



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, January 6, 2025 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
Altman, Rachel
Bhalloo, Shafik
Brooks-Wilson, Angela
Bullock, Cécile
Carcano, Luana
Chapman, Glenn
Collard, Mark
Denholm, Julia
Eftenaru, Cristina
Egri, Carolyn
Everton, Mike
Fatima, Fatima
Fisher, Brian
Fiume, Eugene
Frank, Richard
Gray, Bonnie
Hall, Peter
Hashemi, Tara
Khangura, Harinder
Karaivanov, Alexander
Kessler, Anke
Kingsbury, Paul
Krogman, Naomi
Laitsch, Dan
Leznoff, Daniel
Liu, Landy
Lysova, Alexandra
Martell, Matt
McKenzie, Janis
Myers, Gord
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Brien, Mary
O'Neil, Dugan
Percival, Colin
Rassier, Dilson
Schiphorst, Thecla
Snyder, Jeremy
Spear, Jennifer (for Laurel Weldon)

Stockie, John
Sutherland, Jill
Szymczyk, Barbara
Thornton, Allen
Tong, Pok Man
Traversa, Marissa
Vrooman, Tamara
Whitehurst, David
Williams, JF
Williams, Vance
Zickfeld, Kirsten

Absent:

Ali, Sikandra
Al-Rawi, Ahmed
Ashoughian, Gohar
Bagga, Rishu
Baker, Micah
Brennand, Tracy
Do, Henry
Elhayek, Abdulkarim
Fung, Aaron
Gunawan, Derrick
Herrenbrueck, Lucas
Kim, Lisa
Liu, Connie
Masri, Kamal
Pantophlet, Ralph
Ricker, Amy
Schmidt, Michèle
Tucker, Rochelle
Weldon, Laurel

In Attendance:

Blair, Alison
Fullerton, Margarita
Gupta, Sudheer
Spector, Stephen

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of November 4, 2024

The minutes of the open session on November 4, 2024 were approved as distributed.

3. The Minutes of the Open Session of December 2, 2024 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on February 3, 2025**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 face of ongoing fiscal challenges, members of the executive team are continuing to make government advocacy a priority. New changes announced by IRCC on November 15th stated that *international students must apply and be approved for a new study permit before changing learning institutions*. This announcement is concerning given B.C.'s robust college transfer program and SFU's close relationship with Fraser International College (FIC). In particular, it impacts students planning to transfer from FIC to SFU in January 2025. In the wake of this announcement, SFU successfully advocated for protections that minimize the impact of these changes for international students transferring to SFU for the spring term. On December 11th, IRCC issued a policy update to provide a grace period that allows students to continue their studies while the federal government is processing updated study permits. At SFU's request, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and Business Council of B.C. joined SFU's sectoral advocacy efforts and issued public letters to the immigration minister.

The Chair reported that she, in her role as President, along with the Provost, traveled to India in December to rekindle partnerships and provide reassurances that Canada is still open and that SFU will be welcoming international students from India. The President presented at a Times Higher Education Conference on Innovation and also met with a number of university partners, including the Indian Institutes of Technology.

The Chair reported that in recent months, there has been an increase in discussion among the SFU community about campus safety. The Campus Public Safety (CPS) team has been active on this file, which also surfaces important questions about SFU's community's approach to the topics of homelessness, mental health and substance use, and campus access. In December, Chief Safety and Risk Officer Galib Bhayani shared a message with the SFU community outlining new safety measures that have been undertaken in the past year, as well as sharing resources and reminders about our SFU Safe App and how to reach out to CPS for support. CPS continues to respond to all reported safety incidents, work with local authorities when necessary and provide support to community members impacted.

i) Report of the Provost

The Provost reported that after having balanced the budget following a near \$50 million deficit, SFU is now facing a predicted shortfall for the year 2024-2025 of about \$20 M. This is partially due to low international student enrollment that was causing a deficit of about \$12 to 13 M in

predictions. The university was able to monetize on some areas and draw on reserves to avoid further cuts and it is expected that the budget for 2024-2025 will be balanced.

Based on recent government announcements regarding international students, the Provost reported that SFU is facing a larger shortfall in international enrollment than was previously predicted, leading to a larger budget deficit. The predicted numbers for the enrollment of international students for 2024-2025 are lower by 2-3% and for 2025-2026 are lower by 4-5%. This has led to a near \$20 M deficit, which became clear to the executive team following an announcement from the government on November 15, 2024.

