



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on  
Monday, November 1, 2021 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)  
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

## Open Session

**Present:** Joy Johnson, Chair

Bains, Serena  
Bhalloo, Shafik  
Bird, Gwen  
Brennand, Tracy  
Bubela, Tania  
Chessel, Patrick  
Coleman, Gordon  
Daniel, Bryan  
Dauvergne, Catherine  
Denholm, Julia  
Derksen, Jeff  
Egri, Carolyn  
Everton, Mike  
Fiume, Eugene  
Gardinetti, R. Georges  
Hall, Peter  
Hoffer, Andy  
Kandikova, Alisa  
Krauth, Brian  
Krogman, Naomi  
Kumpulainen, Kristiina  
Laitsch, Dan  
Leznoff, Daniel  
Liosis, Gabe  
Liu, Connie  
Lord Ferguson, Sarah  
Lu, Joseph  
Malott, Brianna  
Martell, Matt  
Masri, Kamal  
McTavish, Rob  
Mirhady, David  
Murphy, David  
Myers, Gord  
Nagy, Judit  
Nepomnaschy, Pablo  
Neustaedter, Carman

O'Neil, Dugan  
Pahou, Helen  
Pantophlet, Ralph  
Parent, Micheal  
Parkhouse, Wade  
Parmar, Abhishek  
Percival, Colin  
Phangura, Almas  
Schiphorst, Thecla  
Shapiro, Lisa  
Silverman, Michael  
Spector, Stephen  
Stockie, John  
Vrooman, Tamara

**Absent:**

Andreoiu, Corina  
Chapman, Glenn  
Chenier, Ele  
Chowdury, Saima  
Collard, Mark  
Dhesa, Priyanka  
Elle, Elizabeth  
Gray, Bonnie  
Hendrigan, Holly  
Hogg, Robert  
O'Neill, Susan  
Shinkar, Igor  
Walsby, Charles

**In Attendance:**

Davis, Trevor  
Friskien, Barbara

Tom Nault, Senate Secretary  
Steven Noel, Recording Secretary

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as distributed, with item S.21-115 being withdrawn.

**2. The Minutes of the Open Session of September 13, 2021 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on December 6, 2021****3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session on October 4, 2021**

The minutes of the open session on October 4, 2021 were approved as distributed.

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

**5. Report of the Chair**

The Chair reported that SFU's executive team has been reviewing its accomplishments in relation to sustainability and climate justice and determined that despite significant accomplishments, more needs to be done and more needs to be done to communicate these accomplishments to the SFU Community. Divestment of fossil fuels is an important and emblematic commitment to climate justice and earlier today SFU announced its divestment plans. Thanks was offered to all those working alongside the executive team, including the SFSS, GSS, SFU 350, faculty and staff members and the Board of Governors Responsible Investment Committee.

The Chair reported that she, in her role as President, recently had the opportunity to take a boat trip up Indian Arm with Chief Jen Thomas of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, along with council members and the Provost, Catherine Dauvergne. It was an afternoon spent learning about places of importance, including Burnaby Mountain. SFU continues to work on the development of a memorandum of understanding with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

The Chair reported that following an October 21<sup>st</sup> order from the Provincial Health Officer, vaccination is now mandatory for SFU staff, faculty and students working in health care facilities. In addition, as of November 15<sup>th</sup> all SFU employees will require mandatory vaccination to access federal government workspaces. The University is working to ensure that faculty, staff and students needing access to these spaces are made aware of these changes.

The Chair reported that in October SFU returned to holding in-person convocation ceremonies, making it the first university in Canada to offer in-person convocation this fall. A total of 2169 graduates were approved by Senate to cross the stage.

The Chair reported that Maclean's magazine ranked SFU as Canada's number one comprehensive university for 2022, sharing this honor with the University of Victoria. SFU has placed first in this category for 13 of the last 14 years. Comprehensive universities are recognized for their significant research activity and wide range of programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The Chair reported that the Munro Lecture returned on October 20<sup>th</sup> with a lecture from Mariana Mazzucato, a world-renowned economist and SFU honorary degree recipient in 2020. The online

lecture discussed the role of the public sector in tackling the grand challenges of our time and was attended by over 700 people. The Monroe Lecture is an annual address that brings scholars to SFU in recognition of former Vice-President, Academic and Provost Dr. John Monroe.

