



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, July 8, 2024 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

Open Session

Present: Joy Johnson, Chair

Abu-Samhan, Mishael

Ali, Sikandra

Al-Rawi, Ahmed

Altman, Rachel

Bagga, Rishu

Baker, Micah

Bhalloo, Shafik

Bird, Gwen

Bullock, Cécile

Carcano, Luana

Chapman, Glenn

Denholm, Julia

Do, Henry

Eftenaru, Cristina

Elhayek, Abdulkarim

Everton, Mike

Fisher, Brian

Fiume, Eugene

Frank, Richard

Fung, Aaron

Gray, Bonnie

Gunawan, Derrick

Hall, Peter

Hashemi, Tara

Kim, Lisa

Krogman, Naomi

Leznoff, Daniel

Liu, Connie

Liu, Landy

Lysova, Alexandra

Magnusson, Kris

Masri, Kamal

Myers, Gord

Neustaedter, Carman

O'Brien, Mary

O'Neil, Dugan

Parmar, Abhishek

Percival, Colin

Rassier, Dilson

Ricker, Amy

Schiphorst, Thecla

Snyder, Jeremy

Stockie, John

Sutherland, Jill

Szymczyk, Barbara

Thornton, Allen

Traversa, Marissa

Tucker, Rochelle

Weldon, Laurel

Williams, Vance

Absent:

Brennand, Tracy

Brooks-Wilson, Angela

Collard, Mark

Egri, Carolyn

Fatima, Fatima

Herrenbrueck, Lucas

Karaivanov, Alexander

Kerr, Jeannie

Kessler, Anke

Laitsch, Dan

Martell, Matt

McKenzie, Janis

Pantophlet, Ralph

Schmidt, Michèle

Tong, Pok Man

Vrooman, Tamara

Whitehurst, David

Williams, JF

In Attendance:

Kris Nordgren, Senate Secretary pro tem
Steven Noel, Recording Secretary

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of May 21, 2024

The minutes of the open session on May 21, 2024 were approved as distributed.

3. The Minutes of the Open Session of June 10, 2024 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on September 9, 2024

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

i) Amendment of Policy A32.03 Distinguished SFU Professor (S.24-95)

Senate received Amendment of Policy A32.03 Distinguished SFU Professor for information.

ii) Case Note - Faculty Association of UBC v. UBC (S.24-96)

Senate received Case Note - Faculty Association of UBC v. UBC for information.

5. Report of the Chair

The Chair thanked everyone who came out and supported the graduands at the June convocation ceremonies and noted that SFU now has over 200,000 alumni out in the world.

The Chair reported that Year One of *What's Next* implementation has been published and thanks was extended to all who work to support the university's priorities and academic mission.

The Chair reported that Joanne Curry is stepping down from her role as Vice-President, External Relations. Starting on July 5, Joanne will move into a special advisor role for nine months, supporting the university around government relations.

i) Report of the Provost

The Provost reported that the President has decided that, at least for the time being, the Vice-President, External Relations position will not be replaced. As a result, certain units that reported within that portfolio will now report elsewhere: Communications and Marketing and Government Relations will now report to the President; Ceremonies and Events will report to the Vice-President, Advancement & Alumni Engagement; a number of units dealing with community engagement, such as the Centre for Dialogue, SFU Public Square, and SFU Galleries, are being consolidated into one unit for community engagement reporting to the Provost and will work closely with the faculties to help advance the academic mission of the university.

6. Question Period

i) Senator Lysova submitted the following question:

My question is about concerns around the “SFU: What’s Next” studies and next steps to ensure high quality and validity of research designed to inform strategic plans and policies at SFU.

The “SFU What’s Next” reports are frequently used to justify SFU’s strategic priorities, policies, administrative initiatives, and financial decisions (e.g., see the June 18 “Message from the President: 2023–24 Community Report”). Yet the analysis in the reports appears to have some methodological issues, which were discussed at Town Halls on January 31, 2023, and September 13, 2023. I contacted the author of one of the reports (“SFU: What’s Next, Thought Exchange Data Analysis”) on August 21, 2023 for an explanation of the inconsistencies between the data and the conclusions but received no response.

Specifically, the conclusions presented in the reports often do not align with the data summaries but rather seem to mirror the strategic goals already set by the administration. For example, the report “Thought Exchange Data Analysis” (p.17) says: “The results from the coding reveal that overall, the current priorities of the University, namely Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as well as Student Experience are well-aligned with the sentiments of the community at SFU.” However, the report suggests that the community placed high importance on practical and immediate concerns such as improving financial support for faculty and staff (p.13), improving working conditions, and reducing bureaucracy (p.14). But these critical concerns were downplayed in the “Key Points” (p.3); increased financial support was not even mentioned. Labour issues (e.g., “helping staff and faculty afford the cost of living in the surrounding area”) were also identified as a faculty and staff priority in the “SFU What’s Next: Phase 2” study (p. 11). However, this priority is not specified in the section that summarizes the findings (p. 2) and is not reflected in the “What’s Next: The SFU Strategy” report.

