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**MEMORANDUM**

ATTENTION	Senate	DATE	April 2, 2026
FROM	Peter Hall, Chair	PAGES	1/1
RE:	Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies Revisions to Co-operative Education Program ( <i>SCUS 26-16</i> )		

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Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies at its meeting of April 2, 2026 gives rise to the following recommendation:

**Motion 1**

That Senate approve, effective Spring 2027, the revisions to Co-operative Education Program Calendar language as outlined in the appendix. (*SCUS 26-16a*)

**Motion 2**

That Senate approve, effective Spring 2027, the revision to Calendar Definition of "Students" as outlined in the appendix. (*SCUS 26-16b*)

**MEMO:** Formalizing Part-Time Co-operative Education (Co-op) at SFU

**To:** Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

**From:** AVPLT, Paul Kingsbury & Director of Co-operative Education, Tanya Behrisch

**Date:** February 23, 2026

### Background

SFU currently offers an accredited full-time (FT) Co-op program integrating paid work terms into students' degrees. Historically, part-time (PT) Co-op has occurred informally, with students registering and paying tuition for their initial PT work term before working PT in a subsequent term without registration or tuition. This approach has led to significant administrative, financial aid, and liability challenges:

- While students have official student status during their first PT Co-op work term in which they are registered and have paid tuition, they lose their official student status in their second work term in which they have historically been unregistered, jeopardizing loan eligibility, access to services.
- Lack of registration creates risk liability concerns for employers, SFU, and students who are not covered as official SFU students.
- The absence of a formal structure limits consistent academic oversight, tuition revenue capture, and integration with student systems.

SFU's Undergraduate Student Survey shows that ~55% of SFU students are employed while studying,<sup>1</sup> underscoring the importance of flexible, credit-bearing work-integrated learning opportunities. SFU's Registrar and Co-op Director are exploring a sustainable model to formalize and integrate PT Co-op within SFU's academic and administrative infrastructure.

UVic and UNBC are the two main Canadian examples where parallel/PT co-op options are *formally* recognized within the Co-op framework. Most other Canadian universities have flexible co-op schedules or work-integrated learning options (e.g., internships, variable term lengths) but still rely on FT work periods as the standard co-op model.

SFU's move to formalize PT Co-op aligns with emerging but limited models in Canada, supporting students needing to work while pursuing coursework.

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<sup>1</sup> Fall 2022 Undergraduate Student Survey, pp. 6, 41.

## Recommended Model

Following review, the Registrar's team recommends establishing **faculty-specific course codes** for PT Co-op (i.e, APSC, FASS, BUS, CAT, EDUC, CENV, HSCI, and SCI ), with unit weights reflecting the academic expectations of each PT work term (1.5 units for the first PT term; 1.5 units for the second PT term).

This model is intentionally designed to **reduce institutional and operational risk** by:

- Ensuring **accurate tuition assessment**, including correct fee application when work terms span academic years with tuition changes.
- Eliminating reliance on **manual workarounds**, such as multi-term stretched courses and IP grade entry.
- Aligning cleanly with SFU's student information system without introducing half-unit or non-standard configurations.

Implementation of this model will require calendar updates, regulatory language, and clear articulation of how PT and FT Co-op pathways may interact (e.g., eligibility, sequencing, and credit). While this represents an initial governance effort, it significantly lowers ongoing risk compared to maintaining an informal and unmanaged practice.

Formalizing PT Co-op will create the structural conditions under which future Co-op funding models, including a universal fee, could be considered. It recognizes how the majority of SFU students *already* work but who are currently ineligible to count their PT work experience under SFU's accredited FT Co-op program.

## Implementation Timeline

Subject to approval, implementation would follow SFU's standard academic governance and calendar processes. Proposed calendar language and regulations for PT Co-op have been developed collaboratively by Co-op and the Registrar's Office and submitted to SCUS in accordance with published deadlines for the Fall 2026 Calendar. This timeline is ambitious but achievable, contingent on timely feedback and resolution of issues raised through the governance process. Following approval, implementation activities would include SIS configuration, course creation, and coordinated communication to faculties, advisors, students, and employers, with the goal of launching the formal PT Co-op program in Fall 2026.

## Closing Statement

Formalizing PT Co-op is fundamentally a **risk-reduction and student-protection initiative**. By ensuring continuous registration, academic oversight, and institutional recognition, SFU mitigates student loan disruptions, liability exposure, and administrative inconsistency while offering flexible, credit-bearing Co-op opportunities aligned with contemporary student realities. The proposed model replaces an informal and unmanaged practice with a transparent, governed, and system-aligned framework that supports students, employers, and the university.

## List of items for approval:

1. Calendar language revisions for Co-operative Education
2. New Part-Time Co-operative Education (Co-op) Acronyms for FAS and FCAT
3. 80 new course proposals (10 in each faculty)

**MEMO:** Formalizing Part-Time Co-operative Education (Co-op) at SFU

**To:** Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

**From:** AVPLT, Paul Kingsbury & Director of Co-operative Education, Tanya Behrisch

**Date:** March 10, 2026

### **Background**

SCUS met on March 5, 2026 to discuss the above. Some new questions emerged which are in **bold**. These are addressed below in plain font.

