Executive Summary
Internal Audit Report on Asbestos in Strand Hall: Key Findings and University Response

On May 31, 2017, an Internal Audit Report was released in response to an asbestos incident in April 2016, where routine maintenance work involving asbestos ceiling tiles in Strand Hall (3000 Level) was performed without safe work procedures in place. Below is a short summary of the report’s key findings as well as a summary of the actions the University has taken as a result of the incident.

Key Findings

The Internal Audit Office’s Report identified four main areas of concern pertaining to the management of asbestos at SFU, including:

a) Identification of asbestos-containing material,
b) Informing workers of asbestos-containing material,
c) Education/training on safe work procedures, and
d) Incidents and notification.

University Response

After the incident took place, actions were taken by the University to address identified gaps with the Asbestos Exposure Control Plan (ECP) and Contractor Safety Management Program, including a re-build of the asbestos inventory database and update of Facilities Services maintenance management software system. The new database will be made available to the campus community in June 2017.

Additionally, in February 2017, an external consultant was hired to do a review of SFU’s Asbestos Exposure Control Plan to ensure that it met WorkSafeBC regulatory requirements and was being complied with by employees at the University. The final report from the external consultant will be delivered in summer 2017.

An RFP was also issued on March 27, 2017, to identify a qualified consultant to perform an asbestos re-inventory at both the Burnaby and Vancouver campuses. The re-inventory process will document areas known to have asbestos as well as newly identified asbestos.

The Internal Audit Report also makes several recommendations around notification, auditing and oversight of the asbestos Exposure Control Plan, communication and training, compliance with the asbestos Exposure Control Plan, and re-inspection of asbestos containing materials.

The asbestos Exposure Control Plan review and asbestos re-inventory process will address the compliance and re-inspection recommendations and it is anticipated that additional changes will be made to the asbestos Exposure Control Plan after SFU receives the external consultant’s final report with recommendations. With regards to auditing and oversight of asbestos management at SFU, Environmental Health & Research Safety (EHRS) is currently developing an audit protocol to determine ongoing compliance with the asbestos Exposure Control Plan. However, routine enforcement of health and safety requirements by supervisors in units across the organization will be key to ensuring compliance with the asbestos Exposure Control Plan going forward. EHRS is also reviewing the comprehensiveness of its education/training materials and target audiences, and the frequency of
training offerings so that workers have the training needed to ensure the health and safety of all SFU employees.

With regards to notification and to ensure transparency, a copy of the Internal Audit Report along with the University’s response is being provided to WorkSafeBC, so that they have information on file regarding the potential for past occupant exposure to asbestos in Strand Hall. Further, on May 31, 2017, the University sent broad and targeted communications regarding asbestos to SFU community members.

If you have any questions regarding the incident in Strand Hall, the Internal Audit Report, or asbestos management on campus, please contact Melinda Skura, Senior Director of Environmental Health and Research Safety at melinda_skura@sfu.ca or local 27264.