

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



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September 29, 1999

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to provide my response to *The Task Force on Faculty Renewal and Retention* which I have attached for your review. It is my hope that the document will stimulate further discussion and positive actions on this important matter.

No single issue is more important to the University's future than our capacity to attract and retain the very best faculty and staff.

We do need to find the financial resources to compete in the competition for talent, but we also need to acknowledge and support those intangible things that make us a unique, open and collegial place where all members of our community see their role in the development of this University. We must work to sustain the kind of institution that attracts those whom we wish as colleagues.

I remain confident that we will find the necessary resources to see us through the coming decade of transition when, through attrition and retirement, as many as two thirds of our colleagues might leave the University. Rather than being daunted by the task ahead, I see it as a great opportunity for renewal. We can affirm and strengthen our sense of community and establish a clear direction that will ensure our academic freedom and our academic quality.

I welcome your comments on the issues and recommendations set out in the Task Force Report and in my response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack Blaney".

Jack P. Blaney
President

JPB:vr
attachment
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President's Response
to
The Task Force on Faculty Renewal and Retention

Jack P. Blaney
September 23, 1999

1. Preamble

Earlier this year, an article of mine appeared in the National Post under the leader, "Canada's Universities and the War for Talent." It makes the point that we are approaching a crisis that is insidious, largely invisible, and incremental. The crisis involves the erosion of our research capability and our weakened position to recruit and retain the best faculty at a time when North American universities are facing unprecedented numbers of retirements.

Contributing to this crisis, we have seen a 28 percent decline in revenue per student over the past two decades. Further, B.C.'s provincial universities, when compared to 16 Canadian counterparts, have a revenue per student shortfall that totals \$55 million. At the same time, our costs continue to climb well above the Consumer Price Index, especially in areas such as library purchases where we suffer a double hit from the need to purchase out-of-country publications with a weak Canadian dollar. These are profound and distressing problems that are too significant to be solved by business as usual.

We now confront a retirement bulge that is a demographic product of university expansion in the 1960s. But this problem goes beyond filling retirement vacancies and includes the departure of mid-career faculty who are receiving competitive recruitment offers from other post secondary institutions and from the private sector. A recent analysis of the B.C. university system shows that almost 1200 faculty will reach retirement age between now and August, 2009, with Simon Fraser University contributing approximately 230 to this total. When attrition rates for those faculty who retire early or resign to take positions elsewhere are taken into account, 850 additional vacancies are predicted across the B.C. system and will need to be filled over the same period.

Based on our current revenue position and on these predictions, recruiting and retaining the best faculty will be a challenge. But meeting this challenge also offers an opportunity to revitalize and diversify the faculty complement. With these dual objectives in mind, I established the *President's Task Force of Faculty Renewal and Retention* in June, 1998. Chaired by Kathy Heinrich, with Paul Delaney, Mario Pinto and Blaize Reich serving as members, the Task Force submitted its final report in mid-April, 1999.

The Task Force undertook extensive consultations, reviewed the available literature, examined applicable University policies, gathered information from other institutions, and conducted surveys with new faculty and with chairs. The process was very open throughout. Two draft reports were issued and both were amended to reflect the responses they generated. In providing my comments on the Task Force report, it is my intention to continue the open dialogue begun by its authors.

The Terms of Reference given the Task Force in 1998 anticipated that traditional sources of University revenue would remain flat over time. While this assumption has so far proven correct, a national lobby has been forming over the past year with participation from student organizations, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). The purpose is to convince the Federal Government that the Post Secondary Education component of the Canadian Health and Social Transfer payment should be restored to its earlier levels. I am pleased to say that the B.C. universities worked effectively with the Provincial Government in bringing this matter to the attention of the Western Premiers Conference in May, and there are signs that the nation-wide effort is getting an encouraging response from Ottawa. Over the past two years in B.C., The University President's Council (TUPC) has also been working more closely than ever before in preparing joint budget submissions to the Province and in developing strategies aimed at increasing our per student funding. A restored Post Secondary Education transfer payment that flows back to the universities and a higher revenue per student contribution from the Provincial Government is absolutely essential if we are to remain competitive in recruiting and retaining faculty and in providing fundamental research infrastructure. There are, as well, some things we can do for ourselves to build the kind of community that will attract and keep the kinds of talented and dedicated people we wish to have among us.