In response to the question submitted in section 6. *Question Period*, the Provost provided the following timeline:

- On November 18th emergency budget meetings were held with the VP Finance and the Provost's Office.
- On November 20th and 22nd analysis of budget numbers and data began for current and multiyear planning, in preparation for the Board of Governors.
- On November 26th a report from Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) predicted that the number of international students over the next year or two to three years, if the situation does not change, would be approximately 14% less than what was planned in the multiyear budget analysis.
- On November 28th there was a Board of Governors meeting in which it was mentioned that significant changes would be needed if the trend of lower international enrollment continues.
- On December 4th a meeting of the Provost Council was held. This is a meeting of the deans, directors and associate vice-presidents within the Provost's Office. It was mentioned at this meeting that a hiring freeze would have to be considered given that the number of cuts and initiatives instituted in the previous year would not be enough going forward.
- On December 5th another report from IRP stated that the number of international students for the next year would be lower by about 20%.
- By December 15th meetings had been held with the deans to evaluate possible measures to be taken to ensure a balanced budget. It became clear that for some faculties it would be almost impossible to have a balanced budget without a hiring freeze.
- A final report from IRP on December 11th confirmed about 450 less international students than predicted, thus leading to deficit of roughly \$20 M.

The Provost added that the hiring freeze is not intended to be permanent, and that in the fall of 2025 a faculty renewal plan will be initiated to start hiring again. The hiring freeze was imposed on December 14th or 15th and since that time the Provost's Office has been working with the deans to promote exceptions to the freeze, noting that almost 50% of planned hiring will proceed as planned.

Noting the uncertain political landscape at the federal level, a question was asked regarding how much lobbying has been done with the Conservative Party given that they may form the next

government. Senate was informed that SFU is working hard to create relationships with Members of Parliament from the Conservative Party. On a recent trip to Ottawa, the Chair, in her role as President, met with the Chief of Staff for Pierre Poilievre to understand what their priorities are.

A question was asked regarding who will be the first set of hires once the budget situation stabilizes. Senate was informed that the hiring of faculty and prioritizing the academic mission has been the focus and will continue to be so. Priority for hiring has not been on administrative support staff for the past year and a half given the staff hiring freeze and any currently posted positions are the result of a process for evaluating exceptions to the freeze. This has led to approximately 50% fewer new administrative positions than at this time last year.

Citing the number of administrative School of Medicine positions currently posted, a question was asked regarding the ongoing monies required to fund these positions and if the specifics of this ongoing monies can be made available to Senate. Senate was informed that the permanent administrative positions in the School of Medicine are to be covered by the government and that no funding will come out of another unit to cover medical school expenses. It was added that more detailed information on this can be provided to Senate at a future meeting.

A question was asked regarding if the two-visa requirement for international students applies to UBC's Vantage College. Senate was informed that Vantage College is an internal college and when a student is accepted into it, they are also accepted into UBC. As such, the requirement does not apply. It was added that since the announcement of changes for international students, SFU has worked closely with FIC to understand the impact of these changes.

A question was asked regarding if SFU is carrying the third highest deficit amongst universities in Canada, and if so, what accounts for this ranking. Senate was informed that a more comprehensive analysis would have to be undertaken to confirm that ranking, but it was noted that many universities across Canada will be facing significant deficits.

A question was asked about how the budget deficit will impact the academic mission and academic functionality of the university. Senate was informed that the goal is to minimize the impact on the academic mission as much as possible. When confronted by the deficit for 2024-2025, budget cuts were made to non-academic units by between 7-10 %, whereas no budget cuts were made to the faculties, despite making up 70% of the budget. With the changes announced to international enrollment and facing a deficit for the 2025-2026 fiscal period, a decision was made to cut the budgets of faculties by 1% and to cut the budgets of non-academic units by 6.5%.

Noting the comment that almost 50% of planned hirings will proceed as planned, a question was asked regarding if some faculty searches have been allowed to proceed as part of the Faculty Renewal Plan while others have not. Senate was informed that the announced faculty hiring freeze is selective in its nature and there is a subset of positions that will be allowed to move forward without further discussion. Such positions include School of Medicine positions, Library positions, externally funded positions, underlying faculty appointments for a dean, and positions where a contract has already been offered or an agreement has already been reached. There are

certain positions, those in which final interviews had already been conducted, in which a discussion was held with the dean to determine if the position was affordable and whether it could proceed. The final and largest group of exemptions consist of positions in which the dean can make a case that not filling an appointment would directly result in a reduction in temporary instruction because the instruction contemplated by that role is critical to the needs of the unit.

A number of comments were made that the university should have taken steps to communicate the intention to institute a faculty hiring freeze, especially to those units already engaged in the search process. Failure to do so lead has led to reputational harm and lower morale and it was suggested that steps need to take by the university to earn back the trust of faculty members.

