



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, September 8, 2025 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

Open Session

Present: Joy Johnson, Chair

Accettola, Evan
Al-Rawi, Ahmed
Altman, Rachel
Ashoughian, Gohar
Bhalloo, Shafik
Black, Sam
Brooks-Wilson, Angela
Carcano, Luana
Chapman, Glenn
Choi, Jake
Collard, Mark
Crage, Suzanna
Denholm, Julia
Dhelia, Priyanka
Do, Henry
Eftenaru, Cristina
Egri, Carolyn
Everton, Michael
Ferenc, Ava
Fisher, Brian
Fiume, Eugene
Frank, Richard
Gislason, Maya
Gough, Aidan
Gray, Bonnie
Gunawan, Derrick
Hall, Peter
Hashemi, Tara
Herrenbrueck, Lucas
Khangura, Harinder
Kim, Lisa
Kingsbury, Paul
Kwan, Isabelle
Laitsch, Dan
Leznoff, Daniel
Liu, Connie
Lysova, Alexandra
Markey, Sean
Martell, Matt
Masri, Kamal

McKenzie, Janis
Murali, Surya
Myers, Gord
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Brien, Mary
Pantophlet, Ralph
Percival, Colin
Rassier, Dilson
Schiphorst, Thecla
Shulepova, Sofia
Snyder, Jeremy
Stockie, John
Sutherland, Jill
Szymczyk, Barbara
Thornton, Allen
Travers
Weldon, Laurel
Whitehurst, David
Williams, Vance

Absent:

Ali, Sikandra
Bagga, Rishu
Baker, Micah
Brennand, Tracy
Jahandideh, Roman
Liu, Landy
O'Neil, Dugan
Schmidt, Michèle
Vrooman, Tamara
Zickfeld, Kirsten

In Attendance:

Brown, Melanie
Ham, David
Magnusson, Kris
Naqvi, Zareen
Price, David
Stern, Pam

Tom Nault, Secretary of Senate
Steven Noel, Recording Secretary

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of May 20, 2025

The minutes of the open session on May 20, 2025 were approved as distributed.

3. The Minutes of the Open Session of July 7, 2025 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on October 6, 2025

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that SFU faced a security incident on Burnaby campus over the summer. Since that event, students, faculty and staff reported that the emergency response was not as robust as it needed to be and caused concern and confusion among the SFU community. Assurance was given that Galib Bhayani, Chief Safety and Risk Officer, has conducted a full debrief within SFU, including with union and employee group representatives, and also with the RCMP. It was added that SFU is committed to learning, improving and ensuring consistent processes and communication in the case of any future incidents, and Safety and Risk Services will share details with the community this fall on what to expect in an emergency and how to access accurate information.

The Chair reported that SFU welcomed 34 new faculty members this September in faculties and departments all across the university, from Psychology and Health Sciences to Education, Business, Sustainable Energy Engineering and Indigenous Languages.

The Chair reported that SFU has welcomed Nobel Prize-winning chemist Thomas Cech as the inaugural President's Distinguished Visiting Scholar, a position created to recognize academics who have been trailblazers in their field and enable distinguished scholars to spend time at SFU. This fall, Cech will co-teach a molecular biology and biochemistry course and provide advice and mentorship to faculty members, enhancing the SFU experience for community members across the Faculty of Science and the university.

The Chair recognized a number of faculty members for their recent achievements:

- Computing Science professor Jiangchuan Liu, Public Policy professor Kora DeBeck, Health Sciences professor TJ (Travis) Salway and REM professor Tammara Soma for being named to the Royal Society of Canada, the nation's top academic honour
- Health Sciences professor Zabrina Brumme for being elected as a Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Fellow
- REM professor Mark Jaccard for being awarded the Order of British Columbia, the province's highest honour, for his outstanding contributions to global climate action

- Environmental professor Ruth Joy and Molecular Biology and Biochemistry professor Peter Unrau for being awarded a combined total of \$3.3M in funding from NSERC's Collaborative Research and Training Experience program for their respective projects

The Chair reported the following leadership updates:

- Sean Markey began his appointment as Dean, Faculty of Environment, effective August 1, 2025 for a 5-year term.
- David Bangsberg will join SFU effective October 15, 2025 as the next Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Jeremy Snyder will continue as dean pro tem until David's arrival.

