



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on  
Monday, October 7, 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  
Baker, Micah  
Bhalloo, Shafik  
Bird, Gwen  
Brennand, Tracy  
Brooks-Wilson, Angela  
Bullock, Cécile  
Carcano, Luana  
Collard, Mark  
Denholm, Julia  
Do, Henry  
Eftenaru, Cristina  
Egri, Carolyn  
Everton, Mike  
Fatima, Fatima  
Fisher, Brian  
Fiume, Eugene  
Frank, Richard  
Fung, Aaron  
Gunawan, Derrick  
Hall, Peter  
Hashemi, Tara  
Herrenbrueck, Lucas  
Karaivanov, Alexander  
Kerr, Jeannie  
Kim, Lisa  
Kingsbury, Paul  
Laitsch, Dan  
Leznoff, Daniel  
Liu, Connie  
Lysova, Alexandra  
Martell, Matt  
McKenzie, Janis  
Myers, Gord  
Neustaedter, Carman

O'Brien, Mary  
O'Neil, Dugan  
Pantophlet, Ralph  
Parmar, Abhishek  
Percival, Colin  
Schiphorst, Thecla  
Snyder, Jeremy  
Stockie, John  
Sutherland, Jill  
Szymczyk, Barbara  
Thornton, Allen  
Tong, Pok Man  
Traversa, Marissa  
Tucker, Rochelle  
Weldon, Laurel  
Whitehurst, David  
Williams, Vance

**Absent:**

Bagga, Rishu  
Chapman, Glenn  
Elhayek, Abdulkarim  
Gray, Bonnie  
Kessler, Anke  
Krogman, Naomi  
Liu, Landy  
Masri, Kamal  
Rassier, Dilson  
Ricker, Amy  
Schmidt, Michèle  
Vrooman, Tamara  
Williams, JF

**In Attendance:**  
Cooper, Elizabeth  
Marshall, Steve  
Spector, Stephen  
Stern, Pamela

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 September 9, 2024**

The minutes of the open session on September 9, 2024 were approved as distributed.

**3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

**4. Report of the Chair**

The Chair reported that three weeks ago, the federal government announced a further 10% reduction of international student permits over the next two years. It was also announced that the international student cap is now inclusive of graduate and doctoral students. Provincial allocations related to the cap are still being determined, but it is known that 12% of permits will be reserved for master's and doctoral students. It was noted that the Vice-President, Academic and his team are on an international trip talking about international student recruitment and will continue to advance an International Enrolment Strategy and invest in key areas related to international enrolment.

The Chair reported that she, in her role as President, and the Vice-President, Research, were in Ottawa when the international student cap changes were announced to meet with federal representatives and advocate for SFU and the post-secondary sector. Over the course of three days, 26 meetings were held with a range of Members of Parliament, political staff, and senior bureaucrats from several federal offices, agencies and Ministries. These meetings largely centred around student housing, visa and work permits for international students, AI and quantum and clean tech.

The Chair reported that the search for a new Vice-President, Finance and Administration is well underway, led by PFM Executive Search. A Search Committee has been formed and has convened several times, and community consultation has been completed. The intention is to fill the role prior to the retirement of the current Vice-President, Finance, to ensure a smooth transition.

The Chair reported that Gohar Ashoughian has been appointed as SFU's new Dean of Libraries and University Librarian, as of November 15, 2024.

Noting that this would be the last Senate meeting for Gwen Bird, the Chair, on behalf of Senate, thanked Senator Bird for her work as Dean, and to the overall SFU community, since 2014. Senator McKenzie (Librarian) also spoke briefly on Gwen's leadership and on her commitment to listening and inclusion.

**i) Senate Review Committee Presentation**

Stephen Spector, Senate Review Committee member, did a brief presentation to update Senate on the work of the committee to date.

