Vision:

The Faculty of Health Sciences will be a leader in the generation and mobilization of interdisciplinary knowledge to understand and improve health and well-being.

Mission:

The Faculty of Health Sciences strives to improve the health of individuals and populations and to reduce health inequities through excellence in interdisciplinary research and education, in partnership with local, national and global communities and with a commitment to social justice.

Values Statement:

The Faculty of Health Sciences is committed to academic excellence and leadership through the pursuit of interdisciplinary scholarly activities, including research, teaching and learning, and through community engagement and partnership. The Faculty is committed to social justice and aims to improve health and reduce health inequities locally, nationally and globally.

Our core values are:

• **Excellence in Teaching and Learning.** We strive to provide our students with an excellent education that will make a difference in their lives and help them apply their learning to make a difference in the world. We encourage critical thinking, intellectual creativity, and lifelong learning.

• **Academic Freedom, Integrity, Excellence.** We pursue: intellectual integrity; collegiality; academic freedom; academic rigor, quality and excellence; integration of education and research themes; and knowledge translation and exchange.

• **Equity and Diversity.** We value the diversity of academic knowledge perspectives, skill sets, and methodologies that our Faculty possesses. We support diversity within the Faculty that reflects the composition of the communities we serve. We believe equity and fairness are central to an inclusive and diverse environment.

• **Community Engagement.** We strive to engage with communities, adopt a community perspective, and embrace meaningful relationships with external partners.

• **Healthy Workplace.** We promote the health of our students, faculty members, administrators, and staff. We value dialogue across differences and disagreements as well as consensus-based and democratic decision-making. We recognize the responsibilities of participants to be engaged, and the responsibilities of leaders to respect policy and processes. We conduct ourselves ethically, respect others’ areas of expertise, conduct our activities in an open, honest and transparent manner, and practice civility with candor and a sense of humour.
1. Executive Summary

This Academic Plan (2013-2018) reflects a broad consultation with faculty and staff in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), with our undergraduate and graduate students, and with external stakeholders. All faculty and staff were invited to participate in a two day Academic Planning Retreat in June 2012, supplemented by additional review of Plan drafts and discussion at faculty and staff meetings from January through September 2012. Undergraduate and graduate students, and external stakeholders both at SFU and in the wider community were surveyed on-line prior to the June retreat. This Plan was reviewed and approved at September, 2012 Faculty and Staff meetings. These activities included a review and revision to the Faculty Vision and Mission statements, as well as a full SWOT analysis reflected in this document.

This Plan is also consistent with previous Academic Plans and our goals and objectives for the next five years reflect the goals and objectives that have framed the development of the Faculty to date. In addition, the Undergraduate Studies Committee, the Graduate Studies Committee and the Associate Dean (Research) developed strategic planning documents for their respective areas that have been incorporated into this document.

This Plan provides a comprehensive roadmap for the next five years of FHS development. Although we recognize that the external environment is likely to be characterized by economic constraint, limiting growth in the universities, we see this as an opportunity for both consolidation and refinement of our programs, and to continue to build strong partnerships with key health system stakeholders both locally and globally. We anticipate that it is through these partnerships that we will secure new opportunities for introducing exciting new opportunities in both education and research. Our four broad Goals are to:

1. Continue to develop FHS to ensure excellence and sustainability across all Faculty goals.
2. Encourage, support, and produce excellence in teaching and the student experience.
3. Encourage, support, and produce excellence in research and knowledge mobilization.
4. Provide service to the community – from the FHS community to the global community.

2. Faculty Core Activities

In 2004, Simon Fraser University took the bold decision to create a new Faculty of Health Sciences that would be unlike any other health-related Faculty in Canada. This new Faculty was designed to be interdisciplinary, encompassing a “cell to society” approach to teaching and research, and it was developed in response to the recognized need in Canada to build capacity in population and public health. In order to avoid the siloed biomedical focus that typically
characterizes medical schools, it was designed around important research themes and problems rather than discipline based departments, and it was also intended to be broader than the “School of Public Health” concept that other Canadian universities were implementing.