#### **1. Does the co-op office “go after” students who secure employment outside of the co-op process?**

We encourage students who make use of our staff’s time, advising, coaching and support in competing for Co-op jobs to register their Co-op work terms, whether the job was sourced through our internal job portal or externally. Some students choose not to register even when they make full use of Co-op staff’s professional coaching, resume, cover letter refinement and mock interviews. This choice generates mixed reactions from employers; recently, a student was fired for claiming to be a Co-op student but did not register. It was seen by the Co-op employer as a breach of academic honesty, with which I agree. Some employers see no reason why a student should pay ~\$900 Co-op tuition. This is a problem that needs to be fixed internally and should not involve employers.

Students should be charged tuition up front, before they start working with staff, as they are charged for coursework up front, not at the end or half way through a course. This tuition loophole is causing SFU to lose money. If students don’t want to pay Co-op tuition, they should not do Co-op. If they apply for ENSC where Co-op is mandatory at the UG level, they enter the program knowing this is integral to their degree.

#### **2. Will part-time co-op add to this issue?**

Most Co-op jobs are full-time. I don’t see it adding to the above problem.

- a. **Assumption is that they have signed up for co-op, then find a job separate from the co-op process – and the co-op office subsequently finds out that they are working, but not paying the co-op course fee. Students are then asked for the ...**

It feels as if text missing here. I assume “tuition” was intended to be included in the above statement. If we have worked with a student and find them working in a job (they post about it on LinkedIn or are literally sitting next to a tuition-paying Co-op student during a stie visit) then yes, we will follow up with the student and supply time-intensive evidence of the student’s click throughs, appointments with Advisors and Coordinators, number of jobs applied for. We remind them they signed an agreement upon being admitted to Co-op in which they agreed to pay for each work term whether the job is found through our portal or externally. If we move ahead with the VPA’s idea to implement a universal Co-op fee, SFU would close this money-losing loophole. An interim solution would be to immediately start

charging Co-op tuition up front, as with classes, before the student's first appointment with a Co-op staff member.

- a. **Could you clarify the structure of part-time co-op work terms? The policy defines part-time co-op as a minimum of 24 weeks or 420 hours and states that part-time work terms extend over two terms—does this mean they must always span two terms, or could they occur within one term or extend to three terms?**

Full-time Co-op is minimum 420 hours/semester. Part-time Co-op is minimum 420/hours over 2 semesters. Ideally, one part-time Co-op semester should be followed by a second part-time Co-op semester. However, it could happen that one part-time Co-op semester is followed by full-time classes, followed by the second part-time Co-op term.

- b. **Additionally, the listed part-time co-op courses carry one or two credits, whereas a regular co-op term is three credits; what distinguishes the one-credit from the two-credit course?**

There is no difference. Registrar Tom Nault has reported that he cannot split credits into fractions, such as 1.5 + 1.5. Hence, the 1 + 2, or 2 + 1.

- c. **Recommendation is to flip the unit values – so term 1 = 1 unit; term 2 = 2 units.**

The reason I recommend 2 + 1 instead of 1 + 2 is because of the possibility that a student's second part-time Co-op term is inadvertently cancelled due to any reason. This means that when they get a different part-time Co-op later on in their degree, they would start again at 1 credit, resulting in the total credits not adding up to 3, the equivalent of a full-time Co-op. With credits structured as 1 + 2, there's a risk that students will be registered in their second disconnected Co-op into the 1 credit course. They would then fall short of the full 3 credits they get for a full-time Co-op.

In the January 5, 2026 SCUS memo, it states "Following review, the Registrar's team recommends establishing faculty-specific course codes for PT Coop, with unit weights reflecting the academic expectations of each PT work term (term 1 = 2 units; term 2 = 3 units." This is incorrect. It should read as follows: "the Registrar's team recommends establishing faculty-specific course codes for PT Coop, with unit weights reflecting the academic expectations of each PT work term (term 1 = 2 units; term 2 = 1 units)."

- d. **Could the wording on page 59 be revised? It currently states that taking coursework during full-time cooperative education terms is "not recommended," but some students do take courses during co-op.**

True, some students do take courses during Co-op. However, this is not recommended and is against our national accreditation standards.

**Would it be clearer to say that "students are not expected to take courses" during full-time co-op terms, which would remove pressure while still allowing flexibility?**

I would not recommend this suggested wording. Employers treat Co-op students working full-time as **full-time** temporary employees. We struggle when students overextend themselves in coursework when they are supposed to be working full time in their Co-op jobs. Employers notice it and it compromises their willingness to take on students in the future as the student's attention is divided and their performance on the job suffers. About a third of the way through a semester while working full-time and taking more than one academic course, something usually collapses: the students' mental health, their attendance or performance at work, their relationships with their colleagues, and/or their

academic coursework which they are expressly *not supposed* to be taking when on full-time Co-op. Our national accreditation criteria stipulate a division between work and classroom studies for accredited Co-op. We need to maintain that clear division for full-time Co-op. Taking coursework while on full-time Co-op should be done as an exception, in consultation with the student's Coordinator AND their Co-op employer who is under no obligation to accommodate exam, lab or group work schedules.