## 5. Question Period

i) Senator Myers submitted the following question:

*The centering of the academic mission is vital for SFU going forward. We advocate for more accountability and efficiency through further governance restructuring. The appointment of the VP Academic as Chief Budget Officer was an important step in this direction. We believe other changes are important in other VP portfolios as well.*

*The academic units are held accountable through regular, rigorous, and arm's-length reviews. These public reviews go to the executive, the Board, and the Senate. We believe all major portfolios will benefit from such exercises to help improve accountability, transparency, and the adoption of best practices.*

*As with academic external reviews, reviews of VP portfolios also need to be conducted by experts who are at arm's length and external to the university, not consultants hired by the VP. External performance reviews for all VP portfolios should be public, regular, and independent.*

*Will the Senior Administration commit to adopting public external performance reviews for all VP portfolios to strengthen academic governance?*

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

Senate was informed that the University will not commit to adopting public external performance reviews for all VP portfolios. This is in part due to already having a number of accountability processes in place:

- SFU operates within a provincial accountability framework and is accountable to the government to make sure that certain things are delivered and reports on a variety of measures to the province.
- SFU is audited by the Auditor General to ensure compliance.
- Senior leadership undergoes regular performance reviews through annual goal setting, annual assessments and 360 evaluations.
- Reviews of units are often conducted by external individuals with expertise to provide feedback that is accountable to administration and ultimately the Board of Governors.

It was added that improvements are being considered to the internal audit process, which assists the University by assessing if risk management, governance and internal control processes are operating effectively and to make recommendations on how they can be improved.

## 6. Report of Faculties regarding students who have met requirements for Degrees, Certificates, and Diplomas

i) **Adjustments – Graduate and Undergraduate Credentials (S.24-132)**

Senate received Adjustments – Graduate and Undergraduate Credentials for information.

## 7. Reports of Committees

### A) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

#### i) Establishment of the Global Institute for Agritech (S.24-133)

Moved by P. Hall, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve the establishment of the Global Institute for Agritech for a five-year term.”

Under *Alignment with What's Next and Strategic Research Plan*, a concern was raised with use of the language *prioritization of Indigenous ways of knowing*, feeling that such prioritization could be seen as prescriptive by expecting faculty members to prioritize a certain way of thinking. Senate was informed that this language is not intended as a commentary on what is and is not allowed but rather as what the Institute would prioritize in terms of the forms of knowledge it's dedicated to researching.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

#### ii) Establishment of the Centre for Research and Practice in Teacher Education (S.24-134)

Moved by P. Hall, seconded by M. O'Brien

“That Senate approve the establishment of the Centre for Research and Practice in Teacher Education for a five-year term.”

Steve Marshall, Associate Dean, Research and International - Faculty of Education, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Citing the use of terms like *anti-racism*, *advancing social justice within teacher education and classroom settings*, and *enacting activist pedagogies*, a question was asked regarding if the proposal can be revised to include more inclusive language that supports a diversity of perspectives and critical thinking. Senate was informed that critical inquiry is a core pillar of the faculty and is central to the focus of the Centre. The identified terms are core to the critical pedagogy approach of the Centre and is framed within a critical pedagogy perspective built into existing teacher education practice and research.

A comment was made that changing the wording of established areas of research and scholarship would violate the academic freedom of the proposers of the centre.

A question was asked to clarify if the document is setting goals or is it setting policy for the unit. Senate was informed that the document is identifying the Centre's research agenda and scholarly research areas and is not setting policy or behavioral values.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED,  
with two opposed.

**iii) External Review Report for the School for International Studies (S.24-135)**

Moved by P. Hall, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the School for International Studies that resulted from its external review”

Elizabeth Cooper, Director & Undergraduate Chair - School for International Studies, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Under *External Review Action Plan* a concern was raised with the wording *curriculum have been carefully renewed to ensure further decolonization and particularly inclusion of diverse perspectives, including centering Indigenous knowledge*, feeling that it could be seen as prescriptive coming from the departmental level. Senate was informed that the external review did flag diversity, equity and inclusion, along with indigenous curriculum as something the school could be paying more attention to. It was added that this is one part of many for renewing curriculum and should not be seen as prescriptive. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives is a priority for the school, as is making sure a plurality of perspectives is included and that curriculum is diverse and inclusive.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**iv) Full Program Proposal for the Certificate in Data Science in Physics (S.24-136)**

Moved by P. Hall, seconded by H. Do

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the full program proposal for the Certificate in Data Science in Physics in the Department of Physics within the Faculty of Science.”

It was noted that suggestions for additional/alternative courses can be considered at a later date, even if the certificate is already approved by Senate.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**v) External Review Mid-Cycle Report for the School of Computing Science (S.24-137)**

Senate received External Review Mid-Cycle Report for the School of Computing Science for information.

**vi) Proposal for a Faculty of Graduate Studies (S.24-138)**

Senate received Proposal for a Faculty of Graduate Studies for consultation.

