



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, November 4, 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
Al-Rawi, Ahmed
Altman, Rachel
Baker, Micah
Brooks-Wilson, Angela
Carcano, Luana
Chapman, Glenn
Collard, Mark
Denholm, Julia
Do, Henry
Eftenaru, Cristina
Egri, Carolyn
Everton, Mike
Fatima, Fatima
Fisher, Brian
Fiume, Eugene
Frank, Richard
Gray, Bonnie
Gunawan, Derrick
Hall, Peter
Hashemi, Tara
Jordan, Mark
Khangura, Harinder
Karaivanov, Alexander
Kessler, Anke
Kingsbury, Paul
Krogman, Naomi
Leznoff, Daniel
Liu, Connie
Liu, Landy
Lysova, Alexandra
Martell, Matt
McKenzie, Janis
Myers, Gord
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Brien, Mary
O'Neil, Dugan
Percival, Colin

Rassier, Dilson
Snyder, Jeremy
Stockie, John
Sutherland, Jill
Szymczyk, Barbara
Thornton, Allen
Tong, Pok Man
Tucker, Rochelle
Weldon, Laurel
Whitehurst, David
Williams, JF

Absent:

Ali, Sikandra
Bagga, Rishu
Bhalloo, Shafik
Brennand, Tracy
Bullock, Cécile
Elhayek, Abdulkarim
Fung, Aaron
Herrenbrueck, Lucas
Kerr, Jeannie
Kim, Lisa
Laitsch, Dan
Masri, Kamal
Pantophlet, Ralph
Ricker, Amy
Schiphorst, Thecla
Schmidt, Michèle
Traversa, Marissa
Vrooman, Tamara
Williams, Vance
Zickfeld, Kirsten

In Attendance:

Hennigar, Francesca
Stern, Pamela

Tom Nault, Senate Secretary
Steven Noel, Recording Secretary

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. The Minutes of the Open Session of October 7, 2024 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on December 2, 2024

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Report of the Chair

The Chair welcomed newly elected Senators Harinder Khangura (Applied Sciences) and Kirsten Zickfeld (Environment).

The Chair reported that SFU was recently named the top comprehensive university in Canada by Maclean's, a ranking held for 16 of the past 17 years.

A question was asked regarding if SFU will lose the status of *comprehensive university* with the establishment of a medical school. Senate was informed that the answer to that question is unknown at this time. It was noted that Memorial University of Newfoundland is the one exception of a university in Canada having a medical school and still be considered a comprehensive university.

With over 600 staff and volunteers from across the university, the Chair thanked all those involved in October convocation.

The Chair reported that government relations continue to be a priority for the executive team. A government relations strategy is in development and Trevor Boudreau, former director of GR at YVR, has been hired to lead those efforts at the university moving forward. With more certainty around what the provincial government will look like, SFU has reached out to offer meetings and times to connect with local MLAs and key members of official opposition. Further, SFU has doubled the number of interactions with the federal government this year over last year and will continue to advocate for the post-secondary sector and SFU at all levels of government.

The Chair reported that she, in her role as President, was recently in London to connect with SFU alumni and had meetings with the High Commission of Canada in London and the London School of Economics. The Chair was also in Ottawa last week for the Universities Canada membership meeting in which she was officially appointed vice-chair of the Universities Canada Board of Directors for a one-year term.

The Chair reported that she recently gave her annual address to the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade on the topic of partnerships. The University continues to look for ways to expand SFU's reach and reputation and demonstrate its impact on the economy in B.C. and Canada and this is one part of that campaign.

Senate was informed that teams across the university have been working over the spring and summer to prepare for the development of the 2025-26 budget and its now in the discussion and

consultation phase. Thanks was extended to the VPA and VPFA and to their teams for their continuing work. Consultation has been completed with student groups and there is a budget info session for faculty and staff coming up on November 18th.

The Chair reported that SFU is hosting the Royal Society's annual Celebration of Excellence & Engagement later this week. The event will provide an opportunity to welcome academic colleagues to Vancouver, celebrate the newest members of the Royal Society and engage in a symposium on community-centred climate innovation.

5. Question Period

i) Senator Martell submitted the following question:

Are we having a systemic issue with server capacity and canvas? In previous years, this was infrequent, recently it seems to be happening with increasing frequency, can we allocate more processing power/server space at peak times to reduce the issue? I ask based on personal experience and comments from students on Reddit. It sometimes makes student submissions difficult and increases the time for me to review issues and/or make updates to course material.

Brian Stewart, Chief Information Officer - IT Services, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that SFU is experiencing systemic problems with Canvas, due not to server capacity but rather to the complexity of the SFU environment and the quality of the software upgrades being provided by Instructure. There has been a significant change in instructors behaviour this year with instructors deprecating the community version by relative deprecation. Also, since September the codes provided by Instructure are not being tested to the required level for SFU's complex environment and this is causing significant problems in pre-testing. Though not fully in control of the problem, more resources are being directed towards fixing problems as they arise, but it may reach a point to where SFU will need to isolate its environment and not take any new code, which could open up the potential for cyber problems and impact the app. The long-term solution is to move to Canvas Cloud and a plan is in place to start that in January, but it could take 12 to 18 months to migrate the whole of the infrastructure over.