This unique Faculty serves as an innovative platform to support and develop interdisciplinary health education and research, integrating the social and natural sciences with population health outcomes, societal application and policy analysis.

A vibrant undergraduate and graduate teaching program with an emphasis on experiential learning is at the heart of FHS. The Faculty is committed to giving students practical opportunities to apply their knowledge in research, policy and practice settings at the local, national and global levels.

In September 2005, FHS enrolled its first graduate students in our Master of Public Health (MPH) program, today offering concentrations in global health, population health, environmental and occupational health, and social inequities and health. Our Bachelor of Arts program and Bachelor of Science programmes were launched in September 2006 and September 2007 respectively. A new Master of Science was introduced in 2009 and a PhD program in 2012. The US-based Council for Education in Public Health accredited our MPH, BA and BSc programs in 2010, making them the first public health-oriented programs in English Canada to receive international accreditation.

SFU’s Health Science degrees are multidisciplinary and innovative. Students examine the interactions between human biology and society, health and public policy, health and culture, health and the environment, and more. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) draws upon the social, behavioral and policy sciences, as well as biology, and focuses on the broad determinants of health, health promotion, disease prevention, health care systems, and health policy. The Bachelor of Science (BSc) includes studies in biology, chemistry, molecular biology, biochemistry, immunology, infectious disease, environmental health, and epidemiology. The BSc in Health Sciences is unique in its interdisciplinary approach to the scientific and social determinants of health and disease, especially infectious and environmental diseases. The Diploma in Global Health is a stand-alone credential, designed to serve the needs of those who would like training in the basics of global health practice. The MPH program aims to promote an engagement with knowledge creation, exchange and application, and to equip public health practitioners and leaders of the future with the knowledge and skills required to improve the overall health and well-being of the population; prevent diseases, injuries, or disabilities that may shorten life or impair health, well-being and quality of life; and reduce inequities in health from local to global levels. The MSc Program prepares graduates for research careers in one of the signature areas that either have been developed or are currently under development within the faculty including: global health; environmental and occupational health; toxicology; maternal and child health; epidemiology and biostatistics; health promotion and disease prevention; infectious diseases; chronic diseases and aging; mental health and substance
use; social inequities and health; adolescent and child development; reproductive health; and health policy. The PhD program is designed to train students in advanced research in health sciences, and to provide them with the skills, content area expertise, analytical and critical-thinking capabilities required to pursue original research relevant to health.

FHS has established several centers of research and policy excellence in areas of children's health, mental health and addictions, and gender, social inequities and mental health, and continues to develop research laboratories in areas such as immunology, neurobiology, microbiology, virology, toxicology, reproductive health and epigenetics. FHS also maintains a crosscutting interest in lifecourse perspectives on health and disease, and global health. The Faculty supports strong interdisciplinary research groups addressing critical population level concerns in mental health and addictions, environmental and occupational health, infectious disease, and chronic disease.

3 Planning Assumptions

FHS was launched as a strategic initiative in 2005 with a commitment from the university to provide the necessary resources for achieving the critical mass necessary to offer accessible and high quality programs to a large cadre of undergraduate and graduate students, and to provide a supportive environment for faculty research success. As a result of the continuing economic downturn that occurred in 2008, the university has had difficulty in meeting these commitments. Nonetheless, despite extraordinary workloads for all faculty and staff, FHS has largely succeeded in meeting the needs of approximately 1200 undergraduate majors and 100 graduate students per year as of September, 2012.

This Academic Plan recognizes that the original growth scenario for the Faculty is not possible in the current fiscal environment and as a result is built around two key assumptions. The first assumption is that the focus of our academic planning should now be on refining and strengthening our existing programs in education and research. Our focus will be on ensuring the work environment supports faculty, staff and students to achieve success through greater reliance on best practices and efficiencies in administrative processes.

