



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, September 12, 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
Arseneault, Donovan
Bhalloo, Shafik
Bird, Gwen
Bubela, Tania
Campbell, Lara
Chapman, Glenn
Chessel, Patrick
Coleman, Gordon
Collard, Mark
Daniel, Bryan
Denholm, Julia
Derksen, Jeff
Elle, Elizabeth
Everton, Mike
Faris, Reema
Fiume, Eugene
Gray, Bonnie
Hendrigan, Holly
Herrenbrueck, Lucas
Karaivanov, Alexander
Krogman, Naomi
Kumpulainen, Kristiina
Lam, Allan
Leznoff, Daniel
Liu, Connie
Magnusson, Kris
Masri, Kamal
Masri, Lynn
McTavish, Rob
Myers, Gord
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Neil, Dugan
Pantophlet, Ralph
Parkhouse, Wade
Parmar, Abhishek

Percival, Colin
Rashmi, Samiya
Schiphorst, Thecla
Shinkar, Igor
Sidhu, Harneer
Silverman, Michael
Spector, Stephen
Stockie, John
Tingling, Peter (for Ujwal Kayande)
Van Veen, Melissa
Williams, JF

Absent:

Ahsan, Shariq
Brennand, Tracy
Dhesa, Priyanka
Kayande, Ujwal
Laitsch, Dan
Murphy, David
Nagy, Judit
Nepomnaschy, Pablo
Parent, Michael
Subbiah, Arun
Tran, Lisa
Vrooman, Tamara
Williams, Vance

In Attendance:

Blair, Alison
Blue, Dan
Linklater, Kristen
Naqvi, Zareen

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed, with item S.22-88 being withdrawn at the request of the Senate Committee on University Priorities Chair.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of June 6, 2022

The minutes of the open session on June 6, 2022 were approved as distributed.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of July 4, 2022

The minutes of the open session on July 4, 2022 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 in the interest of centering the academic mission of the University, work is currently being done with the Provost pro tem to strengthen the role of the Provost and the Provost Office. In order to better share information and to give the Provost more decision-making authority, two committees have been struck. The first is an Integrated Planning and IT Strategy Committee, with the second being the Capital Planning Committee. It was added that information and timelines will be shared on the recruitment of a new Provost and that the University will be seeking nominations for membership on the search committee.

The Chair reported that since the July meeting of Senate, two new Deans have been appointed. The first is Dr. Angela Brooks-Wilson, who has been named Dean of the Faculty of Science, effective October 31, 2022. Dr. Brooks-Wilson has recently served as Associate Vice-President, Research pro tem and as a professor and chair in the Department of Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology. The second is Dr. Laurel Weldon, who has been named Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, effective January 1, 2023. Dr. Weldon is a professor in the Department of Political Science and is a member of the Royal Society of Canada and an SFU distinguished professor.

The Chair reported that eight SFU scholars have been named to the Royal Society of Canada – six as Fellows and two as members of the society's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists. Congratulations was offered to David Chariandy, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Dana Lepofsky, Laura Marks, Judy Radul, Maite Taboada, Angela Kaida and Meghan Winters.

The Provost pro tem provided the following updates on enrolment:

- For Fall 2022, based on data up to day 45, it is estimated SFU will be 7% below target for international AFTEs and 2% above target for domestic AFTEs.
- For Fall 2022, headcount is estimated that SFU will be 7% below for new undergraduate international students and 13% above target for new undergraduate domestic students (about 545 more students than anticipated).
- At the graduate level, regular graduate AFTEs are up 4%.

- Based on data up to day 45, it is estimated the final non-coop Graduate Specialty AFTE figure will be 14% below targets, with some of that due to large co-op enrolment relative to last year (186 vs. 48).
- SFU is seeing a higher than normal melt rate among international students that accepted offers but did not show up, likely as the result of visa processing issues and other factors.

i) Annual Financial Report (S.22-86)

Senate received the Annual Financial Report for information.

Alison Blair, Associate Vice-President - Finance, and Dan Blue, Director - Financial Services, were in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked as to when the 2021/2022 Statement of Financial Information will be available. Senate was informed that the Statement of Financial Information will be on the Board of Governors agenda for September and is then submitted to the government by the end of September. Once approval has been granted by both entities, the report will be made available to Senate.

ii) SFU: What's Next? Update

The Chair, in her role as President, provided Senate with an update and a presentation on SFU: What's Next? for information.