My response to the Task Force report is based on its broad section headings and focuses on some of the themes which emerge. Where appropriate, specific references to individual recommendations are made. I should add that a number of the recommendations have already been implemented or are under discussion as noted below.

2. Simon Fraser University Today

(a) The Challenge Ahead

The *President's Task Force on Faculty Renewal and Retention* begins with an overview of faculty perceptions about the current state of affairs at SFU. There is a concern that the number of Continuing Faculty List (CFL) positions and the resources to support them are decreasing while student numbers are on the rise. It is true that imbalances can be identified, especially if we look at the history of budgeted CFL positions over the last decade. In the past 10 years, the faculty complement has grown by 27 percent, support staff by 19 percent, and full-time equivalent enrollments have increased by 40 percent. Looking at budgeted CFL positions over the past five years

only, growth has only been 2.8 percent but relative to other Canadian universities, SFU compares favourably.

If we look to the future, the figures on renewal look marginally brighter. Seventeen CFL positions have been identified for "bridge" funding tied to upcoming retirements. This will allow new faculty to be hired before the retirements take place. During the bridging period, costs will be shared between the Vice President, Academic, and the Faculties with central support provided from a special \$600,000 allocation which I added to the Vice President, Academic's budget last year. The bridge positions represent a real strengthening of faculty numbers, even though they fall outside the budgeted CFL complement and the increased numbers will only be temporary.

(b) The Strategic Initiatives Fund

The Strategic Initiatives Fund (SIF) has been established and has been allocated \$1.1 million over the past two years. The Task Force supports retaining the SIF as an ongoing element in the Operating Budget and makes a recommendation, which I endorse, regarding the Fund's terms of reference. The suggested SIF funding criteria includes consideration for initiatives which reflect our existing research and teaching strength as well as consistency with the University mission and Faculty plans. The Strategic Initiatives Fund is being used to address teaching workload issues across the Faculties and has been drawn on to establish two new CFL positions in Applied Sciences, eight new positions in Business Administration and one in the Faculty of Arts.

(c) Enrollment Issues

Although the question of disparities across Faculties does not appear in the Task Force's terms of reference, I should point out that the Strategic Initiatives Fund is not the only way workload disparities are being addressed. In the latest round of bargaining with the Faculty Association, it was agreed that over the next two years the University will assess the effectiveness of new measures to address increased enrollments. These measures include enrollment targets at the Faculty level, more funding to Teaching Assistant budgets, and a revised Workload Policy for tenure-track faculty. As a way to monitor progress, the results of these assessments will be reported annually to the Faculty Association.

3. **Renewal**

(a) Faculty Renewal a Priority

I agree with the Task Force that the central strength of the University resides with our faculty. It follows that faculty renewal must be a priority. But the challenge of renewal is much broader than this and includes academic renewal in general, including

program renewal. Renewal also must pay attention to the needs of librarians, lecturers, laboratory instructors, administrative and professional staff and other employees who provide the support required to make the University work effectively. Good faculty need good support, and although we will strive to hire and retain the best scholars, they will be less effective if the support they receive is not of the same quality.

(b) University Mission

The Task Force makes the important point that "renewal involves first knowing where we want to go." I can report good progress in the informal consultation on University mission which Nancy Olewiler is leading, and I expect that a draft will be ready for wide discussion and comment by mid-fall.

(c) Resource Allocation and Academic Plans

The Task Force emphasizes that resource allocations should be tied to the Three-Year Academic Plans on an institution-wide basis. I am in full agreement. I believe that our academic planning and budget development processes are capable of ensuring that this important relationship is sustained; when planning and budgeting are in harmony, the selective allocation of resources can be carried out in an informed way.

