about how an N grade is changed. It was suggested that changing an N grade is no different than changing any other grade, thus the proposed language change does not provide any more flexibility than the current policy allows. Senate was informed that the difference is that an N grade should rarely be changed and you get credit for the course by re-taking it. Also, an N is given when significant components of the course have not been completed.

Comments were then made for and against the use of the word “expected.” Some found the use of word ambiguous, while others found it appropriate arguing that there is a difference between an expectation and a requirement.

It was then suggested that given the lively debate surrounding the proposed N grade language change it may be advisable to send this item back to committee for rewording, thereby making it more clearly understood.

Motion to refer this item back to SCUS

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Requisite Definitions (S.15-142)

Moved by G. Myers, seconded by S. Spector

“That Senate approve the following Calendar language changes effective Summer 2016:

From:

Prerequisite

A prerequisite, also called a requisite, is a requirement needed to enrol in a course.

Corequisite

A corequisite is a course to be completed at the same time as another course.

To:

Prerequisite

A prerequisite is a requirement which must be satisfied before taking a course.

Co-requisite

A co-requisite is a requirement which must be satisfied before, or while taking a course.

Rationale:

The old language was not common usage and led to confusion.”

A concern was raised that the proposed language change allows easily for the situation when courses may be taken before or at the same time, but not when the courses must be taken at the same time. Senate was informed that our current definition of a co-requisite is not common usage, and leads to confusion.

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Applied Sciences (S.15-143)

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

A comment was made relating to Computer Science and the rationale to encourage more students to take the minor, given its importance to students in other disciplines. It was suggested that it's

more useful for students in other disciplines to take the certificate, and thus is surprising that similar changes have not been made to the certificate. Senate was informed that this suggestion will be brought back to Computer Science for consideration.

iv) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (S.15-144)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing programs and courses in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (English; History; School for International Studies; Labour Studies Program; Philosophy; Political Science; French Cohort Program; Psychology).

A question was asked about the creation of POL 200 and if it will be considered a Q course. Senate was informed that an answer would be sought and brought back to a future meeting.

A question was asked about why so many courses are being removed from the upper division requirements for the Labour Studies Minor. Senate was informed answers to such questions would best be addressed to the faculty, who can then go to the department for answers.

v) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (S.15-145)

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

vi) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (S.15-146)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing programs in the Faculty of Science (Chemistry)

vii) 2014-2015 Annual Report (S.15-147)

Senate received for information the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies Annual Report for 2014-2015.

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

i) TFFE Final Report (S.15-148)

Moved by P. Pappas, seconded by S. Easton

“That Senate approve the motion to accept the TFFE report, and request the VPA bring to Senate for further approval a more detailed action plan that takes into account the comments from SCUTL, other relevant Senate committees, and Senate.”

Stephanie Chu, Director, Teaching and Learning Centre, was in attendance to respond to questions.

After discussion it was agreed that a minor amendment be made to the motion, changing the language from “that the VPA bring to Senate...” to “request the VPA bring to Senate...”

A question was asked about appointing a senior administrator at the Associate VP level, and also someone at a slightly lower level on an interim basis to help facilitate a strategic approach to teaching and learning across all learning units. Senate was informed that if generally favorable

comments are reported concerning this report, the intention would be to start developing a more detailed action plan, and likely hire someone on a contract basis, or second someone from elsewhere in the University to spend time working on this. The question to create a new Associate VP position is up to the Board of Governors.

A question was asked about projects conducted by the Teaching and Learning Development Grants being presented to the community at large and if there are any projects that can be currently presented. Senate was informed that there is a record of all grants awarded, the uses to which they've been put, and the dissemination of the results of those grants. Also, the Director of the Institute for the Study of Teaching and Learning in the Disciplines has created an annual report which can be made available to Senate should there be interest.

Comment was requested regarding the following excerpt from the SCUTL Response to TFFE Final Report:

“As long as tenure and promotion practices continue to under-value the role of teaching at SFU, there is very little incentive for instructors to pursue professional development in this direction.”