Kristin Linklater, Associate Vice-President, Communications & Marketing, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Senate was informed that the main sponsor of SFU: What's Next? is the President and the Provost. Though SFU has had a vision for the University, it has lacked an overarching strategic plan or framework. This initiative is to help the entire SFU community think about what its priorities should be and how SFU situates itself within the larger community. A number of discussions across different portfolios have occurred over the past months involving deans, vice-presidents, senior leadership, and a core team of consultants made up of faculty, staff and equity deriving groups. Groundwork was laid out in March and April of 2021 with online work and a survey, gathering broad input from the university community, asking questions about the vision, values and next big ideas to pursue. In order to deepen the conversation, SFU: What's Next? is now moving into its second phase. This will allow for an analysis of the feedback that has been provided and sharpen the focus as to what initiatives can be undertaken to deliver a meaningful vision and a strategy to get there. This strategy will be approved by the Board of Governors and will come to Senate for information.

SFU: What's Next? has been using an appreciative inquiry approach, asking what can the University do more of, what is it doing well, how can it build upon its accomplishments. This approach included a survey, a thought exchange, and an online dialogue, as well as roundtable discussions with stakeholders. Next steps will include creating full reports on the feedback that has been provided, continuing with roundtable discussions to test out some of the ideas being heard from the SFU community, and holding a townhall event to engage the broader community and help shape the plan.

iii) Medical School Update

Wade Parkhouse, Provost and Vice-President, Academic pro tem and Tania Bubela, Dean of Health Sciences, provided Senate with an update and a presentation on a potential medical school at SFU.

Senate was informed that SFU regularly approaches government about establishing new programs. Over the past ten years, SFU has periodically raised the subject of creating a medical school to serve the needs of British Columbians. These approaches take years to pay dividends and ultimately, not all are successful. The School of Sustainable Energy Engineering (SEE) program and building took 4-5 years to gain approval, another 3 years to construct the building and for Applied Sciences to develop the curriculum. For the last 18 months SFU has engaged with its partners, initiated substantial consultation with communities and developed a concept paper on what an SFU Medical Program could look like. This paper was submitted in April 2022. Since the government caucus meeting in June 2022, SFU has continued to work on understanding the workplan that would be needed to launch a medical school should the government decide to commit. Such approval would initiate work on developing a curriculum, establishing a governance structure and seeking approvals through normal Senate structures. The Board of Governors will ultimately decide if SFU goes forward with the creation of a medical school if it is approved by Senate.

Noting the support of the current NDP government for a medical school at SFU, a question was asked if the University has been in discussion with the opposition party to determine their level of support should they win the next provincial election. Senate was informed that members of SFU leadership meet regularly with BC's opposition party, and though nothing is finalized, the University is fairly confident that it would have their support.

A question was asked if government support for an SFU medical school has changed given UBC's purchase of land in Surrey for a potential expansion of its medical programs. Senate was informed that UBC has purchased a \$70-million site at the intersection of King George Boulevard and Fraser Highway, and though they have ambitions related to medical education, there has been no approved programming for that site at this time.

6. Question Period

- i) Senator Myers (on behalf of Maite Taboada (FASS), Oliver Schulte (FAS), Nilima Nigam (SCI), and himself) submitted the following question:

As of July 1st, we have had 5 different Provosts in less than 6 years.¹ The Provost position is far and away the most important executive position in the university in pursuit of our mission of research and educational excellence. This extreme instability will make it very difficult to appoint a great Provost next year. One is bound to wonder whether the instability in the Provost position may be the source of our struggles. SFU has declined in the standard university rankings over the last decade. There has been a striking growth in VP and AVP positions in Strand Hall. There has been an explosion in additional administrative managers (APSA) and a crippling lack of hiring of tenure track professors who teach students, do research, and engage

with our communities. These problems have been repeatedly documented at Senate and elsewhere over the last few years.

After our most recent Provost Catherine Dauvergne arrived a report was commissioned from an expert, UBC's former VP of Human Resources Lisa Castle. The subject matter was SFU's executive (Strand Hall) structure and how it compared to other Canadian universities. We have heard speculation that the conclusion was that the SFU executive structure has a Provost with extraordinarily limited authority. Much less than is normal at comparable universities and less than is required to move the academic mission forward. The reason we are speculating is that the report has not been released to Senate. Provost Dauvergne recently resigned. This report will allow the SFU community to better understand our situation, and to have a fulsome and constructive discussion around governance. There is urgency around a clearer definition of the role of the most important academic executive position in our institution.

Given that the university is struggling to fulfill its core academic mission, will the President please be transparent and release the Castle report to Senate so that the SFU community can start working towards helping our university?

The Chair, in her role as President, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that it is broadly recognized that the Provost model at SFU needs to be strengthened, and there is a commitment to do so. It is also recognized that the University cannot move forward to hire the next Provost without strengthening that model. It was noted that the Board of Governors approves administrative positions and have expressed concern with the turnover rate of recent provosts. In regards to the Castle Report, Senate was informed that the report would be made available to those who request it.

- ii) Senator Myers (on behalf of Maite Taboada (FASS), Oliver Schulte (FAS), Nilima Nigam (SCI), and himself) submitted the following question:

Last year at Senate and the Board of Governors we pointed out that in the previous 10 years, up to March 31, 2021, both the total number of students (AFTE) and the total number of professors (tenure-track/researchers) had been flat.² During the same 10-year period ending March 2021, well over 500 new APSA positions were created, a majority of those in central administration.

