



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, January 10, 2022 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

Open Session

Present: Joy Johnson, Chair

Andreoiu, Corina
Bains, Serena
Bhalloo, Shafik
Bird, Gwen
Brennand, Tracy
Bubela, Tania
Chapman, Glenn
Chenier, Ele
Chessel, Patrick
Chowdury, Saima
Coleman, Gordon
Collard, Mark
Daniel, Bryan
Dauvergne, Catherine
Denholm, Julia
Derksen, Jeff
Dhesa, Priyanka
Egri, Carolyn
Everton, Mike
Fiume, Eugene
Gray, Bonnie
Hall, Peter
Hendrigan, Holly
Hoffer, Andy
Kandikova, Alisa
Krauth, Brian
Krogman, Naomi
Kumpulainen, Kristiina
Laitsch, Dan
Leznoff, Daniel
Liosis, Gabe
Liu, Connie
Lord Ferguson, Sarah
Malott, Brianna
Martell, Matt
Masri, Kamal

Mirhady, David
Murphy, David
Myers, Gord
Nagy, Judit
Nepomnaschy, Pablo
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Neil, Dugan
O'Neill, Susan
Pahou, Helen
Parent, Michael
Parkhouse, Wade
Parmar, Abhishek
Percival, Colin
Schiphorst, Thecla
Shapiro, Lisa
Silverman, Michael
Spector, Stephen
Stockie, John
Vrooman, Tamara
Walsby, Charles

Absent:

Elle, Elizabeth
Gardinetti, R. Georges
Hogg, Robert
Lu, Joseph
McTavish, Rob
Pantophlet, Ralph
Phangura, Almas
Shinkar, Igor

In Attendance:

Davis, Trevor

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. The Minutes of the Open Session of December 6, 2021 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on February 7, 2022

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that January marks the beginning of another unusual term due to the pandemic, but plans are in place to continue the operation of the University while placing the safety of faculty staff and students at the forefront of decision making. SFU continues to work closely with Public Health and a decision was made to begin the Spring term online, with the exception of labs and other courses requiring a face-to-face component. The shift to online is temporary, and at this time the University is expecting to return to in-person teaching on January 24th. It was noted that SFU had a safe return to campus in the fall and that there are layers of protection in place to ensure that the return to campus will be as safe as possible.

The Chair reported that on January 5th SFU announced Dr. Yabome Gilpin-Jackson as SFU's first Vice-President, People, Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Gilpin-Jackson has deep connections to the SFU community as both an alumnus and an adjunct faculty member, is a leader in organizational development and people practices, and has expertise in equity, diversity and inclusion, and in transformational change. Dr. Gilpin-Jackson officially begins her role as Vice-President on April 15, 2022, but has already started the on-boarding process.

The Chair reported that the President's Faculty Lecture resumes on January 25th with a lecture by Taco Niet of the School of Sustainable Energy Engineering. The topic will be *Just Climate Policies* and how evidence-based modelling tools are essential for making climate policy decisions grounded in justice and equity. This will be followed by a lecture on February 2nd by Vaibhav Saria of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies on how the complex history of health care in India has led to a valorization of care providers' work during COVID-19, but also to increased violence against them.

The Chair reported that SFU is working on planning the development of a new strategic plan and has met with a number of individuals and groups to seek advice on how to best approach an inclusive consultation with SFU's communities. Consideration is being given to delivering training on decolonizing practices for the executive and advisory team and to adding faculty members to the advisory team to ensure that the academic mission of the University is a major focus of the work.

The Chair reported that SFU has again experienced transit difficulties due to recent snowfall and that the construction of a gondola would provide a difference-making rapid transit option. The Chair, in her role as President, will be meeting with the Burnaby Mayor and Council on January 11th in a closed session with TransLink, with a vote on the gondola expected by the Council later in January.

5. Question Period

i) Senator Bhalloo submitted the following question:

SFU launched an 8-week Covid 19 rapid Screening project on Burnaby campus in June 2021. The pilot project involved students living in on-campus residences, and varsity athletes from invited sports teams. According to Martin Mroz, director of SFU Health and Counselling Services, the pilot project was to allow us to detect possible cases of Covid 19 early on, prevent the spread and protect the safety of the SFU community and to determine the feasibility of a wider screening approach for SFU, if needed in the future.