The Chair reported that in the light of increases in racism, discrimination and hate over the past 19 months, it's important for higher education institutions to ensure a safe environment for learning, teaching and working. During the first week of October the University launched *Inclusion Benefits Us All*, a collection of tools, resources and actions people can take to ensure that others feel safe and welcome at SFU. One aspect of diversity and inclusion not often talked about is ideas and the freedom to express ideas. Some members of the SFU Community have expressed a reluctance to express their opinion, fearing they will be misunderstood or have their ideas taken out of context. The University must be a place where ideas can be freely expressed and debated and members must fight against forces attempting to constrain debate and Senate, in particular, is a place where this should happen.

A comment was made that following the September Senate meeting, but also prior to that, Senators and other SFU Community members have privately expressed their reluctance to offer their opinions on certain topics, fearing that doing so would be personally detrimental. Noting concern over this occurrence, and in the spirit of wanting to foster honest debate, Senator Percival offered to speak on behalf of other members, even when not in agreement with the opinions being expressed.

A comment was made that it may be useful to reserve time at a future Senate meeting, or at the annual Senate-Board of Governors retreat, to have complex discussions in a safe and open environment. When determining how best to have these discussions, it was added that it may be useful to use resources from the Center for Dialogue or from other scholars who are trained in having complex conversations rather than trying to do so on the Senate floor.

## 6. Question Period

i) Senator Bhalloo submitted the following question:

*I have been teaching at SFU for about 15 years. For as long as I can recall, contract cheating agencies have existed and thrived in British Columbia (and I am sure elsewhere). More specifically, at SFU, contract cheating agencies have incessantly targeted vulnerable student population, including particularly our Chinese students. They have been openly advertising their services on eye-catching glossy posters in Mandarin language. You will find these posters prominently stapled on announcement boards in the AQ, WMC, Convocation Mall and other places on campus.*

*As part of my pro bono service to the University, I have been taking down these posters almost on a daily basis only to see them come up the following day. The posters list between 50 to 75 courses in various departments the agencies are ready and willing to assist students with. They even offer students a guarantee of a high grade (B or higher) or money back. They charge anywhere between \$700 to over \$1,500 for different services including writing papers for students, editing papers, giving access to stolen (screen captured) exams, providing answers*

*during exam, etc. I know this from talking to several students I have caught in my class using these services. I have discovered from my students that these agencies have access to all my course materials on Canvas including recordings, slides, notes, and past exams and assignments,*

*I am not alone in my frustration with these contract cheating agencies. Many of my colleagues share my frustration. I have raised this issue with my Academic Director in the Beedie School, Senator Masri, at whose office door I have often dumped advertising posters of these agencies. Senator Masri was kind enough to forward me a letter/petition drafted collaboratively by members of the BC Academic Integrity Network, consisting of a group of educational institutions and individuals working together to support and promote academic integrity in BC and beyond. I signed the letter/petition. It urges the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training to come up with a legal response to contract cheating in BC. Given my natural skepticism with governments acting in a timely fashion, I have little faith that any material change will occur anytime soon or at all. In the meanwhile, does SFU have any plans to proactively take on contract cheating agencies or to stop them from infringing instructors' proprietary rights in their materials? If we are allowing them to post their posters on our announcement boards, what message are we sending them? If an instructor wants to pursue any one or more agencies for copyright infringement of their property (be it their slides, recordings, exams or any other materials), will SFU provide legal support?*

Catherine Dauvergne, Vice President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that contract cheating is a serious and pernicious problem, and one that SFU has been engaged with for a number of years. This issue has also been harder to track given the transition to online learning for a majority of academic activates. The University has explored a variety of legal options, and as a result, received a number of cease and desist letters or been legally challenged by some of these companies claiming defamation given they advertise as being merely tutoring services. Due to the complications of legal challenges, the University has focused some of its greatest efforts against the industry towards working with students to let them know the risks of engaging with these types of services.

On the subject of legal action, the University is not in a position to support individual instructors who initiate legal actions against these companies, as individual instructors are represented by their union and legal representation to members of the Faculty Association comes from the Faculty Association. The Registrar is involved in combating cheating by identifying and punishing those found to have committed academic dishonesty. Also, the Registrar's Office is looking to participate in an international study looking at the motivations behind academic dishonesty. This may lead to a better of understanding of the issue and allow for more effective messaging to students. It was added that it may be time to review the University's policy on posters and advertisements.

Based on the response provided by the VPA, the following comments/suggestions were offered:

- The University should be more proactive in its effort to fight contract cheating by holding these companies to account whenever possible.
- Class roster photos should be required when writing exams.

