

**MEMORANDUM** 

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**ATTENTION** Senate **DATE** September 19, 2024  
**FROM** Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President **PAGES** 1/6  
 Academic, and Chair, SCUP *DJ*  
**RE:** Establishment of the Centre for Research and Practice in Teacher Education (SCUP 24-37)

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At its meeting on September 11, 2024, SCUP reviewed and approved the establishment of the Centre for Research and Practice in Teacher Education for a five-year term.

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

C: Valorie Crooks, Associate Vice-President, Research  
 Steve Marshall, Associate Dean, Research and International, Faculty of Education

**Proposal for a Centre for Research and Practice in Teacher Education**  
**Faculty of Education**

**Simon Fraser University**

This proposal seeks to establish the Centre for Research and Practice in Teacher Education within SFU's Faculty of Education. The Centre aims to address contemporary challenges and opportunities within teacher education contexts through an interdisciplinary approach. The constitution outlines key objectives and alignment with faculty's priorities, specifically in the critical areas of Indigeneity, equity and culture of inquiry. Further, the constitution includes the appointment process for the Director, compliance with university policies, internal governing processes, and a communication plan to ensure promotion of activities and engagement across related stakeholders.

## **Constitution**

### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

The Centre for Research and Practice in Teacher Education facilitates and supports research on K-12 teacher education. The quality of teacher education plays a crucial role in preparing teachers for the demands and complexities of contemporary classrooms. By supporting research in teacher education, the Centre endeavours to advance scholarship in the field and contribute to the development of teacher education programs and practices. With a focus on interdisciplinary inquiry, the Centre's research addresses emerging challenges and opportunities within K-12 teacher education settings. The Centre serves as a dynamic research hub for examining and addressing issues of equity and diversity in teacher education contexts, promoting inclusive practices, and advancing social justice within teacher education and classroom settings. The Centre is committed to being a site for collaborative research and upholds objectives which foster interdisciplinary inquiry. These objectives include:

- Fostering interdisciplinary research among scholars to advance the understanding of critical issues in pre-service and in-service K-12 teacher education;
- Establishing meaningful partnerships with K-12 schools and districts, community-based organizations, and educational stakeholders to address critical issues and opportunities in teacher education;
- Promoting novel collaboration across faculty, graduate students, practitioners, and community-based educators to advance research in areas including but not limited to: Indigenous education, rural education, French education, international education, and anti-racism education. These themes are explored and addressed within the context of teacher education;
- Becoming a leading source of research in teacher education within British Columbia and contributing to national and international discourse in the field;
- Promoting, celebrating and mobilizing the research and practices of the Faculty of Education and its collaborators in the field of teacher education.

Activities that would promote the Objectives include:

- Presenting at academic and professional conferences, workshops, seminars;
- Applying for externally funded competitive grants (e.g., SSHRC Insight, Spencer Foundation Grant);

- Developing a lecture series showcasing the Centre's research and featuring notable scholars in the field of teacher education;
- Offering Professional Development workshops for the BCTF;
- Designing and executing collaborative research projects with community partners, with a focus on addressing the needs raised by stakeholders in the local community;
- Organizing and hosting seminars, workshops and public forums led by the Centre's members and community partners on critical issues related to pre-service and in-service teacher education;
- Establishing a program for visiting scholars;
- Conducting research on SFU's teacher education programs (PDP, PLP, PQP) to raise the visibility and profile of the programs, while improving educational experiences through research-informed practice;
- Facilitating grant programming aimed at funding K-12 classroom teachers to design and conduct research within their educational contexts;
- Collaborating with established service-based initiatives at SFU to develop and facilitate emerging educational research initiatives, e.g., working with Friends of Simon to develop research focused on the development of peer-mentors and tutors within the program, with attention on better understanding the support systems for newcomer students and those with refugee experiences.

## 2. Alignment with Faculty priorities

The Centre aligns with the Faculty of Education's strategic plan priorities of equity, Indigeneity, and cultures of inquiry. The Centre is committed to promoting equity in teacher education through research initiatives intended at exploring and facilitating the integration of equity principles into teacher education. Lines of inquiry include, but are not limited to, the development of racial literacies in teacher education contexts, studying holistic assessment practices in the preparation of teachers, and enacting activist pedagogies in teacher education. Central to the Centre's work is supporting the K-12 educational experiences of Indigenous students and communities by helping teachers advance the role education plays in truth and reconciliation efforts within school-based settings. Research at the Centre explores and addresses systemic issues in educational equity relating to K-12 teacher education, and offers recommendations for both policy and pedagogy. Through innovative research initiatives, engagement with practitioners and community partners, and a commitment to inclusive practices, the Centre contributes to the Faculty's mission of scholarly excellence, leading-edge pedagogy and democratic participation.

## 3. Uniqueness of the Centre

The objectives of the Centre do not significantly overlap with other SFU Research Centres or Research Institutes. The research initiatives of the Centre are unique in their focus on pre-service and in-service teacher education for K-12 contexts with an emphasis on community engagement with school districts and community partners in both research and practice. With a primary mission to advance the knowledge and practice of K-12 teacher education, the Centre is committed to exploration and innovation in the field. There are, however, productive synergies in the work of the Community Engaged Research initiative (CERi), the Centre for Research on International Education (CRIE), and the Cassidy Centre for Educational Justice (CCEJ), facilitating possible collaborative efforts with these organizations.