The second assumption is that we will continue to achieve excellence and enhance the uniqueness of our programs through strengthening partnerships with external agencies and communities. These partnerships will foster both greater opportunities for student engagement and faculty research, as well as opportunities for growth through joint funding of academic positions and expansion of programs allied with health system sustainability and global health equity. In particular we recognize the important opportunity offered through growth at the Surrey campus in partnership with the Fraser Health Authority.
FHS has also been remarkably successful with generating competitive salary awards for junior faculty. These resources have allowed us to expand our faculty base through term teaching appointments and we will continue to utilize these resources to ensure course accessibility and quality, and appropriate workload distribution. However, these external resources will also sunset as junior faculty move through the ranks and it will be important to secure replacement funding as this occurs over the next 5-7 years.

4 Strategic Influences

4.1 Opportunities:

1. Teaching and Learning
   1.1. Surrey population needs access to post-secondary education in health sciences with opportunities to collaborate with community partners such as Fraser Health Authority region to create new programs oriented to disease prevention and improvements and sustainability in health care systems.
   1.2. Emerging economies (notably China and India) are investing heavily in their public health systems and could be a source of students in the immediate future.
   1.3. Interdisciplinary approaches, accreditation, community engagement and unique and globally relevant programs prepare students well to compete for employment in the health sector.
   1.4. Students from LMICs seeking advanced degrees and exchange opportunities.
   1.5. Partnerships with practice-based organizations provide opportunity for better integration of skills with labor market
   1.6. Developing partnership with First Nations Health Authority and other First Nations organizations offers opportunities to attract Aboriginal students, strengthen Aboriginal health curriculum and expand research opportunities.
   1.7. New technologies in course delivery such as E-learning; distance and co-op learning still to be fully exploited.
   1.8. External economic challenges create opportunity for consolidation in areas such as curriculum alignment, joint diplomas, service learning with community partners, and internationalization of curriculum

2. Research
   2.1. Strong tradition of community engaged research with external organizations, and solution oriented research, positions us well to attract funding and respond to crisis in health systems.
   2.2. Access to world-class databases for population data offers potential for increased research contracts versus grants and funding through external partnerships with health care organizations.
   2.3. Funders are aligned with our Vision and Mission, and offer new opportunities for interdisciplinary team approaches, expanding capacity in population and public health, policy oriented research, and support for graduate and post-doctoral training.
   2.4. Interdisciplinary development will evolve as faculty matures and will attract more funding for research and student support.
4.2 Threats:

3. **TEACHING AND LEARNING**
   3.1. Competition for students and faculty in health science growth environment, particularly from other MPH programs, and growth of special-purpose universities in BC with 4-year degrees focused on practical health skills (i.e. BCIT, Kwantlen, etc).
   3.2. Changing demographics and economic environment may impact on student enrollment, program expansion, budget constraints and faculty/staff morale.
   3.3. Programs may produce too many students with insufficient practice-based skills for external employment
   3.4. Workload challenges time available for collegial interaction to innovate.
   3.5. Competing demands on faculty for administrative and research contributions without growth in the faculty base may limit opportunity to undertake innovation in curriculum and respond to student needs.

4. **RESEARCH**

   4.1. Changes to Funding Agency priorities and process may threaten discovery oriented research, concentrate funding in larger institutions, and focus too much on relevance and practical impact, limiting intellectual creativity.
   4.2. Interdisciplinary research is more difficult to undertake and current administrative systems don’t always recognize and reward appropriately; too much interdisciplinary emphasis may also create disciplinary orphans and potential “deskilling”.
   4.3. Increasing administrative requirements for grant administration and ethical review take time away from scholarly activity.
   4.4. External threats to sustaining assets such as facilities, technology, and critical mass and diversity of faculty members.

