

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Senate

FROM: Elizabeth Elle, Chair, Senate Committee on
University Teaching and Learning

Elizabeth Elle

RE: Proposed Undergraduate Educational Goals for SFU

DATE: 19 November, 2020

For Information: Please see attached proposed Educational Goals for SFU, for discussion and consideration by Senate. The Goals were discussed a multiple SCUTL meetings and this document was approved at the November 18 meeting.

Educational Goals for Simon Fraser University Undergraduates

From the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning, Fall 2020

The Task Force on Teaching and Learning recommended in its 2010 report that SFU should “Identify and promote a set of attributes that every SFU graduate should possess or be able to demonstrate”. The proposed Educational Goals brought to Senate for discussion are meant to address this recommendation.

History of the Educational Goals Initiative

In 2012 and 2013, Provost Jon Driver formed the Learning Outcomes Assessment Working Group, who recommended an approach linking the setting and assessing of Learning Outcomes to the External Review 7-year cycle. LOAWG noted that “SFU values regular assessment of the achievement of specified learning outcomes as a means of promoting continuous improvement of its courses and programs”. After significant discussion with Senate and the broader SFU community, the processes for what became known as Educational Goals were approved. The setting and assessing of goals was seen as important to clarify the purpose of academic programs to students, and to demonstrate to the broader community that we are evaluating our ability to deliver what we promise. As of 2020 all but a few units whose External Reviews have been delayed due to COVID-19 have defined Educational Goals. Educational goals (EGs) are considered the anticipated benefits to students from participation in an academic program, and thus may include knowledge, understanding, skills, competencies, experiences, attitudes, ethics, and professional development.

In the 2017/2018 academic year, Provost Peter Keller formed a working group to determine the progress SFU had been making in the setting of EGs for programs, and to propose EGs for the university. The group was comprised of faculty, staff, and students, and their final report can be accessed via the [Educational Goals website](#), as can the LOAWG report of 2012 and the 2010 TFTL report.

The draft university-level EGs were based on commonalities across the program goals submitted by Schools, Departments and Faculties at SFU through to 2018, as part of their External Review process. Consultation with Deans and the Senate Committee for Undergraduate Studies in 2018 and 2019 provided feedback that the originally proposed EGs were not aspirational enough, nor did they capture anything unique about SFU. A revised version of the EGs was then brought to the Senate Committee for University Teaching and Learning, also comprised of faculty, staff, and students. SCUTL discussed the report and different versions of the goals at multiple meetings in 2019 and 2020. SCUTL now brings the proposed EGs forward for discussion by Senate. Your feedback will be used to revise the goals, which will be brought to a future meeting of Senate for further discussion and adoption.

We expect aspects of process will be of interest. University-level goals will be assessed by staff that report through to the Provost (including the Office of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, and the Learning Experiences Assessment and Planning Division in the Centre for Educational Excellence), not by individual programs. In preparation for future External Reviews, programs will be asked to look for alignment between their program goals and the university goals, once the latter are finalized and passed by Senate. This does not mean that all of the proposed university goals must be addressed within the program, as in some cases they would be more appropriately addressed through co-curricular experiences or through general education requirements.

Proposed Educational Goals for Simon Fraser University

Preamble:

As an institution, we are dedicated to preparing students for lifelong learning, and to producing community-engaged and responsible citizens who demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior. We value a community founded on principles of respect for knowledge, truth, and scholarship. Our graduates are critical and creative thinkers, skilled at problem solving and equipped for the challenges of the future.

Our students are:

A. Practical, creative, and critical thinkers, with the capacity to:

- 1) Articulate broad and deep understanding of a field of study, including core assumptions, key concepts, standard methodologies, and common theoretical approaches.
- 2) Pose thoughtful questions, analyze and interpret information and arguments, and ethically apply insights from multiple disciplines to create new understanding.
- 3) Engage critically in experiential and synthesized study and reflection, to produce practical, creative, and scholarly products.

B. Strong, meaningful, and inclusive communicators who can:

- 1) Analyze and interpret ideas through various media, including but not limited to effective written, verbal, quantitative, and visual arguments.
- 2) Evaluate and use source materials effectively and ethically to support and advance ongoing and new knowledge.
- 3) Promote inclusive, collaborative problem-solving through respectful interpersonal communication.

C. Community engaged individuals who:

- 1) Foster and support diversity, inclusion, and intercultural understanding of indigenous and other local, regional, and global communities.
- 2) Evaluate ethical values and the social context of problems; apply different perspectives to ethical dilemmas.
- 3) Contribute to the communities in which they work and live through reciprocal relationship building, and participate in community-embedded challenges or opportunities.