6. Question Period

- i) Senator Frank submitted the following question:

Could Senators get some clarity from the VPA about when he knew there would be a hiring freeze? Miller's policy announcement was Nov. 15th. The VPA's announcement was Dec 15th. Between those time periods countless hours will have been spent conducting job searches by various departments, including my own. In many instances, advance notice would have saved faculty members and search committees a staggering amount of time. Thank you.

Please refer to section 5(i) *Report of the Provost* for Senator Rassier's response to this question.

7. Reports of Committees

A) Calendar Committee (CC)

- i) **Revision to Academic Dates – Summer 2025 Convocation Dates (S.25-1)**

Moved by D. Leznoff, seconded by T. Schiphorst

“That Senate approve the revised schedule of academic dates for the Summer 2025 term by adding one additional ceremony on the afternoon of Monday, June 9, 2025 to the June/Spring 2025 convocation ceremony. Spring 2025 Convocation will now run from June 9th to June 13th, 2025.”

Stephen Spector, CC Chair, was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

B) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

- i) **Amendments to GP 41 - Safe Disclosure of Wrongdoing (S.25-2)**

Senate received Amendments to GP 41 - Safe Disclosure of Wrongdoing for information.

Alison Blair, Interim Director of Internal Audit, and Margarita Fullerton, University Secretary, were in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked regarding if this policy resides solely within SFU or does it allow for appeals outside the university should the administration be in conflict. Senate was informed that GP41 is the internal whistleblower policy, but that if someone wanted to go outside the university under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA), they can go directly to the BC Ombudsperson office.

Given that GP41 doesn't apply to students, a comment was made to encourage the university to consider having a centralized disclosure office in order to minimize the number of times a person would need to report.

C) Senate Committee on International Activities (SCIA)

i) Annual Report 2023 (S.25-3)

Senate received the Senate Committee on International Activities (SCIA) Annual Report 2023 for information.

D) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

i) Full Program Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Futures (S.25-4)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by M. O'Brien

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the Full Program Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Futures within Beedie School of Business, effective Fall 2025.”

Sudheer Gupta, Associate Dean - Graduate Programs, Beedie School of Business, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Noting a new course in the proposal called *Being in Good Relations with Indigenous Peoples* (BUS 568), a comment was made that a more generic title such as *Fostering Good Relations Between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples* may help in attracting both Indigenous and non-indigenous students. Senate was informed that consideration can be given to whether a name change would open up the course for Indigenous and non-indigenous students.

A comment was made by the Senate Secretary, in his role as Registrar, that this credential as a stand-alone program will not currently qualify a student for a postgraduate work permit, but the intent is that this program will be completed with the MBA, which is eligible.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Program Changes for the Graduate Certificate in Business Analytics (S.25-5)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by M. Martell

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the program changes for the Graduate Certificate in Business Analytics within Beedie School of Business, effective Fall 2025.”

Sudheer Gupta, Associate Dean - Graduate Programs, Beedie School of Business, was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iii) Program Changes for the Graduate Certificate in Digital Innovation (S.25-6)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by C. Egri

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the program changes for the Graduate Certificate in Digital Innovation within Beedie School of Business, effective Fall 2025.”

Sudheer Gupta, Associate Dean - Graduate Programs, Beedie School of Business, was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iv) Program Changes for the Master of Publishing (S.25-7)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by T. Schiphorst

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the program changes for the Master of Publishing within the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology, effective Fall 2025.”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

v) Centres and Institutes Annual Reports (S.25-8)

Senate received the Centres and Institutes Annual Progress Reports 2023/24 for information.

vi) Centres and Institutes Renewal Applications (S.25-9)

Senate received Centres and Institutes Renewal Applications for information.

E) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

i) Program Changes (S.25-10)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Sociology and Anthropology, School of Criminology, School for International Studies) and the Faculty of Science (Chemistry, Mathematics, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry).

ii) New Course Proposals (S.25-11)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (International Studies).

iii) Course Changes (S.25-12)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course change in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science, School of Engineering Science), the Beedie School of Business, the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School for the Contemporary Arts), the Faculty of Environment (Archaeology), and the Faculty of Science (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry).

iv) WQB Designations (S.25-13)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved WQB designations in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Sociology and Anthropology, Urban Studies, World Literature).

F) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Graduate General Regulation 1.6.7 - Human Subjects Ethics Review (S.25-14)**

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

“That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.6.7 Human Subjects Ethics Review, effective Fall 2025.”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Program Changes (S.25-15)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a program change in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Urban Studies).

iii) Course Changes (S.25-16)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Urban Studies).

iv) Course Reinstatements (S.25-17)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a course reinstatement in the Faculty of Environment (School of Resource and Environmental Management).

G) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.25-18)**

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) Updated Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Reports (S.25-19)**

Senate received Updated Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Reports for information.

9. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting - Monday, February 3, 2025

Open session adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Tom Nault
Senate Secretary