Mary O'Brien, Dean of Graduate Studies, did a presentation, following which she took questions.

The following is a summary of the questions/comments raised during consultation, accompanied by responses when applicable:

- For programs with external regulatory compliance requirements, how will a Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) assist such programs? *It is not the role of FGS to make decisions around curriculum or research. Such decisions will remain with graduate supervisors. FGS will provide voluntary workshops and guidance on how to best support graduate students.*
- Given that the establishment of FGS would impact the membership of Senate, can it be assumed that graduate students would simultaneously be members of FGS and their respective faculty?
- How will the establishment of FGS be evaluated to determine if the transition has been successful? *There are a number of things being put forward that can be measured, including participation in an FGS assembly, and are programs being represented and offering feedback. Further, FGS will undergo an external review and the dean will be accountable to speak to that review at Senate and implement recommendations.*
- What are some of the potential negative impacts in establishing FGS, either from a student, faculty or school-wide perspective, and how can they be overcome? *One negative is a concern by some around increased standardization and enhanced centralized recordkeeping. It was stated, however, that such steps would increase transparency, consolidate resources, and give academic programs a voice in governance.*
- In cases where a faculty member needs to be precluded from acting in a supervisory role, will such a decision be made at the departmental level or by the FGS? *In terms of revoking privileges, supervision is outlined in GGR section 1.6 and anything beyond that would have to come forward as a new policy and be voted on by the Faculty of Graduate Studies Assembly.*
- Will there be a commitment to ensure that the roles of graduate program staff within faculties and departments remain the same? *There is no plan to remove the role of Graduate Program Assistants (GPAs) or to centralize GPAs across the university. Further, there is no plan to increase GPA workload.*
- Do lecturers with PhD's supervise graduate students and how would they be treated? *Lecturers with PhD's currently do serve as supervisors and there is no plan to change that.*
- What are the guiding principles that will guide FGS? *Graduate Studies lists both its vision and mission on its website under the Dean's Welcome.*
- When a lecturer begins a supervisory role, will they automatically become a member of FGS? *Anyone in a supervisory role will be a member of FGS. One of the first tasks of FGS will be to look at GGR 1.6.3 – Supervisor, to determine if it's serving the institution.*
- Is there a plan to consider how clinical affiliates through the School of Medicine will fit into FGS? *There is currently no plan for the School of Medicine to have graduate students. However, professors affiliated with the medical school are likely to supervise across the university.*
- Are there other monetary requirements beyond the ongoing cost of \$100,000 per year for a records coordinator? *Graduate Studies has sufficient staff coverage so the expectation is that one new person will need to be hired, along with a one-time additional requirement for the funding of new software.*

Senate was informed that additional questions or feedback can be addressed directly to Senator O'Brien after the meeting and that the proposal will be coming back to Senate for approval, pending approval by SCUP.

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

**i) High School Admission Requirement Changes - Faculty of Communication Art, and Technology (S.24-139)**

Moved by P. Hall, seconded by T. Schiphorst

“That Senate approve the revised changes to the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology Grade 12 admission requirements, effective Summer 2025.”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**ii) Program Changes (S.24-140)**

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, School of Engineering Science, School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering), and the Faculty of Environment (School Environmental Science, Geography).

**iii) Course Changes (S.24-141)**

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 Mechatronic Systems Engineering, School of Sustainable Energy Engineering), and the Faculty of Science (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry).

**iv) New WQB Designations (S.24-142)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new WQB designations.

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

**i) Graduate General Regulation 1.7.7a Transfer Credit; 1.7.7b Advance Credit; 1.12.1 Time Limit; 1.12.2 Extensions (S.24-143)**

Pamela Stern, Associate Dean, Policy & Curriculum – Graduate Studies, was in attendance to respond to questions.

**Motion 1:**

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by J. Stockie

“That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.7.7a Transfer Credit and 1.7.7b Advance Credit.”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**Motion 2:**

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

“That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.12.1 Time Limit and 1.12.2 Extensions.”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**ii) New Course Proposals (S.24-144)**

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

**iii) Course Changes (S.24-145)**

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

**iv) Course Deletions (S.24-146)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course deletions in the Faculty of Environment (School of Environmental Science).

**D) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**

**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.24-147)**

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, November 4, 2024**

Open session adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Kris Nordgren  
Senate Secretary pro tem