(d) External Relationships

I also agree with the view that we should seize opportunities to build on our connections with the external community as a way to enhance our resources for teaching and research. A new policy on "Special Appointments and Continuing Appointments" is being prepared. I would like to see new kinds of teaching appointments created, perhaps modeled on the style of the arrangements we already have in special categories such as "Clinical Professors." Assuming that we can diversify the range of teaching appointments by drawing on experts from the external community, I also believe that we should find ways to extend the privileges associated with these new employment relationships to include greater participation in University affairs.

External partnerships offer a potential source of much needed revenue and I agree with the Task Force that we need to be clear about the incentives provided for such activities. Academic values are central and partnerships that are consistent with academic values can be very useful. While the report's ideas on revenue generation should be aggressively pursued, we must explore internal as well as external opportunities. For example, we should continue our efforts to obtain market-level fees for specialized professional programs at the graduate and post-baccalaureate levels.

4. Faculty Retention

The Task Force's comments and recommendations on faculty retention are wide-ranging. Some recommendations focus on the role of Chairs and others advocate greater departmental autonomy. Still others concentrate on the salary scale.

(a) Leadership Training for Chairs

With respect to leadership training for Chairs, the Associate Vice-President, Academic, has completed a substantial revision to the orientation program. This program is provided for new and for continuing Chairs, and I understand that further training enhancements are anticipated.

While current efforts to assist Chairs with additional training meets the spirit of the Task Force recommendation, I believe that preparing our faculty colleagues to take on key responsibilities in academic administration is extremely important and we should consider some changes to current practice. The literature on university administration observes that while Chairs are a vital link in the institutional structure, universities, relative to other organizations, spend far too little attention on Chairs' professional development. In our own case, annual management training courses offered in Banff and Windsor are designed specifically for the benefit of Chairs and Academic Directors, but SFU's participation has consisted almost entirely of non-academic administrators. Whatever the specific reasons for this imbalance in representation, it seems there is an overriding reluctance about professional development for Chairs built into the management culture at SFU. Chairs are taking on greater administrative responsibility as budget authority continues to decentralize, and it is time we recognized their importance and the need to encourage use of available training opportunities.

Aside from taking part in professional development programs outside the University, there are a number of organizational steps we could take that are not mentioned by the Task Force. Most important would be stronger emphasis on succession planning. For instance, the timing of new administrative appointments usually corresponds with the beginning of the Fall semester, arguably the worst period in the academic year for an inexperienced administrator to assume the role. We should also consider a one semester overlap between incoming and outgoing Chairs, and extending the three year terms (customary in some Faculties) to five years.

(b) Departmental Autonomy and the Hiring Process

On the matter of departmental autonomy, the report makes the following recommendation: "Shortly after the university budget is known, departments should receive from their Dean an annual budget with which to make commitments for the coming year consistent with their departmental plan." In a later section, a companion recommendation states: "The annual budget and planning process should ensure new positions are authorized at the departmental level by September 1st each year and are

not subject (even if unfilled) to cancellation or freezing." I support these recommendations in principle and I believe that they are consistent with our approach to decentralized budget management. Nevertheless, some details need clarification.

Annual departmental budgets should be openly communicated within each unit. Faculty position authorizations clearly must be tied to each department's Three Year Academic Plan. I support these recommendations in principle but their implementation must be consistent with our approach to decentralized budget management and be responsive to unanticipated changes in our level of funding.

(c) Faculty Work Plans

The Task Force section on faculty retention comments on the role of Chairs in assisting individual faculty to adjust their career paths. Faculty members and Chairs should work together and use work plans to ensure that the talents of all faculty members are used optimally to achieve both the faculty member's and the department's goals. The revised Workload Policy should assist this process.