As reported at the previous Senate meeting, the Chair reminded Senate that Chancellor Tamara Vrooman is nearing the end of her maximum six-year term as Chancellor, per the University Act. As such, the university is beginning the process of selecting a new chancellor. Guided by the University Act and SFU policy B10.12, a Chancellor Selection Committee has been formed that includes two members of Senate, Sikandra Ali (student rep) and Matt Martell (faculty rep). The first committee meeting will be held in September, and a call for nominations will be issued to Senate and members of the community later this fall.

The Chair reported that since the summer of 2024, SFU's Artificial Intelligence strategy committee and many other subcommittee members from across the university have been exploring the opportunities and impacts of AI at SFU, in the areas of learning and teaching, research, operations and external engagement. An overall SFU AI strategy is now in draft and will be shared early this fall. As part of this work, a document entitled *Learning & Teaching with Artificial Intelligence Guidelines* has been drafted. These guidelines aim to provide guidance for instructors, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as an AI framework for unit leaders. The guidelines will be distributed to stakeholders across the university for review, feedback and refinement during the fall term and ultimately submitted to Senate for approval.

The Chair reported that the government relations team continues to advance SFU's strategic priorities through engaging with the provincial and federal governments on topics including financial sustainability, the Cedar Supercomputing Centre expansion and SFU's leadership in research topics including climate innovation, research infrastructure and AI research and adoption. The Chair, in her role as President, is headed to Ottawa next week for meetings with key government stakeholders, and a mission to Victoria is being planned for next month as well.

The Chair reported some dates and events to be aware of this fall:

- Friday, Sept. 12: First Peoples' Gathering House Grand Opening – all community members are invited to an open house from 2:30-6:00 pm. Drop by to enjoy performances from Indigenous performers, bannock and tours of the new space.
- Saturday, Sept. 20: Marianne and Gibson Art Museum opening. While the opening event is ticketed, once the museum is open it will be free and open to all.
- Wednesday, Sept. 24: Faculty and Staff Town Hall.

i) Report of the Provost

The Provost reported that steps are being taken to finalize the Academic Plan (2025-2030). It will be presented to the Board of Governors at the end of September, and then will be brought to Senate for information. Thanks was extended to everyone who participated in the consultation process and provided feedback on the plan.

6. Question Period

i) Senator Collard submitted the following questions:

Question 1:

Preamble

- 1) *Under the University Act, Senate has the power not only to recommend to the Board the establishment of a faculty (section 37.1.i), but also to “determine the members of the teaching and administrative staffs who are to be members of each faculty” (section 3.7.1.k).*
- 2) *On 21-May-24, Senate recommended to the Board the establishment of the School of Medicine as a faculty, with teaching staff to include ca. 1000 part-time clinical faculty members and 70-80 fulltime tenure-track faculty members. Approximately half of the latter were supposed to be regular professors (i.e., full-time tenure-track professors who engage in research and teaching), while the remainder were intended to be in leadership positions. These arrangements were described in documents provided to Senate, including the report of the Joint Senate-Board Working Group.*
- 3) *Recently, it has become apparent that the plan has changed. According to various sources, including members of the Executive, the intent is no longer to appoint regular professors. Instead, the medical school will appoint Medical Research Faculty – a new category of faculty at SFU, established by the Executive Committee of the Board on 28-Mar-25. This category differs from existing faculty roles in that it is primarily a research position, with the only teaching expectation being the provision of “specialized instruction”.*
- 4) *This change is concerning for two reasons. First, it was not approved by Senate. As explained earlier, Senate is supposed to determine the membership of the teaching staff of a faculty. Thus, the failure to seek the approval of Senate represents a breach of procedure.*
- 5) *The second reason the change is concerning is that it will diminish the quality and relevance of the education offered by the medical school. The dual role of the regular professor at a research university—conducting research and teaching undergraduate and graduate students—is key here. It underpins the quality of education provided by the institution, because it means that students are regularly taught by people who are at the forefront of knowledge creation, and ensures that degree programs remain in line with disciplinary standards, which change rapidly in large part due to the scholarly activities of regular professors. Accordingly, the decision not to hire regular professors will have a negative impact on the quality of the Medical Doctor Program. Students in the program will receive less academically rigorous teaching than their peers in other SFU programs, and the program’s curriculum will likely become outdated quickly.*

