



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, May 20, 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
Al-Rawi, Ahmed
Altman, Rachel
Ashoughian, Gohar
Baker, Micah
Bhalloo, Shafik
Brennand, Tracy
Brooks-Wilson, Angela
Bullock, Cécile
Carcano, Luana
Chapman, Glenn
Denholm, Julia
Egri, Carolyn
Everton, Michael
Fatima, Fatima
Fisher, Brian
Fiume, Eugene
Frank, Richard
Gray, Bonnie
Gunawan, Derrick
Hall, Peter
Hashemi, Tara
Karaivanov, Alexander
Kessler, Anke
Khangura, Harinder
Kim, Lisa
Kingsbury, Paul
Krogman, Naomi
Laitsch, Dan
Liu, Connie
Maine, Elicia (for Dugan O'Neil)
Martell, Matt
McKenzie, Janis
Myers, Gord
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Brien, Mary
Ortabasi, Melek (For Laurel Weldon)
Percival, Colin
Rassier, Dilson

Schiphorst, Thecla
Snyder, Jeremy
Stockie, John
Sutherland, Jill
Szymczyk, Barbara
Thornton, Allen
Tong, Pok Man
Tucker, Rochelle
Whitehurst, David
Williams, Vance

Absent:

Ali, Sikandra
Bagga, Rishu
Collard, Mark
Do, Henry
Eftenaru, Cristina
Elhayek, Abdulkarim
Fung, Aaron
Herrenbrueck, Lucas
Leznoff, Daniel
Liu, Landy
Lysova, Alexandra
Masri, Kamal
O'Neil, Dugan
Pantophlet, Ralph
Ricker, Amy
Schmidt, Michèle
Vrooman, Tamara
Weldon, Laurel
Williams, JF
Zickfeld, Kirsten

In Attendance:

Behbahani, Laya
Davie, Jackie
Fullerton, Margarita
Stewart, Arlette
Westerlaken, Kristie

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of March 3, 2025

The minutes of the open session on March 3, 2025 were approved as distributed.

3. The Minutes of the Open Session of April 7, 2025 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on July 7, 2025

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that Dr. Marvin Washington will join SFU as Dean of the Beedie School of Business starting October 1, 2025. Dr. Washington is currently the College Dean and Vice-Provost for the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Alberta, where he oversees the faculties of Arts, Education, Business and Law.

The Chair reported that following federal election, SFU's Government Relations team is conducting a number of outreach activities to connect with new and returning MPs and Cabinet Ministers, as well as to determine how SFU can continue to best advocate for the post-secondary sector under a federal Liberal minority government. It was added that the Chair, in her role as President, is headed to Victoria for meetings with MLAs later this month, and trips to Victoria and Ottawa are being planned for the fall.

On the subject of consultation and the Faculty and Staff Dashboard, the Chair reminded Senate that the Dashboard contains a section for engagements and consultations. For example, there are currently ongoing policy reviews for GP40 - Disability Accommodation in the Workplace, GP47 - Bullying and Harassment Policy, and GP18 - Human Rights Policy. Senators are encouraged to get involved and share their thoughts to help shape policy and governance.

The Chair reported that SFU International, Institutional Strategic Awards and Research Services launched a Horizon Europe Engagement Fund (HEEF) to support SFU researchers seeking to establish and/or join consortium towards the submission of a Horizon Europe application. This is part of a broader strategy to promote SFU participation in Horizon Europe, Europe's largest and best resources research funding program. There are 24 researchers in the pipeline so far and four have received HEEF funding.

The Chair reported that a number of Senators were in attendance at the opening of Fire Station 8 on Burnaby Mountain last month. The opening highlights the partnership between SFU and the City of Burnaby, and is supported by \$30 million in federal funding.

The Chair reminded Senate that Convocation is coming up at the beginning of June. Senators were encouraged to either volunteer or spread the word to enlist volunteers.

i) Report of the Provost

The Provost had nothing to report.

6. Question Period

i) Question submitted by Senator Hashemi:

I am writing to express a concern shared by many students regarding the current scheduling practices for final exams.

One major issue is that students are unable to view final exam dates when enrolling in classes. This makes it difficult for students to plan their schedules effectively and avoid having multiple exams closely packed together.

In addition, the final exam schedule often feels unreasonably condensed. For example, during the Spring semester, I was enrolled in four HSCI courses. I had 3 assignments due in the final week, and the last day of classes was on Wednesday. My finals were scheduled for the following Friday, Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, leaving very little time to properly prepare for each subject.

Many students are not satisfied with this arrangement. Having both heavy assignment loads in the last week of the semester and tightly packed exam dates creates unnecessary stress and limits our ability to perform at our best. It can also lead to burnout, reduced academic performance, increased caffeine uptake, and negatively impact students' mental and physical health.

