



## MEMORANDUM

**ATTENTION** Senate **DATE** April 28, 2025  
**FROM** Peter Hall, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Academic on behalf of Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President Academic, and Chair, SCUP **PAGES** 1/5  
**RE:** Termination of the African Research Centre (SCUP 25-34)

At its meeting on April 16, 2025, SCUP reviewed and approved the termination of the African Research Centre within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The documents are attached for the information of Senate.

C: Steeve Mongrain, Associate Dean, Research & International, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

**Memorandum**

---

From: Valorie Crooks, Associate Vice-President, Research *Valorie Crooks* Date: April 3, 2025

Re: Termination of the African Research Centre

To: Dilson Rassier, Chair, *Ex-officio*, Senate Committee on University Planning (SCUP)

---

Attached is Dean's office memo from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences approving the termination of African Research Centre, based on the rationale laid out in the 2021-2022 Annual Report.

Although approved as a SFU research centre in April 2020, the African Research Centre was never launched or formally constituted due to the decision of the African Studies Working Group steering committee which chose to instead support the work of the Black Caucus at SFU.

I recommend approval for termination of the African Research Centre as a SFU Research Centre.

**Motion:**

To approve and recommend to Senate the termination of the African Research Centre.

**Attachments:**

1. Memo from FASS Dean's Office
2. Annual Report (2021-2022) African Research Centre

## MEMO

Faculty of Arts and  
Social Sciences  
+1 778 782 9982  
fassadri@sfu.ca  
sfu.ca/fass

Academic Quadrangle  
6165  
8888 University Drive  
Burnaby, BC  
Canada V5A 1S6

ATTENTION	Dr. Valorie Crooks, AVPR
FROM	Steeve Mongrain, Associate Dean, Research & International
RE	Termination of the African Research Centre
DATE	April 3, 2024
PAGES 1	

Dear Dr. Crooks,

The Dean's office approves the proposal to terminate the African Research Centre (ARC). The ARC's steering committee voted to terminate the Center, and the Director, Dr. Cooper, informed me of the decision on March 21, 2024. The Africa Research Centre, which SFU's Senate approved in April 2020 for a five-year period (so expiring this year). Despite that approval, the African Studies Working Group steering committee (which had been in place since 2018 and proposed the Africa Research Centre) decided in 2020 not to launch the Centre. The rationale for this decision is laid out in the 2021-2022 annual report.



Steeve Mongrain  
Associate Dean, Research & International  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

## **Annual Report (2021-2022) Africa Research Centre**

### **Description of the Centre/Institute:**

The mandate of the SFU Africa Research Centre (ARC, or the Centre) is to promote research and organize related activities with a focus on issues and perspectives that are of particular relevance to Africa and for people of African identities.

The Africa Research Centre (ARC) was proposed by the SFU African Studies Working Group (ASWG) and approved by the SFU Senate in April 2020. However, the ASWG steering committee (comprised of continuing faculty and staff) decided not to publicly launch the Africa Research Centre at that time given important public reckonings with anti-Black racism in broader society and our university. During 2020 and 2021, ASWG instead chose to support the work of the Black Caucus at SFU in two ways: 1) by providing funding for the Black Caucus to hire a graduate student organizer; and 2) by not pursuing an active agenda while the Black Caucus was conducting a process of engagement and agenda-setting. This deliberate pause of the ASWG/ARC work has been taken in ongoing consultation with leadership of the SFU Black Caucus, and conversations are ongoing regarding how Africa-focused research at SFU can best be supported.

Faculty and staff who have been involved with ASWG (e.g. as steering committee members and other interested affiliates) remain interested and engaged in the original goals of supporting and developing Africa-focused research at and through SFU. That said, the future of the Africa Research Centre is not yet clear as ASWG/ARC's steering committee members and other members seek to learn and support the priorities of the Black Caucus.

### **The Centre/Institute's membership and organization structure:**

As per above, the Africa Research Centre has not been formally constituted. That work has been paused to ensure space for the outcomes of the SFU Black Caucus's ongoing processes of consultation and agenda-setting. Discussions regarding ARC's future are planned for late summer/early fall 2022.

### **Provide a detailed list of accomplishments of the Centre/Institute in the last year (this could include number of HQP trained, or any form of research output or publications).**

Given the decision to pause ARC's launch and active agenda to ensure open space for the SFU Black Caucus's consultations and agenda-setting work to provide leadership, ASWG/ARC has not actively pursued a separate agenda. However, ASWG has provided financial and organizational support to three initiatives organized by SFU-affiliated staff, faculty, and community partners (described under events, workshops and public outreach below).

### **Provide any notable media successes or media engagements (if any) in the last year.**

### **Provide a list of events, workshops, or any form of public outreach in the last year.**

Given the decision to pause ARC's launch and active agenda out of respect for the consultations and agenda-setting work of the SFU Black Caucus, ASWG/ARC has not been actively pursuing accomplishments. However, ASWG has provided financial and organizational support to three initiatives organized by SFU-affiliated staff, faculty, and community partners.

In the last year, ASWG has provided funding support and in-kind organizational support to three initiatives:

Public talk, September 14, 2021: '[Protesting Democracy in Africa: Social Movements and the Future of Global Order](#)' featuring guest speaker Dr. Zachariah Mampilly (Marxe Chair of International Affairs at the Marxe School of Public and International Affairs, City University of New York, where he is the Co-Founder of the Program on African Social Research). This event was an in-person, public and free event held at SFU Harbour Centre. The event was organized by International Studies assistant professor Dr. Jason Stearns, and financially supported and advertised by ASWG. The event was well-attended by SFU students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members.

Community-engaged research, report, and dialogue sessions: '[Worlds Within: Diverse Histories, Identities, and Experiences of Black People of African Ancestry in British Columbia](#)' is an output of the African Ancestry Project, led by SFU research fellow Alice Mürage, highlighting the diversity of Black people in BC. It centers the stories of over 160 project participants who were included in the 2020-2021 project through group discussions, interviews, and surveys. ASWG has supported this project as a collaborator to Alice Mürage's SFU Community Engagement Initiative grant, and with financial support for the study, report printing, and a public dialogue session sharing the report in March 2021.

Public talk and film screening, April 19, 2021: '[An Evening with Boniface Mwangi](#)' featuring Boniface Mwangi, a celebrated photographer, TED fellow, Kenyan peace activist, and recipient of a Luxembourg Peace Prize. The event included a talk by Mwangi and screening of his award-winning documentary film Softie, about his political activism. This event was organized by the Kenyan Community in BC and ASWG/ARC provided financial and organizational support. It was a free, public event held at SFU Harbour Centre that was well-attended.

**Provide any supporting documents that you would like to submit along with your application (in pdf, excel, or word/text file).**

## **Financial Summary**

ARC does not receive direct support from the university.

ASWG/ARC receives seed funding (\$7,000/year) and in-kind support from SFU's School for International Studies (Jarislowsky Chair) and applies for additional funding for special projects (e.g. ASWG director Elizabeth Cooper was a collaborator for the CEI grant for the African Ancestry Project funding).