Question:

Given that the current plan for teaching staff for the School of Medicine departs significantly from the one approved by Senate, will the Executive commit to reverting immediately to the original hiring plan and ensuring that the 35-40 regular professors envisaged are:

- a) Primarily subject matter specialists who are emerging or recognized leaders in the biomedical, clinical, and other core disciplines required for the Medical Doctor Program, rather than researchers whose focus is on medical education per se;*
- b) Substantively and directly involved in teaching in the Medical Doctor Program; and*
- c) Responsible for overseeing the curriculum and ensuring its relevance with respect to knowledge, skills, and ethics, in line with current disciplinary and professional standards?*

Question 2:

Preamble

1) Under the University Act, Senate has the power to “consider, approve and recommend to the board the revision of courses of study, instruction and education in all faculties and departments of the university” (section 3.7.1.f).

2) On 21-May-24, Senate recommended to the Board “the full program proposal for the Medical Doctor (MD) program within the School of Medicine with the requirement that the draft course proposals in Appendix 8.2 are required to receive full approval of Senate at a later date.” When the motion was passed, the understanding was that the MD Program would be consistent with other degrees at SFU in that it would involve classroom instruction (i.e., lectures and seminars) and labs. The only substantive difference was that students in the MD program would receive instruction in clinical settings. These arrangements were described in the Full Proposal for the MD Program.

3) Recently, it has become apparent that the plan has changed. According to various sources, including a member of the Executive, the intent is no longer for the MD Program to involve lectures and seminars. It will be delivered entirely via labs and sessions in clinical settings.

4) This change is problematic. One reason for this is that lectures are vital for providing the theoretical concepts and the complex integration of knowledge that are the hallmarks of a university course. Labs and clinical sessions can be expected to provide students in the MD Program with hands-on skills and proximate-level knowledge, but labs and clinical sessions are incapable of providing the theoretical content that distinguishes university degrees from the credentials offered by polytechnics. Thus, the shift to entirely hands-on learning profoundly changes the MD program, transforming it from an academic program into a vocational one.

5) Relatedly, removing lectures from the MD Program means it will fail to meet its educational goals (Full Program pg. 47). The first of these goals is to provide “a comprehensive understanding of the biomedical sciences and other relevant disciplines as a foundation for clinical medicine”. The second educational goal concerns the social sciences. According to the Full Program, the MD program will provide “an understanding of human relationships and behaviours, social processes and culture, root causes of health inequities, population health, complex modes of action like teamwork and the interplay between biological processes and social context as a foundation for clinical medicine.” Neither of these goals is achievable through labs and clinical sessions alone. Lectures and seminars are required to gain a comprehensive understanding of scientific disciplines.

The same holds for social science disciplines. No social science degree is entirely delivered via practical sessions for the simple reason that the social sciences are inherently theoretical and it

is impossible to adequately convey concepts and theories via practical sessions alone. Practical sessions can improve social science courses but only in conjunction with lectures and seminars. They cannot replace classroom instruction.

Question:

Given that the new instructional plan for the Medical Doctor Program departs significantly from the one approved by Senate and does so in ways that undermine its academic quality, will the Executive commit to reverting immediately to the original instructional plan and ensuring that the draft course proposals that are due to be approved by Senate (see 21-May-24 motion):

- a) foreground theoretical content in line with the expectations for degree programs at SFU;*
- b) emphasize the integration of knowledge at both the level of the individual course and the level of the program; and*
- c) make clear that lectures and other forms of classroom teaching capable of conveying theoretical concepts and providing the integration of knowledge expected of an SFU degree will be central to the delivery of the program.*

Senators Rassier and Hall responded to these questions, with assistance from the Chair. Also, Kris Magnusson, Senior Advisor to the Dean, and Melanie Brown, Director - Faculty & Staff Affairs, were in attendance as resource persons.