1. What did we learn from this pilot project? Any statistics you can share with us from this project? Any plans to adopt rapid testing university wide particularly as the Omicron variant is much more transmissible than the Delta variant and it is not limited to just the unvaccinated?

2. As BC faces yet another surge in COVID-19 cases driven by the Omicron variant, and health officials have announced new public health restrictions, including limits on indoor gatherings, including a requirement of B.C. vaccine cards for events of all sizes, including those involving fewer than 50 people, is there any plan by SFU to require mandatory vaccination of all those who attend our campuses since Covid 19 and its variants do not discriminate between educational gatherings in lecture rooms and other discretionary social gatherings?

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

Senate was informed that SFU ran a pilot on the Burnaby campus for eight weeks during the summer with students living on campus in residence and with varsity athletes. There were 475 eligible participants in the pilot study, of which 24 chose to participate. All participants were screened twice a week for eight weeks and there were zero positive screening tests for the duration of the program.

The main purpose of this pilot was to prevent the spread of COVID among students who live in residence or who play varsity athletics. In order to determine if rapid testing could help prevent the spread of COVID and to help the University develop clinical and logistical guidelines for a larger rapid screening program on campus, groups were chosen that were in sustained close contact with one another where there is some evidence they will be more likely to spread COVID. On this first objective little was learned because there wasn't any COVID spread during this period, either amongst people who participated in rapid screening or amongst the majority of students in varsity athletics or in residence. The second phase of the screening program was established for ten weeks in the fall, and consisted of conducting routine asymptomatic screening of SFU Community members who had declared themselves to be unvaccinated or who preferred not to state their vaccination status. There was limited uptake for this second phase, with only an average of 64 tests being conducted per week, with no cases of COVID being found. Noting that CDC guidelines changed throughout the fall, it was found that in a highly immunized population, rapid antigen testing is not overly effective in asymptomatic individuals. At present, rapid antigen tests available in the province are being used to test symptomatic individuals, given that rapid antigen tests are not effective until individuals have had symptoms for several days. In

terms of rapid antigen testing as a way of discovering in advance that somebody has COVID, it is understood that PCR testing can do this, but rapid antigen testing isn't very effective. Despite this, the provincial government is making available to post-secondary institutions half a million tests, which SFU is now trying to determine how best to utilize given that one would need to invite symptomatic people onto campus to get tested.

In terms of implementing a mandatory vaccine requirement to be on campus, SFU is not considering such a measure at this time. An audit was done through November of SFU's vaccine declaration system in which 10% of declarations were verified (roughly 2700 individual declarations) and there were roughly 43 that could not be verified, either because the photo was blurry or the declaration came from a jurisdiction outside of Canada. As such, it is believed that the SFU community has a very high vaccination rate. It was noted that evidence has shown that a distinction regarding risk should be drawn between social gatherings where people are facing one another and chatting, and gatherings in a lecture theater.

ii) Senator Pahou submitted the following question:

As students revert back to online learning, a key concern rests on maintaining their mental health. Students have expressed concerns towards the increase of suicide ideation, drug misuse and drug overdose while furthering their undergraduate degrees online. This is especially a risk for students coming from marginalized, inadequate and underprivileged living conditions. In addition, students have voiced prominent dissatisfaction towards the shortage and unavailability of mental health counselors to consult with on so-called "accessible" resources like My SSP and SFU Health and Counseling. While the pandemic progresses into its second year, students are continuing to lose trust in the effectiveness of the resources set up by our institution. Does our Executive have any plans to solve the shortage of counselors within our existing mental health resources? And, does our institution have any updated priorities to further protect the mental health needs of our marginalized students?

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

Senate was informed that Dr. Henry and the British Columbia Public Health Authority has updated return to campus guidelines late in December and strongly urged that teaching remain in-person. The reason for this urging not to return to remote education is based on province-wide research and detailed surveying over the first year of the pandemic about the effect on young adults of being in a physically separated state. Thus, a main reason SFU wants to resume in-person teaching on January 24th is because evidence indicates that doing so is one of the most important thing to do in terms of mental health and well-being.