Similarly, the SFU Strategic Planning Survey (Phase 1), which was conducted and analyzed by Academica group, found that reducing bureaucracy (4%) and reducing administration (3%) is one of the important ways to improve the experience at SFU (p. 42). However, this finding was not reflected in the “What’s Next: The SFU Strategy” report. Moreover, the “Uphold Truth and Reconciliation” priority – currently strategic priority #1 – does not seem to be identified as a priority in the “SFU: What’s Next” studies. In other words, the SFU Strategy report does not fully incorporate the survey results, yet it claims that the administration’s current priorities have broad support from the community.

In addition, at least two “SFU: What’s Next” studies involved the use of SFU graduate students for qualitative data analysis. These students “were not provided formal training” (SFU: What’s Next, Thought Exchange Data Analysis, p. 10) and were expected to have no “prior knowledge about common language employed at SFU when discussing the emerging topics” (SFU: What’s Next, Thought Exchange Data Analysis, p. 10), which is unlikely given that they have studied at SFU. The “SFU What’s Next: Student Summary report” does not provide information about who collected the data or how they were analyzed.

My question has two parts:

- i. *How can we ensure that the concerns and priorities expressed by the SFU community that were not included in “What’s Next: The SFU Strategy” are incorporated into the existing strategic priorities and implementation plan for the next four years?*

ii. *Will SFU commit to improving the quality of subsequent “What’s Next” and other related studies, and to more accurately representing the community’s priorities in the strategic plan? The process may include using a team of experienced qualitative and quantitative researchers selected through an open search at SFU to ensure valid analysis and interpretation, maintaining transparency in the methodology by providing detailed explanations of how themes were developed and mapped to strategic goals (including clear documentation of coding decisions and the rationale behind them), and re-engaging with the community to verify that the findings genuinely reflect the community’s priorities.*

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

Senate was informed that the engagement process was guided by the advice of a pan-university advisory team that included faculty members. Engagement activities included student pop-up sessions, round table discussions within faculties and departments, a survey, insights gathered through an online platform called ThoughtExchange and conversations with external specialists. In addition to these activities, insights were incorporated from previous consultations, including the Diversity Meter, SFU Community Engagement Strategy, Walk This Path With Us report and the Student Experience Initiative.

The work being done was not intended as a formal study, but rather as a bottom-up assessment of the provided input. As such, students were hired and supervised to look at the data for themes. The advisory team wanted to hear from a broad group of people with connections to SFU to create a strategy that was reflective of the community’s priorities in a broad sense. However, any strategic plan requires choices to be made to set manageable goals and clear priorities, thus not every thought or idea shared during the process could be included in the plan.

The vision, purpose, priorities and values outlined in *What’s Next* reflect the cumulative insights captured from this process. It was important that the four priorities were aligned with feedback. The examples mentioned in the question – for example, the need to reduce bureaucracy and administration and improve working conditions for faculty and staff – are being addressed through the *Transform the SFU Experience* initiative. It was recently shared in the *What’s Next: Year 1 in Review* report that a number of actions have been implemented over the past year.

The Chair also noted that the advisory committee would take the recommendations under consideration and involve Senate more deeply going forward.

ii) Senator Frank submitted the following question:

According to a Statista study published March 11, 2024: “In 2021, around 1.2 million women were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in Canada, compared to about 931,220 men who were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in that same year.”

From a specific study conducted within BC, the 2011 high-school graduating cohort comprised 56,685 men and 56,411 women. Of these individuals, 17,851 men (31%) and 22,365 women

(40%) enrolled in a bachelor's degree program. In other words, of those progressing to university, women outnumbered men by 4,514 or 25%.

This trend is also visible in the United States, with 46% of women (ages 25 to 34) having a bachelor's degree compared to only 36% of men in the same age category. Currently, the majority of individuals who complete a US degree of any type are women, and this "trend can be seen in every stage of the education system, and in almost every country in the world".

A concrete SFU-based example of this phenomenon was mentioned in the recent proposal to create a graduate program within ENVS. The proposal stated that "[t]he current number of female students enrolled in the Master of Ecological Restoration program is 66%", while in the same paragraph stating that "Our enrollment plan includes a commitment to ensure increased participation of women and equity-deserving groups in Environmental Science.", even though they already constitute a wide majority.

It is now widely assumed that group differences in rates of involvement in education, employment, etc. indicate the existence of conscious or unconscious systemic barriers to participation. If such barriers do exist, they should be identified and eliminated. Given the significantly lower rates of participation of men at SFU, I would like to know whether the Senior Administration is willing to commit to (1) a review of the recruitment and retention of men into SFU's undergraduate and graduate programs and (2) the creation of policies to address any barriers that are identified.

Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that for 2023/2024, the percentage of women applying for SFU programs is 50%, which is slightly down from the previous years. The percentage of women admitted to SFU is 51%, again showing a slight decrease from previous years. Given this close split between women and men and the slight decrease in the number of women applying and being accepted, it is felt that no further review needs to be given to this concern at this time. The example that was mentioned within the Faculty of Environment is specific to one program and the Provost Office should not be managing programs around what they are doing to achieve balance in their enrollment. It was added that the application and enrollment numbers for the past five years can be publicly accessed on the Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) webpage.

7. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR) i) Proposed Public Interest Disclosure Policy (S.24-98)

Senate received Proposed Public Interest Disclosure Policy for consultation.

Alison Blair, Interim Director of Internal Audit, did a PowerPoint presentation, after which she took questions.

Regarding section 7.3(h) of the Procedures document, a comment was made that the language should read that the Designated Officer...will forward the Disclosure to the appropriate

University office(s) *with the permission of the reporter*, given the policy is intended to allow for anonymous reporting and there may be cases where somebody would be concerned about having details forwarded that may reveal their identity.

A question was asked regarding why the definition of *employee* includes members of the SFU Board of Governors as employees but not Senators. Senate was informed that under the definition of employee in the PIDA Act Board members are included.

A comment was made that the concept of anonymity is fluid given that there will be times when the nature of the complaint is such that the party who is being complained about will know the origin of that complaint. Also, within the principles of natural justice, in order for someone to properly respond to a complaint, the respondent will need to know more specifically the allegations and where they come from. As such, anonymity cannot be guaranteed for every disclosure.

ii) Changes to Policy GP 44 – Sexualized Violence Policy (S.24-99)

Senate received Proposed Amendments to Policy B10.00 (Policy on University Policies and Procedures) for information.

CJ Rowe, Director - Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A concern was raised regarding the change to the title of the policy and the language used in the policy by replacing *sexual violence and misconduct* with *sexualized violence*. Arguing that the use of the term *sexualized violence* is jargon, with violence now being applied to forms of non-physical harm, a request was made to either reinstate the original language or delay the changes until a rationale for the changes can be constructed and communicated to the SFU community. Senate was informed that the move to use the term *sexualized violence* comes from years of work being done across the country to modernize sexual violence policies with language adopted and championed by the anti-violence movement. Further, feedback from survivors was positive about the changes, feeling that their experiences were better represented, especially by those who hadn't been impacted by physical violence. The plan for the rollout of the policy is to have a concrete and solidified education plan in order to support the university in adopting all of the language changes that are being made within the policy, appendix and procedures.

A question was asked about section 3.6 and the rationale for a report having to be made within one year of the alleged incident. Senate was informed that the one-year framework for this comes from the Human Rights Tribunal, along with SFU's human rights policy GP 18, which accept complaints or reports related to sexual harassment within one year of experiencing the last instance of sexual harassment.

A question was asked about any remaining gaps in the policy and what the next steps would be. Senate was informed that feedback from the last two rounds of consultation focused on two potential issues: the first is creating a prohibited relationship clause in the policy prohibiting relationships when there are power imbalances in the relationship, the most notable example being between an instructor and a student; the second is mandated training for faculty, staff and

students. It was noted that a document is being drafted summarizing all findings and feedback and how it will be addressed between now and the next policy review period.

iii) Senate Review Committee Interim Report #2 (S.24-100)

Senate received Senate Review Committee Interim Report #2 for information.

B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

i) Duolingo English Test - Pilot Extension (S.24-101)

Moved by P. Hall, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve a subsequent two-year extension of the Duolingo English Test pilot for the Spring 2025 through to Fall 2026 terms.”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Program Changes (S.24-102)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Beedie School of Business, and the Faculty of Science (Mathematics).

iii) New Course Proposals (S.24-103)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Interactive Art and Technology), and the Faculty of Science (Mathematics).

iv) Course Changes (S.24-104)

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), the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (World Languages and Literatures), the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication, School of Interactive Arts and Technology), the Faculty of Environment (Geography), and the Faculty of Science (Mathematics).

C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)

i) Graduate General Regulation 1.3.3 and 1.7.7c (S.24-105)

Motion 1:

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by A. Fung

“That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.3.3 English Language Proficiency.”

A concern was raised about the effect lowering English language standards may have on academic performance. Senate was informed that Graduate Studies is lowering the overall minimum English language proficiency score and giving programs more leeway in what it is that

they're allowed to accept. It was added that programs can decide if they want students to submit a writing sample, and they are also encouraged to meet with every incoming student to ensure that they possess the required language skills to succeed in the program.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

Motion 2:

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by H. Do

“That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.7.7c Laddering Credit.”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) New Course Proposals (S.24-106)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Environment (Geography), the Faculty of Health Sciences, and Graduate Studies.

iii) Course Changes (S.24-107)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Beedie School of Business.

D) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)

i) Senate Committee Elections (S.24-108)

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, September 9, 2024

Open session adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Kris Nordgren
Senate Secretary pro tem