Senate was informed that in the opinion of the Administration, staff hiring and the educational model does not differ significantly from what was presented at Senate. Upon receiving these questions, and in an effort to ensure that the appropriate process has been followed, consultation was held with SFU's General Counsel and it was agreed that what was approved by Senate, that being the academic governance and academic programs of the School of Medicine (SoM), has not changed significantly. Items that were to be approved by the Board of Governors, including policies related to employment, tenure assignments and duties of members, were decided at the Board of Governors level as designated by the University Act. It was added that these questions were taken very seriously, and that in the interest of responding to Senators questions, a special information session of Senate could be held.

With respect to the hiring plan for the Medical School, the category of Medical Research Faculty referenced in the question, it is specified that people in those positions will have active research programs and it's also specified that they'll be engaged in what's described as specialized instruction. It's true that the Medical School plans for the next couple of years do not involve a lot of hiring in that area, but it should be remembered that the full program proposal that came to Senate and that was subject of the review by the Joint Board-Senate Committee was the hiring plan and the budget for what's described as steady state, which is essentially some point in the future when the Medical School ceases to be a project and becomes a regular part of university life. So small hiring in that category now is not inconsistent with reaching a more robust level of hiring consistent with the full program proposal in the future.

The Medical School is requested, like all other faculties, to submit an annual faculty renewal plan, which they refer to as a faculty development plan. At this particular time, since they're not yet at the stage of renewal, that faculty development/faculty renewal plan is part of the annual

process of determining what the faculty complement would look like. To emphasize, the policy does include that these individuals will do teaching and research.

In terms of the concern about the course proposal, when the full program proposal came to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS), two meetings were held – an initial discussion and information meeting followed by a decision meeting. Following robust discussions and lengthy meetings, the recommendation of SCUS was that the full program proposal could go on to the Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) for consideration. But SCUS explicitly requested that the course proposals come back to SCUS once they were more fully developed, because there were questions about what exactly it means to have a course that is one year long that is not divided into semesters the way one traditionally thinks of a course at SFU as having an instructor of record, and that is associated with a single semester. So a very robust discussion was held and then earlier this year the full course proposals, significantly enhanced, came back to SCUS and were discussed at the previous meeting of Senate.

It was added that the process of approving the SoM has been challenging given that discussions about courses, admissions criteria, and budget have occurred in closed sessions, making it more difficult to engage in robust collegial discussions.

The business case that was developed and prepared was not the operational plan for standing up the program. It was the rationale and justification to the government for the scope and size of funding that would be needed to mount not just a SoM, but a SoM dedicated to serving primary care needs and with a tight focus on primary care. As such, SFU was charged with being a complementary and not a competitive program with UBC in the sense of staking out areas of high need that the province had in terms of the service provision for primary care. That requires some different approaches to the delivery of the training. The business case was then provided to Senate to give an idea of the scope and magnitude being discussed. Thus, when adding up at steady state the amount of instructional units that would be required, backfilling it against a common faculty development allocation, a number somewhere around 80 equivalent FTEs was reached. That was used to establish the cost structure, not the delivery structure. This is important because you can't establish the delivery structure until you actually get in and start developing the curriculum and know how many people you need to deliver what kinds of instruction. Thus, Senate never did approve a staffing plan that was in a business case. The business case was simply a rationale for funding.

Regarding the concern that there's a fundamental shift in instructional methodology away from lectures, it was noted that in the full program proposal it states that students will occasionally learn in classroom-based large group settings. These will not be structured as passive lectures, but instead as active learning in the form of dialogue, debate, panel discussions, team based learning and other modalities. The program does include extensive classroom-based learning, but is delivered through those active modalities. A fundamental component of the curriculum delivery is through the form of what's called case-based learning or presentation-based learning and these are learning pods that will have somewhere between 8 to 12 students. If thought of as a small seminar, remembering again that all of these learners have previous undergraduate degrees and the mode is more closely aligned with graduate instruction than it is with first year

undergraduate instruction, the core instructional delivery is through those case-based learning environments that are led by a facilitator and that will go throughout the year. Thus, a significant portion, especially of that first-year curriculum, is in those environments.