I respectfully request that the university consider:

- Making final exam dates visible at the time of course enrollment.*
- Spacing out final exams more evenly to support student success and well-being.*
- Reducing the number of assignments due in the final week of classes by distributing them throughout the semester.*

Peter Hall, Associate Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that the exam scheduling software was changed in fall 2020 with the goal of trying to improve and address some of the concerns raised in the question. The way that scheduling software works is that after the drop date, which is the point at which it's known how many students there are in each class and what the different patterns of student courses are, scheduling is automated in order to eliminate as many conflicts as possible. The number of conflicts that have come up since the new software was brought in has been substantially reduced, but with space limitations, the complexities of curriculum, and the amount of time between the start of the exam period and the start of the December holidays, there are only a certain amount of time slots and spaces available. The types of conflicts that have been reduced with the new software include the number of instances in which a student has more than one exam per day, which is down to under a thousand from a high of 5800 in Spring 2022. Although the software is not able to eliminate all conflicts, it does try to eliminate multiple exams per day, along with instances where a student is required to be on two campuses on the same day.

It was added that a working group of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS) has been tasked with developing an exam policy to consider issues such as the gap between the end of the semester and the start of the exam time period in order to give students more time to prepare for exams and limiting the number of assignments that can be due in the last two weeks of the semester, but is still in the discussion phase.

A question was asked regarding why the exam schedule isn't publishing at registration. Senate was informed that in order to do so exams would have to be scheduled sequentially and there aren't enough spaces between the end of the term and the commencement of vacation to fit them all in.

A question was asked regarding if consideration has been given to moving SFU to a 12-week semester. Senate was informed that consideration has been given to moving to a 12-week semester, but that SCUS would first bring forward the exam policy before giving further consideration to it.

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

i) Candidates – Graduate Credentials (S.25-85)

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by V. Williams

"That Senate approve the awarding of the graduate credentials as recommended by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Further, that the Dean of Graduate Studies and the University Registrar be empowered to make any required amendments to the list of students who have met the requirements for their credential."

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Candidates – Undergraduate Credentials (S.25-86)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by C. Liu

"That Senate approve the awarding of undergraduate credentials as recommended by the Deans of the Faculties. Further, that the respective Dean and the University Registrar be empowered to make any required amendments to the list of students who have met the requirements for their credential."

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

8. Reports of Committees

A) Research Ethics Board (REB)

i) Annual Report 2023/2024 (S.25-87)

Senate received the Research Ethics Board (REB) Annual Report 2023/2024 for information.

Kristie Westerlaken, Director - Research Ethics and Security, was in attendance to respond to questions.

B) Student Discipline Matters

i) Annual Report 2023/2024 (S.25-88)

Senate received the Student Discipline Matters Annual Report 2023/2024 for information.

Arlette Stewart - Academic Integrity Coordinator, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Noting that a majority of incidents fall under the category of *Cheating on exams or assignments*, a request was made to have that category further broken down into distinct categories for future reports.

C) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

i) Membership Changes to Senate Committee on International Activities (S.25-89)

Moved by M. Everton, seconded by V. Williams

“That Senate approve membership changes to the Senate Committee on International Activities (SCIA).”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Membership Changes to Senate Graduate Studies Committee (S.25-90)

Moved by M. Everton, seconded by C. Percival

“That Senate approve membership changes to the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC).”

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iii) GP40 – Disability Accommodation in the Workplace Policy Review (S.25-91)

Senate received GP40 – Disability Accommodation in the Workplace Policy Review for information.

Laya Behbahani, Director - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Staff Initiatives and Accessibility Secretariat, and Jackie Davie, Associate Director, Organizational Health Office, were in attendance to respond to questions.

Noting that the policy seems appropriate for long-term disability, a question was asked regarding more transient disabilities and if there is a mechanism to handle such accommodations more informally. Senate was informed that the Organizational Health and Well-Being Office would not need to be involved for short-term disabilities if the department is able to operationally manage accommodations. However, if the sick leave involves anything longer than three weeks, the Organizational Health and Well-Being Office would be working with the department and the employee on that short term accommodation so they wouldn't need to go through a lot of red tape and instead could work directly with the department supervisor.

Noting section 3.6 which states that *Costs associated with providing accommodations shall be borne by the University, from the departmental budget*, a concern was raised that having departments pay for long-term accommodations may deter them hiring people with disabilities. Senate was informed that it has been the practice to have long-term accommodations go through the department budget and this is now clarified in the policy. If a department doesn't have the applicable funding, then they are encouraged to seek funding from their faculty, and if the faculty has concerns then they can route that up to the Provost's Office.

Noting that the current policy states that *accommodations shall be borne by the University, either from the Accommodation Fund held by Human Resources, or from the departmental budget*, a question was asked about the Accommodation Fund held by Human Resources and if this funding still exists. Senate was informed that there is a small fund available through Human Resources, typically for funding things like independent medical examinations or when there is sensitivity on file with respect to privacy and confidentiality.

A comment was made that it is important to clarify the sources of funding, especially for the benefit of departmental chairs, given that the proposed language states that funding is provided *from the departmental budget*.

D) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

i) External Review Deferral for the School of Public Policy (S.25-92)

Senate received External Review Deferral for the School of Public Policy for information.