- Focus should not only be placed on students who cheat, but also on the impact academic dishonesty has on those students who do not cheat.
- Many of these companies advertise on non-English websites and make claims that go well beyond the scope of tutoring. They also claim to have TA's on the payroll, along with access to previous exams and course materials.
- Consideration needs to be given to the underlying issues behind why students may resort to cheating, such as the high cost of courses or not having sufficient resources in place to support students who are struggling.
- The messaging sent to students around cheating is either not reaching students or is not being sent through the right channels.
- There may be a need to reengage with Facilities to have a more systematic approach to removing these posters from campus bulletin boards.
- The University may want to more widely adopt the Department of Chemistry's model of exam management in which each exam room is seat mapped with the student's photo, thereby reducing the potential for impersonation.

Given the feedback from Senators, it was agreed to refer the issue of contract cheating to the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning and have it report back to Senate in a timely manner.

ii) Senator Myers submitted the following question:

*We start with the assumption that our university's primary mission is the pursuit of truth (research) and the advancement of learning.*

*Over the last 10 years, March 31, 2011 to March 31, 2021, both the total number of students (AFTE) and the total number of professors (tenure-track/researchers) has been flat. During the same 10-year period well over 500 new APSA (professional staff) positions were created. A majority of those in central administration and a majority in the last three years. In fact, during the last three years SFU has averaged close to 100 new APSA positions created each year.*

*Other universities have experienced run-away administrative growth. What is SFU's plan to rein in this explosive growth and achieve some semblance of balance across administrative and academic appointments in the pursuit of our important mission?*

Catherine Dauvergne, Vice President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that much of the growth in professional staff positions is taking place within the faculties, so there is some question as to whether this growth is really occurring within central administration. It's important to figure out why SFU has experienced such significant staff growth and determine whether the University has the right staff doing the right jobs. To do so, SFU is participating in a uniform assessment to compare the number of staff at SFU doing a particular function in comparison with similar universities.

When looking at staffing over the last 10 years, consideration also needs to be given to the fact that SFU has implemented or bolstered a number of services and programs in that time. For

example, staffing resources have been committed to the Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Office, to expanding mental health support for students, to increasing staffing in the Center for Accessible Learning, to increasing support for students doing professional masters programs, to increasing research grant accountability, alongside of considerable infrastructure improvements. Staffing increases in these areas doesn't necessarily mean the University currently has the correct staffing level, but it will provide important context once the assessment data has been finalized. It was added that staffing levels do need to be adjusted accordingly once it has been determined that a project is complete.

A comment was made that the financial sustainability of any newly created administrative office needs to be considered given the limited financial resources of the University and that the allocation of funding in one area is at the expense of another.

## **7. Reports of Committees**

### **A) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)**

#### **i) Updated Policy R60.01 (S.21-112)**

Moved by C. Dauvergne, seconded by S. Spector

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors updated policy R60.01.”

Trevor Davis, Executive Director - Research Operations, was in attendance to respond to questions.

To provide context for the motion, Senate was informed of the following:

- This is the first major rewrite of this policy since the 1990s.
- This policy update has been initiated because SFU is currently out of compliance with federal regulations and in order to maintain eligibility for faculty members to hold federal grants, changes are required to the current policy.
- The old policy was written at time when policy and procedure were combined, whereas this rewrite separates out policy and procedure. It was added though both the policy and procedures are before Senate, it is only the policy that is subject to the motion.
- Education is at the center of this policy rewrite, including education of faculty and education of students as to what the requirements of research are.
- The procedures for investigation have been reworked to make them clearer, and there is a newly required role called the Research Integrity Officer who receives allegations and leads the processes but is not involved in decision making.
- Students doing research are now explicitly captured in the policy and there is a new process that aligns with the student research integrity policy.

A question was asked about the role of the Research Integrity Officer and if it will include an educational component. Senate was informed that the establishment of the Research Integrity Officer position marks a starting point and there is potential to see the role expanded to include education. It was added that discussions have occurred around creating an advisory committee of faculty to assist with the educational components.

A question was asked about the word *misconduct* still being in the updated policy and if the words *misconduct* and *breach* have the same meaning within the context of the policy. Senate was informed that the emphasis has changed to being about breach more than misconduct, with misconduct being narrowed down to specific elements and breach encompassing things beyond those elements. It was noted that the language was intended to fit with federal policy and the focus on breach now allows for more flexibility.