Senate was informed that SCUTL has been working for more than three years on a new evaluation system, taking into consideration the best practice guide issued previously, and that significant progress can be made in the way that teaching is used in career progress. It was noted that changes can be made to how we evaluate faculty members as teachers and instructors at the University. There is an ongoing project to change the way in which student evaluation of courses is done, and part of that project is to develop a new system for doing this, while also providing better guidelines to departments on appropriate ways to evaluate teaching by individual faculty members. The evaluation of teaching by instructors, and the weight that is given to the evaluation of teaching, is determined to a large extent by faculty members themselves. Because every academic department has a set of criteria as to how they're going to evaluate teaching, the power to change this lies within the hands of the faculty members in the academic departments. In regards to the continuing project on evaluation of teaching, funding has been approved to hire a PhD student to do analysis of all the criteria for the evaluation of teaching currently being used in the University.

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

E) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)

i) Maximum Time for Completion and Readmission (GGR 1.12) (S.15-149)

Moved by W. parkhouse, seconded by P. Ruben

“That Senate approve the revisions to GGR 1.12 (Maximum Time for Completion and Readmission) and the creation of GGR 1.4.8 (Reactivation) and GGR 1.4.9 (Readmission) effective Fall 2016.”

A question was asked about student consultation and if it was limited to within the GSS and student representatives on SGSC. Senate was informed that consultation was not with the general student population as a whole, but within graduate program committees over the past two to three years, since most graduate program committees have graduate student representation.

A concern was raised that this revision is really a top-down administrative policy that does not address median maximum times for graduate students, but instead addresses “outliers.” Senate was informed that this is just one in a series of initiatives geared towards long completion times: regular student supervisory workshops are run to try to address both the expectations of students, as well as from supervisors; scholarships are front-end loaded to allow students more time off earlier in their degrees; multi-year funding programs have been created; on-leave issues are being addressed to create more placeability in terms of being on leave, while not counting towards maximum degree completion time; exit surveys and supervision surveys have been done to identify issues around longer completion times; and in terms of median times, IRP has been asked to run data and it was found that the median times are actually down.

A question was asked if this policy applies immediately to graduate students in the program, or only to incoming students. Senate was informed that it only applies to incoming students for GGR 1.12. For GGR 1.4.8 and GGR 1.4.9 it would apply immediately.

A concern was raised that this revision does not address underlying factors – notably funding - that prevent students from finishing in a timely manner. It was argued one of the primary barriers to students finishing is a lack of time to focus on research due to financial constraints and teaching burdens, with many TA’s forced to work during afternoons, and often work part-time jobs outside of school to supplement their income. It was also noted that we live in one of the most expensive cities in North America and current graduate funding does not reflect this. Encouraging students to finish in a timely manner is important, but those facing financial hardship shouldn’t be punished. Senate was informed that in terms of the chosen time-line, we are at the upper end of what other institutions have done. Another issue that arises with long degree completion times is with the supervisory committee, where members are no longer able or willing to supervise the student. The proposed policy would allow for the student to apply for new admission and have a new timeline applied to them.

A comment was made regarding senior supervisory workshops not being mandatory, and how this impacts the balance of power between students and supervisors since pressure remains on the student to complete their degree while not being applied to the supervisor. Senate was informed that a difference in the balance of power does exist in this scenario.

ii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (S.15-150)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing courses and programs in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Economics, School for International Studies).

iii) Curriculum Revisions – Beedie School of Business (S.15-151)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, added new courses and made revisions to an existing program in the Beedie School of Business.

iii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Environment (S.15-152)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, reinstated a course in the Faculty of Environment.

F) Senate Library Committee (SLC)

i) Annual Report (S.15-153)

Senate received the SLC Annual Report for information.

G) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)

i) Elections by Senate (S.15-154)

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

H) Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries

i) Annual Report (S.15-155)

Senate received for information the Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries Annual Report for 2014-2015.

Manoj Bhakthan, Director, Financial Aid and Awards, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked to explain an increase in the line item “Athletics Awards”, which rose to \$705K from \$350K the previous year. Senate was informed that this change was a movement in terms of finances, in how the accounts were put together and that the actual amount moved down from \$780K.

A question was asked about Student Aid loans and if it’s correct that \$50M in student loans were distributed to over 29 thousand students. Senate was informed that \$50M was the total in terms of student loan funding. With respect to the 29 thousand students, that number can reflect students who have received more than one loan per year.

A question was asked if the report reflected the Annual Service Awards given out by the University. Senate was informed that the Service Awards would either be reflected under In-Course Awards (University funded) or In-Course Awards (Annual/Endowed), depending on how they are funded. They are not listed as a separate line item.

7. Other Business

8. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, January 4, 2016.

Open session adjourned at 9:05 p.m. and Senate moved into the closed session.

Rummana Khan Hemani
Registrar (pro tem)