Concerning counseling and My SSP, SFU has hired a number of new counselors as part of the return to campus plan in the fall. Also, the University has reached out to My SSP to emphasize the need to have counselors who share some common background culturally and socially with our students and My SSP has added some indigenous counselors and black counselors. There are also other sources that students seek out for mental health support including the Multifaith Centre, which receives over 5000 visits per week, the Sexual Violence Prevention Office and the Indigenous Student Center. Across these units, a number of additional case managers have been

hired, many of whom are trained as counselors or social workers, to increase the breadth of help available. SFU also conducted a survey in Fall 2021 of students who have engaged with MY SSP, students who chose not to engage with My SSP, and of students who were not aware of My SSP and found a number of small tweaks that could be made to improve the service and also found that not enough has been done to publicize the availability of the service because not enough students reported that they knew about it, despite the rate of usage being high. It was added that it will always be a challenge to provide enough resources, including those for mental health, which is why there is a desire to return to in-person activities.

iii) Senator Nagy submitted the following question:

In regards to SFU's announcement to move instruction online for two weeks in January, students have expressed great concern over the type of education they will be receiving, especially pertaining to course delivery methods. SFU has released a list of courses that would be taught remotely for Fall 2021 last summer. This was meant to help students who could not return to Canada, or individuals who belonged to vulnerable populations. A semester later, and with Omicron becoming a major cause for concern, will SFU increase the number of courses, and seats within said courses, that will be delivered remotely, in accordance with the Spring 2022 list? Students should have the same opportunity to complete their degrees, regardless whether they are studying on campus or online; the current online course offerings are not adequate to meet graduation and program requirements. So, will SFU look to implement program-necessary classes to be taught both in-person and online, allowing students to make their own choices? This is based on the assumption that SFU plans to return to in-person instruction after January 24, while abiding Provincial Health Orders. However, is SFU prepared to offer more hybrid/remote classes to those who do not feel safe to return to campus?

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

Senate was informed SFU would face significant constraint in trying to add new courses that are offered in a different mode at this point in time, with the single largest hurdle being the duty as an institution to consider the workload of instructors, many of whom are struggling under the demands of teaching in two different modes at once. Instructors are being encouraged to record their lectures and find ways to accommodate students who are sick and unable to be on campus, but it is possible that some students who cannot physically be on campus may encounter difficulties getting the courses they want because the University is not able to meet the vast diversity of needs that exist for students.

iv) Senator Parmar submitted the following question:

Uncertainty around the status of classes for the Spring semester has left many students in a state of limbo. Students don't know whether they should drop or keep classes because either they do not want to attend in-person classes or do not attend online classes. This leads to practices like course hoarding where students will keep an extra course or two to account for the uncertainty. This will also lead to mass drops once the teaching method is disclosed. These mass drops may mean entire sections of classes lose the bulk of their students. Both the uncertainty and class hoarding are two major factors of anxiety for students and the latter also being a stress factor

for professors who may barely have enough students to run classes. The further the decision on the future teaching method of Spring 2022 is delayed, the less time students will have to change accommodations (if classes are online, some students may be able to save on rent by staying at home or at cheaper accommodations further away from campus), picking up jobs (if classes are online many students have expressed they will not take classes and simply work instead) or change their class schedule to reflect the mass drops that will occur.

When can students expect SFU to commit their primary teaching method for the Spring 2022 semester? Additionally, will SFU consider moving its Add deadline to accommodate students who are unhappy with the selected teaching method?

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

Senate was informed that SFU made a commitment in Fall 2021 to return to in-person activities and is again committed to returning to in-person on January 24th. The University continues to monitor the situation closely, but based on daily communications with provincial health authorities, it is unlikely that students would be ordered out of classrooms during the Spring term. The two-week pause was announced to allow for planning and preparation, with the intention of returning to campus after that two-week period.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

i) Revisions to GP 23 (S.22-1)

Moved by C. Dauvergne, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors revisions to GP 23.”

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Updated Policy R20.02 (S.2-2)

Senate received Updated Policy R20.02 for information.