5 **Self Assessment**

   5.1 **Strengths:**

5. **TEACHING AND LEARNING**
   5.1. Faculty and staff commitment to Vision, Mission and Values
   5.2. Breadth and multi-disciplinarity: Capacity for holistic approach to teaching/learning about human health/disease, and commitment to student-centered learning
   5.3. Dynamic faculty/dedicated staff with broad range of experience and committed to innovative teaching strategies
   5.4. Strong application pressure from exceptional and motivated students with interest in interdisciplinary program and population health
5.5. High quality, original, established curriculum with excellence in practicum, experiential learning, interdisciplinarity and collegial approach to teaching as good foundation for refinement and innovation.

5.6. Supportive environment for innovation and experimentation with diverse training/learning opportunities and curricular flexibility

6. RESEARCH
6.1. Increasing strength of research theme groups – inside FHS and connected to external community with excellent basic and applied research capacity and global recognition.

6.2. Strong and advanced population and public health focus that includes a life sciences component with strong links to government and community groups for policy/practice impact.

6.3. Relatively young, diverse enthusiastic faculty with high shared expectations supported by established core of internationally recognized research leaders.

6.4. Significant infrastructure support though endowments, Chairs, staff and excellent facilities.

6.5. Diverse faculty interests, perspectives and expertise with a collective desire to promote interdisciplinarity

5.2 Weaknesses:

7. TEACHING AND LEARNING
7.1. Improvement needed in alignment and integration of courses and curriculum with unclear understanding of core curricular foundations, learning outcomes, and competencies, and with gaps in key areas such as writing skills.

7.2. Challenges in faculty capacity with majority at early career stage grappling with complex priorities and with continuing gaps in areas such as public health practice and an over-reliance on sessionals.

7.3. Workload balance with competing demands of teaching and research where resources do not meet needs.

7.4. Disciplinary paradigms still evident with need to better integrate basic sciences, and limited opportunities to facilitate building relationships among faculty and opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and research.

7.5. Student expectations undermined by large class sizes, difficulties in accessing courses, and difficulty in creating undergraduate student community.

8. RESEARCH
8.1. SFU policies and procedures in research administration are not aligned with growth in health research funding and global research environment resulting in additional burdens, unnecessary obstacles and delays

8.2. Need for clarity in Vision/Mission that is inclusive and better defines and communicates our goals and purpose.
8.3. Challenges to interdisciplinary collaboration from internal processes that continue to reward more discipline-specific research and publication.

8.4. External decline in research funding limits new investments and support for research ideas, graduate student support and facility improvement.

8.5. Small Faculty size constrains emergence of critical mass of peers able to compete for large team grants and maximize relationships with external stakeholders.

6 Efficiencies

Curriculum review is currently underway in both the MPH and undergraduate curriculum which may result in consolidation of program options and requirements. At the moment we offer four concentrations in the MPH, each with different core required courses. Some efficiency could be gained if core course requirements were either reduced or converged.

Similar review is being undertaken at the undergraduate effort in an effort to both ensure students have timely access to upper division courses required for graduation, but also to reduce reliance on sessional instructors.

The Faculty is also reviewing budget commitments and new revenue opportunities from salary awards, indiects and overhead to ensure core support for research clusters.

7 Faculty Objectives

Goal One:

• **Continue to develop FHS to ensure excellence and sustainability across all Faculty goals.**

Strategic Objectives:

1. Strengthen and expand the faculty complement in areas of strategic interest

   **Activities**

   - Identify resources and opportunities to recruit in areas of continuing priority such as cellular neurobiology, genomic toxicology, microbial ecology, health systems and health services, indigenous health, quantitative sciences, public health practice, and ethics.
   - Explore opportunities for cross-appointments with other SFU Faculties and Departments to further expand diversity of faculty resources.
   - Explore opportunities for faculty positions in collaboration with community partners

2. Participate in Surrey Campus planning to acquire resources to recruit new faculty to support new programming in health sciences at SFU.
Activities
- Continue to work with President’s office regarding opportunities for clinical training in Fraser region.
- Collaborate with other Faculties to develop joint programs in Health Informatics, Health Systems and Services and other areas that respond to health system needs.
- Collaborate with Fraser Salish Caucus and Fraser Health Authority to strengthen and expand opportunities for Aboriginal communities and students in health sciences.