## CALENDAR REVISION: Part-time Co-op

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/fees-and-regulations/learning-opportunities/coop.html>

### Co-operative Education

SFU's co-op programs are ~~is~~ accredited by Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada, which confirms that ~~they~~ **the program** meets national **quality** standards for ~~quality in~~ co-operative education. ~~This accreditation~~ **Accreditation** ensures that ~~the SFU's~~ co-op program is a recognized educational strategy that effectively integrates work experiences with the academic curriculum, enhancing student learning and encouraging reflection.

For more information about CEWIL visit [Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning Canada](https://www.sfu.ca/coop/about/guide/co-op-at-sfu.html) and also <https://www.sfu.ca/coop/about/guide/co-op-at-sfu.html>. Accredited programs must meet the following criteria:

- Each work term is developed in partnership with the employer and approved by the co-operative education program as a suitable learning environment;
- The student is engaged in productive work for which the student receives remuneration;
- The co-op curriculum supports student learning goals, personal evaluation and reflection;
- The student's performance in the workplace is supervised and evaluated by the student's employer;
- The student's progress during their work term is monitored by the co-operative education program;
- ~~Both work and academic terms are~~ **Work terms can be full-time or part-time**, and follow a formalized sequence. The total amount of co-op work experience is normally at least 30% of the time spent in academic study. For programs of two years or less the total amount may be a minimum of 25%.
- A **full-time co-op** work term is defined as a minimum of 12 weeks and/or 420 hours full-time paid experience **in one term**;
- **Full-time work terms alternate with full-time academic terms and follow a formalized sequence;**
- **A part-time co-op work term is defined as a minimum of 24 weeks and/or 420 hours of paid experience completed over two consecutive terms;**
- **Part-time work terms extend over two terms and are equivalent to one full-time work term;**
- **Students completing part-time work terms are encouraged to enroll in a minimum of eight units of coursework concurrent to working part-time to integrate their classroom studies with their work experience;**
- **To retain full-time student status, students must enroll in at least eight units of coursework while completing part-time co-op. This is particularly important for international students and for students requiring full-time**

**student status for funding, student loans, access to campus housing and other amenities;**

- Co-op programs begin and end on an academic term. **This means that neither students' first term nor their last term at SFU can be a co-op work term.**

The Simon Fraser University co-operative education program has been accredited since 1998.

A complete list, including specific disciplines, is available at <http://www.sfu.ca/coop/programs.html>.

## **Admission Requirements**

All Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and visa **international** students are eligible to participate in the co-op program. Visa **International** students can obtain a co-op work permit, supported by documentation from the co-op program, which permits them to work in co-op approved roles.

**International students considering participation in a part-time co-op work term should consult with an Immigration Advisor in International Services for Students.**

Co-op is an optional program **a degree requirement for students enrolled in the following degree programs**, except in the School of Engineering Science, School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering, and School of Sustainable Energy Engineering undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Applied Sciences; the School of Computing Science master of science in big data and the School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering master of engineering in smart manufacturing and systems; and the School of Public Policy master of public policy program, where it is mandatory within the program structure.

- **bachelor of applied science in engineering science**
- **bachelor of applied science in mechatronic systems engineering**
- **bachelor of applied science in sustainable energy engineering**
- **master of science in professional computing science**
- **master of engineering in smart manufacturing and systems**

**Participation in co-op is optional for all other undergraduate and graduate programs.**

Acceptance into the co-op program is based on co-op program requirements set by the Co-operative Education Office. Interested students should consult the **Co-operative Education** website.

[..]

## Degree Designation

Three **full-time (or equivalent)** work terms must be successfully completed for an **4-year** undergraduate degree with a co-op designation. Successful completion includes a passing grade (comprised of both a work project evaluation and performance evaluation) and compliance with minimum standards of participation. (A work term typically consists of full-time employment for 13-16 weeks.)

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### **DEFINITIONS:**

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/fees-and-regulations/enrolment/enrolment-definitions.html#students>

SCUS 26-16b

## Students

Simon Fraser University considers any undergraduate student enrolled in nine units or more per term as a full-time student. Conversely, the university considers any undergraduate student enrolled in one to eight units per term a part-time student.

Any undergraduate student enrolled in **full-time** co-operative education courses is considered a full-time student for that term. **It is recommended that students not take coursework during full-time co-operative education courses. Any undergraduate student\* enrolled in part-time co-operative education courses is encouraged to take at least eight units of coursework during their part-time co-operative education course. Any undergraduate student enrolled in part-time co-operative education courses who is taking at least eight units in coursework concurrent to their part-time co-operative education course is considered a full-time student for that term.**

**\* International students considering participation in a part-time co-op work term should consult with an Immigration Advisor in International Services for Students.**