From there, the SoM links much the content that goes on related to those case-based or presentation-based learning to determine what sorts of experiences learners have within their lab settings. As such, every week has multiple sessions of case-based learning. They then go from there into their labs to learn the specifics related to that case and go into clinical instruction, which is in units of about four students for developing specific clinical skills, such as giving injections. Those require intensive and hands-on forms of instruction. Included within that average week is community-based learning, rather than the pre-clerkship/clerkship model found in many medical schools. Learners will be involved in community-based settings, similar to a practicum that begins right at the start of their program, so there is not a sudden jump from the preclinical to the clinical, but rather they'll be providing clinical, or learning in clinical environments right from the very beginning. Thus, the program is exactly as was proposed and approved by Senate.

It was added that when submitting a course proposal to SCUS and to Senate, the number of contact hours would normally be listed underneath the number of units, but that for neither the full program proposal that was brought to Senate in May 2024 nor in the updated course proposals that were approved by SCUS and was brought forward in closed session of Senate in May 2025, there are no contact hours ever ascribed to lectures. You will see, however, significant contact hours for seminars, for tutorials, and for labs in each yearlong course given that the majority of theoretical content will be delivered through those active team-based learning modalities.

A comment was made that Senate has now heard two contradictory things on the staffing plan. On the one hand it was stated that nothing has changed in terms of the plan and on the other hand that Senate didn't actually vote on a plan. Throughout discussions around the medical school there was assurance that it would be similar to every other faculty with research and teaching faculty, along with clinical faculty. Instead, three new categories of faculty have been created specifically for the Med school: clinical faculty, which was anticipated, and then medical research faculty and medical education faculty, which were not anticipated. Senate was informed that there has been a pause on medical teaching faculty, in part due to the feedback provided. There is a desire to move what's now being referred to as research faculty into the collective agreement with the Faculty Association, but that is a matter for the collective agreement and bargaining. It was added that like with every professor at SFU, service, teaching and research is part of the role.

The Chair noted that accreditors have visited SFU and have already looked at the curriculum and are in the process of making a decision on whether they, as experts on medical education in this country, believe that SFU will meet the standards of competencies required for medical education. It's expected that the outcome of the accreditation process will be known on or around September 19th. While it was acknowledged that due to the nature of the process, Senate has felt that it hasn't been adequately brought along in the process, the SoM will not be reverting to the previous plan because there is disagreement about whether that reversion is required. As was

proposed earlier in the discussion, the Chair supported convening a special meeting of Senate on the SoM, where all questions can be put on the table.

Citing the University Act which states that Senate has the power to *determine the members of the teaching and administrative staffs who are to be members of each faculty*, a question was asked regarding if the medical research faculty appointments (A 10.08) came to Senate. Senate was informed that any policy with regard to positions at SFU belongs to the Board of Governors and is considered by the executive, and thus it did not come to Senate. It was added that the University Act states that the Board has the power to *appoint... members of the teaching staff of the university, and the officers and employees the board considers necessary for the purpose of the university, and to set their salaries or remuneration, and to define their duties and their tenure of office or employment.*

A question was asked about the administration's plans going forward to address the lack of communication and information being provided to Senators. Senate was informed that some of the concerns around what is being referred to as research faculty is a matter for collective bargaining and thus will not be discussed at Senate. Further, it should be remembered that the SoM is starting with 48 students and the program will grow over time, as will the complement of faculty. It was reiterated that a special session of Senate focused on the SoM will be held, with details to be provided once a suitable time is found.

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

i) Candidates – Graduate Credentials (S.25-131)

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

"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.25-132)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by A. Gough

"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) Senate Appeals Board (SAB)

i) Annual Report 2023 (S.25-133)

Senate received the Senate Appeals Board (SAB) Annual Report 2023 for information.

ii) Annual Report 2024 (S.25-134)

Senate received the Senate Appeals Board (SAB) Annual Report 2024 for information.

B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

i) Examination Policy (S.25-135)

Moved by P. Kingsbury, seconded by H. Do

“That Senate approve, effective Fall 2026, the changes to Policy T20.02 Final Examinations as outlined in the appendix.”