Since we asked our questions last year, the university executive has seen fit to create over 90 new APSA positions with over 75 of those in central administration!

We note the university has been unable to create even 40 net new tenure-track positions in the last 13 years.

We ask again; what is SFU's plan to rein in this explosive growth and achieve some balance across administrative and academic appointments in the pursuit of our core academic mission of teaching and research?

Wade Parkhouse, Provost and Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that there has been growth in APSA staffing in recent years, and this is partly due to the need for the University to develop programs around sexual violence, mental health, and other programs targeting students. There are now also a number of large grants available to hire APSA staff to support the research community. Over the last four years, the faculty compliment has grown by 80 positions, moving from 970 to 1050, with a significant number of those being tenure track appointments. One thing that will help the University determine where APSA growth is occurring and how much is externally funded is the use of Cubane data, which is benchmarking data that will allow for comparisons with other institutions and measure the satisfaction of the work being done. Also, a Budget Planning Committee has been created for the Fall term that is no longer using incremental budgeting for support units to determine whether or not the budget is appropriate, and whether staffing compliments are appropriate.

7. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

i) Revised Senate Library Committee (SLC) Terms of Reference (S.22-87)

Moved by S. Spector, seconded by G. Chapman

“That Senate approve revisions to the Senate Library Committee Terms of Reference.”

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

B) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

i) External Review Mid-Cycle Report for Department of Earth Sciences (S.22-89)

Senate received the External Review Mid-Cycle Report for Department of Earth Sciences for information.

A question was asked if Earth Sciences will get the supports it needs to hire another faculty member. Senate was informed that Earth Sciences is one of the most effective research departments at SFU, but does suffer from a lack of students taking their programs. In response to the need for growth, they were asked to develop a plan as to how they were going to address these concerns. Once that plan was provided, the new faculty position was approved. It was added that there has been some faculty growth in programs with high student demand and attention does need to be given to recruitment given that the budget model rewards programs with high demand and high student numbers.

A number of comments were made that consideration needs to be given to the way SFU allocates funding between units and that the academic mission of the university should encompass both research and teaching and learning, rather than simply looking at the number of students in a program.

ii) External Review Mid-Cycle Report for School of Engineering Science (S.22-90)

Senate received the External Review Mid-Cycle Report for School of Engineering Sciences for information.

Noting that the number of tenure track faculty in Engineering Science is the same as the number in 1996, a question asked about the state of faculty renewal in Engineering Science. Senate was informed that the faculty complement has increased. It was added that within Applied Sciences there are much higher costs involved in training engineers and must work from a single faculty allocation model requiring a more judicious consideration in the application of faculty positions. There are also constraints around who can be hired due to Engineering Science being an accredited program.

C) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)

i) Senate Committee Elections (S.22-91)

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

i) Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2021/22 Grades Report (S.22-92)

Senate received the Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2021/22 Grades Report for information.

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

Noting that grades went up during the pandemic, a question was asked if cheating might account for this rise. Senate was informed that there are a number of parameters that affected grading at that time, with academic integrity being one of them. A more significant factor is likely that faculty members were more lenient in their grading during the pandemic, coupled with some of the grading policies that were brought into effect to ensure that students were not harmed as a result of working exclusively online.

A question was asked about Faculty of Education grades being well above the average and Beedie School of Business grades being well below the average and if there is any concern around this. Senate was informed that for Education, considerable time has been spent on improving student learning. The intention of Education is not to grade on the curve, but rather to distort the curve by introducing interventions designed to foster learning. This is supported by a wide range of data that shows when proper strategies are used, learning occurs. With regard to the Beedie School of Business, grading norms are used and the consistency indicated in the grades report speaks to the quality of education being offered. It is also the expectation of Business to see an improvement in the disciplinary knowledge over time, but it is important to maintain a quality of teaching across the faculty.

A question was asked about the usage rate of elective grading and if any changes need to be made to make it more effective. Senate was informed that the data is in the process of being analyzed.

A question was asked about lower division grading in the Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Education being lower when compared with other faculties over the past year and if more support is required. Senate was informed that after having been previously inflated, grades

are now returning to their more normal levels. Attention does need to be given to students who finished high school in a remote setting and additional support may be required, but such measures are being left up to individual academic units.

With open scholarships being based on GPA, a question was asked if students from faculties with higher GPA averages are being unfairly advantaged. Senate was informed that the Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries (SPCSAB) is aware of and has discussed this issue, but that for the time being has decided not to make changes to way in which open scholarships are awarded.

ii) Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2021 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report (S.22-93)

Senate received the Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2021 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report for information.

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

9. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, September 12, 2022

Open session adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Tom Nault
Senate Secretary