The Centre funds its activities and initiatives primarily through external funding sources. The Centre will be able to make use of existing support from the Faculty's Research Hub, which includes a Research Director, Grant Facilitator, and a Research Intelligence and Mobilization Officer. Subject to growth and available funding, graduate student will be hired to provide additional support as research assistants.

#### 4. Appointment of a director

The Director of the Centre will be appointed for a three-year term. This term is subject to renewal as recommended by the Steering Committee and approved by the Dean.

#### 5. Compliance with University policies

- The Centre for Research in Teacher Education conducts its activities in accordance with university policies, specifically those outlined in the *Research Centre and Research Institutes Policy and Research Centre Procedure, Policy R40.01*. These policies govern responsibilities, governance and reporting, renewing and discontinuing research centres.
- The Centre conducts its activities in accordance with authorization signing protocols outlined in Policy B10.11.
- The Centre conducts its communication plan in accordance with the University Communications guidelines.

#### 6. Internal governing processes

- The Centre is constituted as a Schedule A Centre at Simon Fraser University under the terms of SFU Policy R 40.01. The Centre is under the direct authority of the Dean of Education and conducts its affairs in accordance with all other University policies. The Director of the Research Centre will submit a written report to the Faculty of Education Dean, once annually for the twelve months ending March 31 and by no later than June 30 of each year. During the last year of the Research Centre's term, renewal requests will be submitted alongside the annual report.
- The Director of the Centre is a full-time faculty member of the Faculty of Education. For the inaugural term, the Director will be appointed by the Dean and in subsequent terms, the Director will be nominated by the Steering Committee and approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Education. The Director will serve a 3-year renewal term. The Centre's inaugural Director will be Dr. Pooja Dharamshi.
- The Director will be responsible for oversight of day-to-day operations to advance the mission of the Centre, while also providing leadership in shaping the Centre's research agenda, fostering collaboration and partnership, and maximizing the impact of its research activities. These include several key tasks:
  - Overseeing the Centre's day-to-day operations and finances;
  - Hiring and supervising Centre personnel, including support staff and research assistants;
  - Chairing the Steering Committee meetings;
  - Maintaining a record of Research Centre meetings and relevant decisions;
  - Maintaining an up-to-date web/social media presence that includes a list of members and research activities;
  - Ensuring a timely and accurate submission of annual reports to the Dean of the Faculty of Education, when applicable, renewal requests;

- Ensuring that governance documents and constitutions that exist, are adhered to, and are amended as necessary;
  - Ensuring that all agreements involving a Research Centre have secured the necessary approvals in accordance with SFU Policy B10.11 Signing Authorizations.
- If the office of Director becomes unexpectedly vacant, the Steering Committee will appoint, after appropriate consultation with the Centre's members, an interim Director and initiate the process of filling the vacancy.
- The Research Centre operates with a central Governing Body by way of a Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee acts as the primary executive authority for the Centre and oversees its activities. The Steering Committee provides advice to the Director on scholarly priorities and strategic guidance for the Research Centre and will meet at least quarterly. Decisions are made through consensus, and when necessary, decisions can be determined by majority vote, including the appointment of new members of the Steering Committee and a new Director. Members of the Steering Committee serve two-year renewable terms.
- The members of the Centre shall be represented sufficiently on the Steering Committee. At least two of its members must be tenure-track or tenured faculty, all in the Faculty of Education. Although expansion is intended, the inaugural Steering Committee includes:
  - Dr. Ann Chinnery (Faculty of Education, SFU)
  - Dr. Isabelle Côté (Faculty of Education, SFU)
  - Dr. Sara Davidson (Faculty of Education, SFU)
  - Janice St. Helene (Faculty of Education, SFU)
  - Dr. Cristiano Moura (Faculty of Education, SFU)
- The work of the Centre is sustained by its members and affiliate members. Our membership may consist of faculty members and faculty associates. Additionally, the Centre values expertise beyond faculty members and beyond SFU, and will work with experts within the undergraduate/graduate students, staff, community, practitioners, administrators, school district leaders, and policy makers, who will be designated as non-voting affiliate members, or as SFU regulations permit. Membership requests can be initiated by individuals identified above and by invitation from the Centre.

## Communication plan

- The Centre adheres to SFU's Communication Toolkit in developing a communication strategy, referring to SFU's best practices for EDI. The communication plan below outlines strategies used to maintain an up-to-date website and social media presence while aligning with university communication approaches. Goals for the communication strategy are as follows:
  - Promoting the Centre's mission, objectives, and ongoing research activities among faculty, students, practitioners, and community-based stakeholders.
  - Involving stakeholders in collaborative research projects, encouraging interdisciplinary communication and cooperation
  - Sharing research findings and practices in teacher education research forums regional and international teacher education research forums.
  - Fostering the reputation and credibility of the Centre within SFU and the broader educational community.

- The primary communication channels are through a Research Centre website and social media accounts on platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter) and Facebook. A part-time graduate student is employed to develop and maintain the website and social media accounts. Developed and maintained as user-friendly, the Centre's website showcases past, ongoing and upcoming research projects, publications, events, member profiles, and teacher education resources. Ensuring accessibility and mobile responsiveness are top priorities during development and maintenance of the website. Communication planning, including communication strategy, messaging, and activity planning, follows templates provided by SFU's Communications and Marketing team. Further, a contact form is available for inquiries and feedback.