3. Strengthen a supportive internal culture that encourages participation, respects diversity, and acknowledges limitations
Activities
- Continue to implement and evaluate the recommendations of the Governance Review Implementation Committee and the External Faculty Review (2013).
- Establish formal opportunities to encourage and support interdisciplinary collaboration, in particular for faculty who may feel isolated.
- Implement policies, programs and events that build community for faculty, staff and students
- Complete development of an undergraduate student Common Room.

4. Implement an Advancement strategy that supports areas of research excellence and support for faculty and student development.
Activities
- Pursue advancement activities oriented to strengthening infrastructure support in the lab sciences.
- Identify and develop opportunities for external financial support of key professorships in areas of excellence in FHS.
- Develop and implement a strategy for philanthropic support of Global Health teaching program with a focus on providing opportunities for international students from LMICs to undertake advanced training at SFU.
- Expand financial support for graduate students through advancement activities.
- Develop and implement an alumni strategy in support of an expanded FHS community.

6. Develop a public relations and communication strategy aimed to increase the FHS’s provincial, national and international profile.
Activities
- Enhance the FHS “identity” to help differentiate the FHS from other similar programs in Canada and internationally
- Develop and implement a communications strategy using SFU-branded multimedia approaches (live, web, print, radio, television) to publicize key messages and recruit faculty and students in alignment with University-wide communication strategies.
- Develop integrated internal and external communication vehicles to highlight faculty members' research, presentation of talks and posters at conferences, funding awards, and students' in-field practicums in Canada and internationally.
- Complete re-development of FHS website.

Goal Two: Engaging Students
- Encourage, support, and produce excellence in teaching and the student experience.

Strategic Objectives:

1. Maintain development of a comprehensive, relevant, and interdisciplinary learning environment for undergraduate and graduate students
   Activities
   - Complete comprehensive undergraduate and graduate curriculum review to ensure efficiency in teaching workload and pedagogical coherence.
   - Develop new on-line opportunities in undergraduate, graduate and professional development contexts.
   - Expand experiential learning opportunities through community-based learning.
   - Implement and expand international exchange opportunities.
   - Strengthen and expand indigenous health component of curriculum.
   - Strengthen and expand the Population and Quantitative Health stream in the BSc.
   - Develop continuing education program for public health professionals.

2. Strengthen student participation in research programs
   - Increase the number of students applying for major scholarships funded externally
   - Implement an effective recruitment strategy for MSc and PhD students
   - Formalize policy for expanding graduate student funding
   - Strengthen links with local industry for life science student learning opportunities and financial support.
   - Develop program for Honour's student research awards.

3. Improve evaluation and assessment practices across all programs
   Activities
   - Document learning outcomes and assessment process for all programs and courses.
   - Strengthen accreditation renewal processes.
   - Review and revise metrics for determining which types of courses are most demanding in terms of faculty workload and implement a system for assigning teaching load that recognizes these differentials.
   - Ensure sustainable teaching support for all courses
Goal Three: Engaging Research
- *Encourage, support, and produce excellence in research and knowledge mobilization.*

Strategic Objectives:

1. Support the development of research groups in the Faculty that reflect complementary interests.
   *Activities*
   - Develop administrative mechanism to incorporate research groups and leadership in Faculty governance.
   - Ensure research clusters reflect full range of faculty interests and that all faculty are included in at least one research cluster.

2. Encourage and support interdisciplinary research
   *Activities*
   - Implement new research seminar format aimed at strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration and understanding
   - Profile potential interdisciplinary opportunities
   - Seek seed-funding opportunities to support innovative collaborations and team-building

3. Encourage collaborative development of research Centres and Institutes involving researchers from across all Faculties at SFU and in the BC region.
   *Activities*
   - Continue to lead SFU Health Advisory Network and SFU Health Research Day as opportunity for SFU researchers to develop collaborative initiatives
   - Invite BC research leaders to explore collaborations with FHS researchers.
   - Engage in partnership activities with key stakeholders notably Fraser Health Authority and Providence Health Authority.