A question was asked regarding if a policy should be put in place to cancel lecture hours if an exam is scheduled outside of class time. Senate as informed that this issue was not discussed in the formation of this policy, but it could be considered in the future.

A question was asked around the reasoning for implementing a 15% total grade limitation on in-term examinations in the final two weeks of class. Senate was informed that the 15% threshold was widely discussed at SCUS and with the SCUS working group and it was felt that 15% struck the proper balance between the need for assessment of a courses components and the need to ensure that students are not overburdened in the two weeks before final exams. A number of faculties indicated that students often have to prioritize their work in the final weeks and a 15% cap makes this more manageable without restricting an instructor’s ability to have smaller end of term quizzes, especially if it’s needed to assess content delivered in the final weeks of class.

A number of concerns were raised that implementing a blackout on exams that account for more than 15% of the total grade in the final two weeks of class represents administrative micromanaging and restricts the pedagogical decisions of the faculty, especially given that there is already a limited number of weeks to utilize in each term.

Given the concerns over the cap being at 15% rather than a higher percentage and over whether the blackout should cover the final two weeks of class or just the final week, it was suggested that SCUS should revisit this policy, taking Senate’s feedback into account. As such, the following motion to withdraw was moved:

Moved by P. Kingsbury

“That item S.25-135 (Examination Policy) be withdrawn.”

A question was called and a vote taken to withdraw the motion.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Program Changes 9S.25-136)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Art and Social Sciences (School of Criminology), the Beedie School of Business, the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Publishing Program), and the Faculty of Science (Statistics and Actuarial Science).

iii) New Course Proposals (S.25-137)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Education.

iv) Course Changes (S.25-138)

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 Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Office of the Dean, School of Criminology, School for International Studies), and the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication, School of Interactive Arts and Technology).

v) WQB Approvals (S.25-139)

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 (History, Philosophy, Social Data Analytics), the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication), the Faculty of Environment (School of Resource and Environmental Management), and the Faculty of Science (Earth Sciences)

C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Graduate General Regulation 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (S.25-140)**

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by P. Dhelia

"That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of Graduate Studies effective Summer 2026."

Pam Stern, Associate Dean - Policy + Curriculum (Faculty of Graduate Studies), was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Graduate General Regulation 1.4 Enrollment (S.25-141)

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by L. Kim

"That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.4 Enrollment effective Summer 2026."

Pam Stern, Associate Dean - Policy + Curriculum (Faculty of Graduate Studies), was in

attendance to respond to questions.

Noting that international students face higher tuition and potential issues around their immigration status, a question was asked about any guardrails or flexibility in place for international students. Senate was informed that changes here are editorial and intended to improve clarity. Changes are not being made to continuous enrollment, as they are meant to help students move through the program expeditiously. It was added that there are opportunities for students to request a leave of absence and not have to pay tuition if they need to be away from their studies.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iii) Graduate General Regulation 1.7 Program Requirements (S.25-142)

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

"That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.7 Program Requirements effective Summer 2026."

Pam Stern, Associate Dean - Policy + Curriculum (Faculty of Graduate Studies), was in attendance to respond to questions.

A friendly amendment was suggested to change the language from *and the external examiner also has the necessary proficiency in the oral and written language* to *and anticipates being able to find an external examiner who also has the necessary proficiency in the oral and written language*. The mover of the motion accepted the friendly amendment.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iv) Graduate General Regulation 1.10 Examinations (S.25-143)

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by C. Liu

"That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.10 Examinations effective Summer 2026."

Pam Stern, Associate Dean - Policy + Curriculum (Faculty of Graduate Studies), was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked about the rationale for the examining committee not being able to award a higher result than the assessment of the external examiner. Senate was informed it is practice across SFU that deference is given to the external examiner, which is why there is such a rigorous vetting of external examiners.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

v) Graduate General Regulation 1.11 Publication of Thesis (S.25-144)

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

"That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.11 Publication of Thesis effective Summer 2026."