Noting that the deferral states that the Provost's Office and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) will be working together to *explore options to ensure the sustainability of the School's programming*, a question was asked about any underlying issues that Senate should be aware of. Senate was informed that Public Policy program has been undergoing some transitions and are not in a place where it would be productive to undergo an external review. Further, FASS, with the help of the Provost's Office, will be looking at how they can most sustainably support the program.

ii) Termination of the African Research Centre (S.25-93)

Senate received Termination of the African Research Centre for information.

A question was asked to expand on the rationale for this termination. Senate was informed that the recent reconstitution of the Institute for Black and African Diaspora Research and Engagement (IBADRE) replaces the African Research Centre.

E) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

i) Guidelines for Students and Instructors in the Event of a Labour Dispute (S.25-94)

Moved by P. Kingsbury, seconded by C. Liu

"That Senate approve the revised "Guidelines for Students and Instructors in the Event of a Labour Dispute" as set out in the attachment."

A comment was made around the expectation that the revised version of these guidelines would contain stronger language indicating that concessions are not guaranteed. Senate was informed that the committee did take note of previous comments and feels the language is clear enough such that students understand that concessions are not guaranteed. Also, it is stated earlier in the document that it's incumbent on students and instructors to understand the consequences of their decisions. It was added that discussions have been held with the Ombudsperson about providing support for instructors to minimize inconsistencies in granting accommodations.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Program Changes (S.25-95)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Science (Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology, Physics).

iii) Program Changes 9S.25-96)

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 (School of Criminology, Office of the Dean, Global Asia Program, Global Humanities, Philosophy, Sociology and Anthropology), the Beedie School of Business, and the Faculty of Environment (School of Environmental Science).

iv) New Course Proposals (S.25-97)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Engineering Science), and the Faculty of Environment (Archaeology).

v) New Course Proposals (S.25-98)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Art and Social Sciences (Economics, French, Global Humanities, History).

vi) Course Changes (S.25-99)

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 Mechatronic Systems Engineering, School of Sustainable Energy Engineering), and the Faculty of Science (Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology).

vii) Course Changes (S.25-100)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course change in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (School of Criminology, Economics, French, Global Humanities, Sociology and Anthropology, World Languages and Literatures), the Beedie School of Business, the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication, School of Interactive Arts and Technology), and the Faculty of Science (Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry).

viii) WQB Designations (S.25-101)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved WQB designations in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Medical Humanities and Social Sciences, Urban Studies Program, Sociology and Anthropology), the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Interactive Arts and Technology, School of Communication), and the Faculty of Science (Earth Sciences).

F) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Program Changes (S.25-102)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (School for International Studies), and the Beedie School of Business.

ii) Course Changes (S.25-103)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Interactive Arts and Technology).

G) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.25-104)**

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

9. Other Business**i) Additional Credentials Initiative: Progress and Next Steps (S.25-105)**

Senate received Additional Credentials Initiative: Progress and Next Steps for information.

Senators Denholm and O'Brien did a brief presentation, following which they took questions.

A concern was raised that establishing more credentials may erode the integrity of existing ones, and though the institution may monetize credentials for its own benefit, whether such a thing helps the public better understand the services they are being provided or creates confusion around what credentials actually represent needs to be carefully considered.

A question was asked regarding who has the ability to create a micro-credential and how can that be coordinated at a university level to ensure consistency. Senate was informed that approval bodies are already in place for both credit and non-credit credentials. For example, a new graduate certificate or diploma would go through the normal review process and would ultimately come before Senate. Within Lifelong Learning the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies (SCCS) oversees the establishment of, changes to, and discontinuance of non-credit certificates and non-credit diplomas. It was added that the document contains a number of recommendations and that by taking stock and providing central resource supports will curb the proliferation of unchecked credentials.

A question was asked regarding if outreach has been done with any professional development organizations, such as CPA Canada. Senate was informed that Lifelong Learning and the faculties do reach out to accrediting bodies frequently and one thing that drives the work done in Lifelong Learning is making sure that people are getting an education aligned with accrediting body recommendations. It was added that conversations have been had with Computing Science around cybersecurity and professional development, with the goal of enhancing opportunities for people to do professional development work under the SFU brand umbrella.

ii) Briefing Note: SFU Human Rights Policy (GP 18) and Bullying and Harassment Policy (GP 47) Reviews (S.25-106)

Senate received Briefing Note: SFU Human Rights Policy (GP 18) and Bullying and Harassment Policy (GP 47) Reviews for information.

Margarita Fullerton, University Secretary, was in attendance to respond to questions.

iii) Election Report to Senate 2025 (S.25-107)

Senate received Election Report to Senate 2025 for information.

10. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting - Monday, July 7, 2025

The Chair, on behalf of Senate, expressed appreciation to the following Senators, whose terms of office expire on May 31, 2025: Mishael Abu-Samhan, Cécile Bullock, Abdulkarim Elhayek, Fatima Fatima, Aaron Fung, Alexander Karaivanov, Anke Kessler, Amy Ricker, Pok Man Tong, Marissa Traversa, Rochelle Tucker, JF Williams.

Open session adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Tom Nault
Secretary of Senate