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

A comment was made to note that the definition of *Biohazardous Materials*, defined as *biological agents and materials that are potentially hazardous to humans, animals and other forms of life*, should include the word *biological* in front of the word *materials* to clarify the meaning.

B) Senate Committee on International Activities (SCIA)

i) Annual Report 2019 (S.22-3)

Senate received the Senate Committee on International Activities (SCIA) Annual Report 2019 for information.

ii) Annual Report 2020 (S.22-4)

Senate received the Senate Committee on International Activities (SCIA) Annual Report 2020 for information.

A question was asked regarding how often proposals for international activities get denied by SCIA. Senate was informed that under the current Chair, SCIA has not turned down any proposal for new partnerships or new student exchange agreements, though it was noted that very few proposals for new partnerships and new exchange agreements have been received. Much of the processing being done is for the renewal of longstanding relationships with existing partners around the world. The small number that have been considered have been new partnerships that get reviewed and discussed by SCIA, none of which raised red flags. It was added that GP23 requires more than an editorial review of SFU's international activities. Consideration needs to be given to how the University chooses to form partnerships, why those partnerships are chosen, and how to support new partnerships.

A comment was made that prior to the current Chair, SCIA did vote against or ask serious questions about certain partnerships, particularly around field schools where there was a concern for student safety or around the quality of the institution being considered.

C) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)**i) Program Changes (S.22-5)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Beedie School of Business, and the Faculty of Environment (Geography).

ii) New Course Proposals (S.22-6)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (Publishing Program).

iii) Course Changes (S.22-7)

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 Computing Science, School of Engineering Science), the Beedie School of Business, the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication, School of Interactive Art and Technology), and the Faculty of Environment (School of Resource and Environmental Management).

D) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Graduate General Regulation (GGR) Revisions (S.22-8)**

Moved by J. Derksen, seconded by S. Spector

“That Senate approve the revisions to GGR 1.5.2 (Competency Grading Basis).”

Noting the shift away from using IP (In Progress) as a designation, a question was asked as to what happens when a course spans more than one term. Senate was informed that the IP

designation will remain for something that still is in progress, but not for when a course is completed, which gets capped off with Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Program Changes (S.22-9)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a program change in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (School for International Studies).

iii) New Course Proposals (S.22-10)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (School for International Studies, Liberal Studies Program, Urban Studies Program).

iv) Course Changes (S.22-11)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Science (Earth Sciences).

E) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)

i) Senate Committee Elections (S.22-12 Revised)

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

F) Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries (SPCSAB)

i) Annual Report 2020/2021 (S.22-13)

Senate received the Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries (SPCSAB) Annual Report 2020/2021 for information.

A question was asked if it's anticipated that the high level of bursary funding for international students will remain high or will it return to previous funding levels. Senate was informed that it is anticipated that the level will move in the direction of its pre-pandemic level, though maybe not all the way. It was added that the need for bursary funding for domestic students, which was down during the pandemic due to funds made available by the federal and provincial governments, will start to increase as that government funding ends.

A question was asked about open scholarships being directly linked to GPA, thereby disadvantaging students from certain faculties where the GPA average is lower. Senate was informed that this topic is something that SPCSAB has been working on and is on the agenda for the next SPCSAB meeting. Contact has been made with other post-secondary institutions in BC to see how they handle this issue and found that most either allocate finding in a similar fashion to SFU or they allocate proportionally to faculties and then have a different threshold within each faculty. When looking at the breakdown of the awarding of open scholarships by faculty over the last few years, distributing proportionally by faculty would reduce the number awarded to the hardest grading faculties, those being Applied Sciences and Science. It was added the

maintenance of a high GPA is not solely a matter of which faculty a student is in, but on which courses a student is taking.

A comment was made that it may be useful to consider how grading policies within certain faculties serve to disadvantage some students when competing for scholarships.

7. Other Business

i) Proposed Updates to the Board of Governors Election Rules (S.22-14)

Senate received Proposed Updates to the Board of Governors Election Rules for information.

Francesca Hennigar, Legal Counsel - Office of the General Counsel & University Secretary, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked if the revised section regarding faculty members require that they be members of SFUFA. Senate was informed that it does not have that requirement.

8. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, February 7, 2022

Open session adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Tom Nault
Senate Secretary