Pam Stern, Associate Dean - Policy + Curriculum (Faculty of Graduate Studies), was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

vi) Graduate General Regulation 1.12 Time Limit for Program Completion (S.25-145)

Moved by M. O'Brien, seconded by

"That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.12 Time Limit for Program Completion effective Summer 2026."

Pam Stern, Associate Dean - Policy + Curriculum (Faculty of Graduate Studies), was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

vii) Program Changes (S.25-146)

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 (Psychology).

viii) Course Changes (S.25-147)

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

ix) Course Reinstatement (S.25-148)

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

D) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)

i) Senate Committee Elections (S.25-149)

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) **Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2024/25 Grades Report (S.25-150)**

Senate received Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2024/25 Grades Report for information.

Zareen Naqvi, Director - IRP, and David Ham, Analyst – IRP, were in attendance to respond to questions.

Noting that many schools across Canada give students the opportunity to take elective credits as a pass/fail so that they can explore elective courses without negatively impacting their GPA, a question was asked as to the status of SFU reimplementing such a policy. Senate was informed that SCUS has considered this issue and came to the conclusion that it wasn't time to bring it back. A key consideration here is the administrative cost, given that the current system necessitates entering grades manually. Changes to this would require significant upgrades and resources.

With certain faculties showing a substantial increase in grades relative to the rest of the university when comparing 2015/16 to 2024/25, a question was asked about what impact this will have on scholarships based on whether you're in a faculty that has higher average grades versus lower average grades. Senate was informed that the last time the Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries (SPCSAB) considered this matter, some statistical analysis was done on grading and it was found that approximately one-third of the open scholarships were handed out to students who would have not received them if the grading system was equalized across the university. The committee considered whether it wanted to make changes to the system, in particular putting together some sort of scholarship GPA that would address inequities and grading schemes, but on the advice of staff on the committee who were concerned about the added workload of advising students who might not understand the system, the committee voted to not pursue this any further. It was added, however, that the committee could reconsider this issue if Senate wishes.

ii) **Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2024 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report (S.25-151)**

Senate received Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2024 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report for information.

Zareen Naqvi, Director - IRP, and David Ham, Analyst – IRP, were in attendance to respond to questions.

Noting that degree completion time is increasing while making meaningful social connections is decreasing, a question was asked regarding how these numbers compare to other institutions. Senate was informed that the undergraduate survey is SFU focused, but that any such data would have to be sought out and reported back to Senate at a future date.

On the subject of making meaningful social connections, a question was asked regarding if there is any intention to reopen the campus pub. Senate was informed that SFU is in conversation with some individuals to get the pub reopened, however discussion is still in the early stages.

Regarding course access, which impacts degree completion time, Senate was informed that it is something that SCUS frequently considers, with the focus of the new academic plan taking a hard look at the structural ways that curriculum make it difficult for students to move through their degrees quickly. The course access issue is also related to the number of seats the university is able to offer and that's challenging in the current budget context.

A number of comments were made about student engagement and the challenges around making social connections at SFU:

- With SFU's reputation as a commuter campus, consideration needs to be given to what is being done to keep students on campus and engaged in the community beyond the Month of Welcome.
- The commuter campus reputation becomes a sort self-fulfilling prophecy because new students coming to SFU already have a pre-conceived notion. This can impact the decisions of perspective students.
- It would be helpful for departments and faculties to highlight the activities of student clubs and unions to help raise aware of the events happening around campus.
- SFU's trimester system means that students have more options as to when they can take courses, rather than enrolling in the same courses each term with the same group of students as they progress through their degree.
- Though it was agreed that making connections can be challenging, it was also agreed that students do need to take some initiative in trying to form those connections.

Noting that 74% of respondents indicated that they were not able to register in all of the courses they wanted in Fall 2024 because *all courses sections were full*, a question was asked regarding if new sections are being opened up to address these pinch points. Senate was reminded that the 74% represents 74% of the 37% of students who were not able to register in all of their courses. SFU does have a course access indicator through SIMS and conversations have recently been held around whether the best use is being made of the indicator and if the collection of information can be improved to target those problem courses. It was added that deans do put aside resources to make course access possible, but are doing so under significant financial restraints.

10. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting - Monday, October 6, 2025

Open session adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Tom Nault
Secretary of Senate