Noting that the policy and the procedures have now been separated, a question was asked as to how changes will be made to the document going forward. Senate was informed that the procedures are publicly posted and fall under the authority of the Vice President, Research and International. Unlike changes to policy, changes to procedure do not require Senate or Board of Governors approval, but still get publicly posted as part of the editorial process.

In the course of discussion, the following concerns were raised:

- Citing section 5.3 as an example, a concern was raised over the clarity of the language used in defining a breach as any conduct, behaviour, actions, or omissions that are inconsistent with or violate the Policy. It was argued that such a broad definition does not match the specific examples listed for what constitutes misconduct and would allow for even minor infractions to be considered a breach.
- The policy lacks a definition for the word *publication*. In this context one might assume that publication refers to a type of academic publication, however, the lack of a specific definition leads one to rely on so broad a definition as to be problematic.
- Section 5.2, which states that *Each person who engages in Research is directly responsible for the quality and ethics of their work*, fails to consider that the Office for Research Ethics reviews all research proposals and has shared accountability for upholding ethics.
- Section 5.2.2, which states that researchers are expected to comply with *scholarly standards and practices that are generally accepted in the academic community and their scholarly field*, fails to identify what those standards are and who gets to decide them.
- Section 5.5 protects the identity of someone making a good faith allegation but fails to state that the researcher upon whom the allegation has been made is considered innocent until a formal review process determines otherwise.

Noting the level of discussion and the concerns raised around this item, the Chair reminded Senate that a decision needs to be made to either approve the motion or refer the policy back to the VPRI Office for further consideration. It was added that this policy did go through a robust consultation process and though some of the feedback offered can be considered, there are some aspects of this policy that are non-negotiable due to Tri-Council requirements. It was further added that there is a time factor to consider given that the University is currently out of compliance, meaning the Tri-Council could decide to restrict access to research grants.

A suggestion was made that it may be helpful as part of the consultation process to have certain items come to Senate as information items to allow for discussion and feedback before requiring

approval. It was added that it may be advisable to refer this policy back for reworking and then have it come back to Senate clearly identifying which aspects of the policy are non-negotiable.

Noting the concerns raised at Senate, the following motion was moved:

Moved by A. Parmar, seconded by D. Laitsch

“That Senate defer consideration of approval of updated Policy R60.01 to the December 2021 meeting of Senate.”

A question was called and a vote taken on the motion to defer.

MOTION CARRIED,  
with one opposed\*.

\*Senator Catherine Dauvergne requested that her opposition to the motion to defer be recorded in the minutes.

**B) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)**

**i) External Review of the Department of Physics**

Moved by C. Dauvergne, seconded by J. Stockie

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Physics that resulted from its external review.”

Barbara Frisken, Professor and Chair – Department of Physics, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Noting that the external review states that the space situation of the department is dire, a comment was made that SFU needs to develop a plan to address the renovation, expansion or replacement of its older buildings. Senate was informed that such plans are in place and that the top capital priority of the University is a new interdisciplinary life science building.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

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

**i) Elective Grading System Extension to Summer 2023 Term (S.21-114)**

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve the extension of the pilot Elective Grading System (P/CR/NC) through the Summer 2023 term.”

A question was asked if the number of courses eligible under this grading should be increased given the extension to the pilot. Senate was informed that this would be taken under advisement by SCUS.

A question was asked regarding the criteria SCUS will use in determining if this pilot project will become permanent. Senate was informed that SCUS would like to assess activity in a



number of non-pandemic semesters to determine if students are taking advantage of the opportunity to use this grading system in non-pandemic times.

A question was asked if there is a centralized location on the SFU website where students can identify which departments or faculties have expanded use of the Elective Grading System. Senate was informed that a webpage was created within the Student Services website after the establishment of the Elective Grading System.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**ii) Program Changes (S.21-116)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science) and the Faculty of Science (Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology).

Citing program changes to the Computing Systems concentration within the School of Computing Science as an example, a request was made to include more detail on the nature of these changes in the future.

**iii) New Course Proposals (S.21-117)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science).

**iv) Course Changes (S.21-118)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Engineering Science) and the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School for the Contemporary Arts).

**D) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**

**i) New Course Proposals (S.21-119)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science).

**ii) Course Changes (S.21-120)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Sustainable Energy Engineering).

**E) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**

**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.20-121)**

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

**8. Other Business**

**9. Information**

**i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, December 6, 2021**

Open session adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Tom Nault  
Senate Secretary