A question was asked regarding if an announcement will be made so that community members are aware of what is happening. Senate was informed that a comms plan is being drafted to that purpose.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

i) Proposed Amendments to Policy B10.00 (S.24-149)

Senate received Proposed Amendments to Policy B10.00 for information.

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

Noting use of the term *Policy Office* in B10.00, a question was asked to clarify what the Policy Office is and where would one go to view the Policy Office webpage. Senate was informed that the Policy Office is a unit within the Office of the General Counsel and is comprised of the Director of University Policies. The Policy Office webpage can be found under the Policy Development and Revision tab in the Policy Gazette. It was noted, however, that work is being done to also bring that information into the General Counsel website.

A number of concerns were raised with a single person acting as gatekeeper around decisions on whether policies should go to Senate or to the Board of Governors. Senate was informed that the focus of this policy is on the Board and the Board making decisions about how it would like to approach policy development. To the extent that SFU does have policies solely within Senate jurisdiction, this process does not purport to be a process that binds Senate. This policy focuses on and creates obligations that bind only the Board and stays within the construct of the University Act, which provides for independent bodies to consider the spheres of their jurisdiction. It was added that when the Board is determining whether it would like to move forward with a policy change request, it is speaking solely on behalf of the Board when making that determination. A policy change request for an item solely within Senate's jurisdiction does not prevent Senate from moving forward with the change request. For subject matter within its jurisdiction, the policy change process only speaks to what the Board would like to do with that policy change request. Further, it was noted that there is a requirement set out in B10.00 for broad consultation with faculty, staff and students and that when new or revised policies are being considered, they are submitted to SCAR, who makes a decision about how to engage Senate.

Noting in the Procedures that *core principles (including commitments to reconciliation and to equity, diversity and inclusion)* was deleted and replaced with *values and priorities*, a question was asked if SFU has changed its previous core principles. Senate was informed that the change was made to reflect that the strategic plan does evolve and change over time. As such, the goal is to capture that evolution and not tie it to anything specific in this policy.

A comment was made that the language used in section 2.1.6 of the Procedures should be cleaned up so as not to appear contradictory and that any additional means of appeal should be more clearly stated.

B) Senate Committee on Continuing Studies (SCCS)

i) Annual Report 2023/2024 (S.24-150)

Senate received the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies (SCCS) Annual Report 2023/2024 for information.

A question was asked to explain why a total of nine programs were either discontinued or suspended. Senate was informed that these programs were discontinued mainly due to a lack of student interest. It was noted that a request came from the committee to clean up items that should be discontinued given that many of these programs have been sitting on the suspended list for years.

C) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)**i) Program Changes (S.24-151)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication), and the Faculty of Environment (Geography).

ii) New Course Proposals (S.24-152)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

iii) Course Changes (S.24-153)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a course change in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

iv) New and Removed WQB Designations (S.24-154)

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

D) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Graduate General Regulation 1.3.6c Admissions to an Accelerated Master's (S.24-155)**

Moved by M. O'Brien, JF Williams

"That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.3.6c Admissions to an Accelerated Master's, effective Summer 2025."

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

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) New Course Proposals (S.24-156)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering).

E) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.24-157 Revised)**

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

7. Other Business

i) New Ministry Program Proposal Criteria (S.24-158)

Senate received New Ministry Program Proposal Criteria for information.

A question was asked to provide context on how big of a change this represents from past practice. Senate was informed that the University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison (UCIL) Office and Graduate Studies assist units in making submissions and that resources already exist to do so. The main changes are that there is now a requirement for consultation with the Indigenous Peoples on whose land our campuses sit and SFU is now being asked to specifically address whether or not the program has thought about how to include Indigenous, underserved and underrepresented peoples within the population. This doesn't mean changes have to be made to the intent of program, but it does have to address whether such consideration was a component of curriculum development when putting forward a new program.

Using the example of a new program in quantum computing, a question was asked regarding if a new program proposal would go forward if the submitted form stated that there is no intention to incorporate Indigenous content in the program and there was no consultation done with local Indigenous groups. Senate was informed that the answer to that question is indeterminate at this time, but there is an expectation that these considerations be made.

Citing section *Standard 3 Social and Economic Benefits*, a concern was raised about the question *What is the institution's plan to incorporate Indigenous content in the program?* and its potential impact on academic freedom. Senate was informed that there is no requirement to incorporate Indigenous content, nor is there a requirement for an individual instructor to teach particular content, but there is a requirement to ask and answer the question around Indigenous content.

A question was asked regarding which groups would have to be consulted when offering fully online courses. Senate was informed that all online content has a territorial origin and the wording of the criteria states *the territory on whose territory the institution is located*, but this is something that will have to be tested with the Ministry when the time comes.

Given the need to consult multiple First Nations on whose lands SFU resides, a question was asked regarding if there is a plan to form a composite committee to limit the number of consultation requests being made on Indigenous communities. Senate was informed that Chris Lewis, Indigenous Executive Lead, is in the midst of forming an external advisory Indigenous committee, which will have host nation representatives, and that there will be a mechanism to bring program proposals en masse should it be necessary.

Given the need for increased consultation, a question was asked regarding how such remuneration will be funded. Senate was informed that since 2020 12 new program proposals were submitted to the ministry, so the funding requirement is relatively small.

8. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting - Monday, December 2, 2024

Open session adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Tom Nault
Senate Secretary