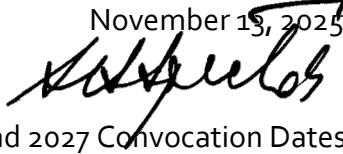


MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Senate DATE: November 13, 2025
 FROM: Stephen Spector
 Chair, Senate Calendar Committee
 RE: Revision to Academic Dates – Summer 2026 and 2027 Convocation Dates



On Thursday, November 13, 2025, the Calendar Committee reviewed, for approval by Senate, a revision to the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 academic years.

The committee was asked to look at revising the previously approved Convocation schedule for Summer 2026 and Summer 2027, adding one additional ceremony on:

- the afternoon of Monday, June 8, 2026 to the June (Spring) 2026 Convocation ceremony dates, and
- the afternoon of Monday, June 7, 2027 to the June (Spring) 2027 Convocation ceremony dates.

The rationale for this request is to allow for a reduction in the size of each ceremony in order to provide graduands and guests with the best in-person graduation experience possible.

The Calendar Committee recommends:

MOTION 1:

“That Senate approve the revised schedule of academic dates for the Summer 2026 term by adding one additional ceremony on the afternoon of Monday, June 8, 2026 to the June/Spring 2026 convocation ceremony. Spring 2026 Convocation will now run from June 8th to June 12th, 2026.”

MOTION 2:

“That Senate approve the revised schedule of academic dates for the Summer 2027 term by adding one additional ceremony on the afternoon of Monday, June 7, 2027 to the June/Spring 2027 convocation ceremony. Spring 2027 Convocation will now run from June 7th to June 11th, 2027.”

BRIEFING NOTE – CALENDAR COMMITTEE

SUBJECT	Adding a ninth Convocation ceremony in June 2026 and June 2027
DATE	Nov 12, 2025
UNIT/DEPARTMENT	Ceremonies and Events
PREPARED BY	Sue Porter, Director of Ceremonies and Events Protocol

TOPIC

Due to the rising numbers of annual graduates, particularly for June Convocation, it has become necessary to add an extra (ninth) ceremony in June 2026 and June 2027. The best day/time of that ceremony must be approved and confirmed by the Calendar Committee before the end of 2025 in order to have time to successfully execute this plan.

BACKGROUND

- SFU has seen consistent growth of graduating class sizes with more new seats coming in the next number of years (SFU School of Medicine, Sustainable Energy Engineering and others)
- Large graduating classes are directly related to issues with the length of the ceremonies, overcrowding and parking availability.
- The ideal length of a convocation ceremony is about 1.5 hours. Grad classes exceeding 400 people push ceremonies past 2 hours in length, resulting in grads and families leaving ceremonies early, an overall poorer guest experience which is tied to poorer post-event survey responses, and potential negative impacts on SFU's brand as a result. Longer ceremonies also mean less time between them for staff to reset and a higher chance of OT accumulation by staff having to stay later than expected.
- In June 2015, an eighth ceremony was added on Tuesday morning of Convocation week to increase capacity. That added capacity is now being exceeded - in June 2024, six of the eight ceremonies were over the 400-grad threshold (see Appendix).
- An additional ceremony was added in June 2025, and significantly reduced both the size and length of convocation ceremonies that week.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Most VPs and Deans will not be directly affected by a ceremony addition, but there are some senior admin (President, Chancellor, Dean of Grad Studies, Provost, Registrar, Beedie School of Business Dean, FASS Dean) who need to attend multiple (or all) ceremonies, who we wish to inform of the implications of these recommendations as soon as possible.
- A student's experience while attending post-secondary is the number one indicator of their engagement level post-graduation. Ensuring convocation ceremonies are a comfortable size and length is a key component in ensuring a positive lasting impression, a negative impression impacts the SFU brand, and alumni's willingness to promote or engage with SFU.

RECOMMENDED OPTION – add ceremony on Monday afternoon of Convocation week

- This option is most cost effective
- Will require moving the ISC Honouring Feast (currently held on Monday afternoon) to an evening event, likely on the Wednesday of Convo week
- The Beedie School of Business has the largest number of grads and will need to be split into two. Aim is to schedule both ceremonies on the same day, making it easier for the Beedie School of Business Dean to attend both
- Will require a coordinated effort on the part of C&E, Student Services and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure we are able to recruit sufficient staff “volunteers” to support the needs of nine ceremonies (e.g. pinning, parchments, ushering, ticket scanning, regalia room support)

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ADDING AN ADDITIONAL CEREMONY

- Greater challenge to find enough staff and student to serve as convocation ambassadors for nine ceremonies
- ~\$15K increase to annual convocation budget, and a possible increase to Beedie School of Business faculty celebration budget
- June Senate meeting might need to be cancelled/moved online as it occurs on the Monday of Convo week.