4. Improve administrative and grant-application support to assist faculty research programs.
   *Activities*
   - Continue to monitor and evaluate changes in SFU policy and processes to ensure security for research employees and to ensure stability and sustainability of research groups.
   - Strengthen mentorship, bridge funding and internal review processes to support grant success.

5. Recognize and reward interdisciplinary and knowledge mobilization activities
   - Ensure tenure, promotion and merit review processes value effort to excel in these areas
   - Promote success in these areas through external communications
- Identify opportunities where faculty and students can strengthen skills in these areas

Goal Three: Engaging the Community

• Provide service to the community – from the FHS community to the global community.

Strategic Objectives:

1. Adopt a faculty–wide strategy for community engagement
   Activities
   - Develop a community advisory committee
   - Encourage grassroots engagement by students
   - Motivate FHS faculty members to participate in community engagement through, for example, formal recognition of and incentives for community-based practice
   - Sponsor forums, conferences and talks on topical issues on health-related research and programming, including representatives from key stakeholders’ groups (government, public health organizations, community organizations, aboriginal representatives, addiction and mental health specialists) and publicizing these initiatives.

2. Develop an internationalization strategy that reflects FHS values and priorities
   Activities
   - Identify potential partners with common interests for capacity-building through the MPH program
   - Build partnerships with comparable Faculties, Schools and Departments in universities for faculty collaboration and exchange.
   - Develop structured opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students to undertake supervised learning with international partner universities.

3. Strengthen linkages with professional health organizations and communities in support of FHS priorities.
   Activities
   - Facilitate opportunities for FHS graduates to work as members of interdisciplinary teams in the local, provincial, national and international environment.
   - Engage FHS alumni FHS activities
   - Review and revise policies to engage Adjunct faculty more fully in FHS strategic goals.
8 Possible Long Term Growth Scenarios

Growth in FHS is contingent on three emerging opportunities: 1) Expansion of current programming into Surrey and Vancouver campus and expansion of on-line opportunities, 2) Expansion of the Surrey campus, 3) Acquiring new external salary resources through advancement and funding agencies, and 4) Partnering on new positions with external organizations.

Current programming will be expanded into the Surrey and Vancouver campus environment through a combination of classroom, on-line and blended learning opportunities. WAFTE funding will be supplemented by tuition from professional public health continuing education activities required for accreditation purposes.

Surrey expansion may bring a maximum of 2500 new FTEs to SFU. A reasonable share of 500 undergrad FTEs and 50 graduate FTEs for new programs related to health system sustainability could generate 20 new faculty positions and associated staff positions for FHS. FHS will need to determine how new undergraduate and graduate programs relate to existing graduate concentrations and the undergraduate curriculum, but new positions should complement existing strengths and expand critical mass in areas of weakness. New programs and faculty recruitment will be designed to improve overall FHS program quality (i.e., better faculty/student ratios, smaller upper division seminars, lower reliance on sessionals, secure TA support).

Advancement strategy will prioritize Professorships for high profile faculty, freeing up existing budget to hire junior faculty in complementary areas. Indigenous health will also be prioritized for securing endowed funding to support an external Chair recruitment.

Partnerships with external organizations such as Fraser Health, Providence Health, Child and Family Research Institute, BC Cancer Agency, and the First Nations Health Authority may generate 50% funding for 3-5 new positions in areas of mutual interest.

9 Communication

All faculty and staff were invited to participate in a two day Academic Planning Retreat in June 2012, supplemented by additional review of Plan drafts and discussion at faculty and staff meetings from January through October 2012. A Draft Plan was reviewed and unanimously approved at September, 2012 Faculty and Staff meetings. The Dean, Associate Deans, Directors, Senior Managers and the UGSC and GSC will be asked to develop Annual Workplans and Progress Reports based on those aspects of the Academic Plan relevant to their areas.

10 Supporting Financial Data for New/Growth initiatives

See attached Excel spreadsheet