(d) Salary Scale

Both the recommendations and the commentary on the faculty salary scale highlight one of the key issues affecting recruitment and retention. Salary policy discussions with the Faculty Association commence in September and the Task Force recommendations will be reviewed at that time. Although I feel constrained in my response to specific recommendations in advance of negotiations, salary issues are so important that they cannot be passed by without some general comments.

First of all, the salary situation should be put in context. The public policy and regulatory environment in B.C. is a formidable obstacle to salary enhancement. We are required to negotiate wage settlements within the Public Sector Employees Council (PSEC) guidelines. If the guidelines are broken and a settlement is achieved above the government mandated ceiling, government will counter the guideline breach with a dollar-for-dollar reduction to our provincial grant. Another government regulation caps salaries at \$100,000 and does not allow faculty to progress on a scale that breaks through this barrier. And finally, step and merit increases bring about annual additions to the University's salary bill, but these increments are not recognized by additions to the provincial grant. Like the resources needed to offer market differentials to some faculty candidates when competing for recruits, these annual increments can only be found through internal reallocations.

In this regulatory environment our responses are limited. Fine-tuning the existing faculty salary scale might not be enough to solve our recruitment and retention problems and we should be cautious about short-term solutions at a time when government policy could change. Without changes in public policy, revenues will remain a problem and we might have to look at radical ways to fund new salary opportunities. For instance, we could institute the kind of curriculum reform that

would allow a decrease in the faculty complement, thereby freeing resources to be concentrated in fewer but higher salaries. Alternatively, we could decrease the number of increments awarded as merit increases and concentrate them among fewer faculty.

As it stands, the existing salary scale allows faculty to reach the ceiling relatively quickly compared to other universities but our entry level salaries are lower. This has a reverse effect because frozen salaries at the top of the scale work against retention and the ability to progress quickly up the scale is attractive to new recruits. Rapid salary progression also results in cumulative lifetime earnings that are better than many other institutions which have more attractive starting salaries.

No doubt there are many other approaches that could be taken and I expect they will be explored as the discussions with the Faculty Association get underway in September. Whatever new models or new approaches arise out of these discussions, we must not make any choice about new directions until we have all the necessary data in hand and fully understand the tradeoffs involved.

(e) Faculty Support

The Task Force also recommended that: "Service areas should develop regular assessment processes by which they measure and respond to the needs of the university community." I agree. Going further, I believe that service areas should publicize their service goals and that the staff in each unit should have the opportunity to participate in their definition. In the fall, I will ask the Vice-Presidents to provide me with an action plan of how this matter will be addressed in their areas.

We also need to have a much more open dialogue between service users and service providers. I feel very strongly that service units should be integrated more fully into the activities of academic departments. By doing so, the important contribution made by support units will become more visible and a stronger spirit of community and shared purpose should develop. In saying this, however, I want to point out that the Task Force did not comment on some necessary differences in the way individual service areas interact with the academic departments: Graduate Studies and the Office of Research Services, by their nature, have a different relationship to the academic mission than Facilities Management, Human Resources or Finance. Although the value of their different contributions remains high, some support services must trade off service flexibility against the need to honour the details of Collective Agreements or to follow regulatory controls that are required by external agencies.

(f) Recognizing Faculty Contributions

In the Task Force recommendation which concludes the section on faculty retention, the Advancement Office is called on to increase the number of endowed professorships and to reintroduce the University Professorship program. I can report good progress in this area. The Endowed Academic Appointments Policy has been revised, and resources from the Burnaby Mountain Endowment Fund have been

allocated to establish more than half a dozen new University Professorships. A major goal of our current fundraising campaign is to add 20 endowed professorships to the 16 we have now. Ideally, at least 10 percent of our faculty should hold endowed professorships and that is the goal I have set.

5. Recruitment

(a) Eliminating Bottlenecks

The Task Force proposes that the appointment process should be reviewed with "the goal of identifying and eliminating bottlenecks." Action has already been taken and recent practice shows that those bottlenecks which can be removed have largely been dealt with. For instance, the Board of Governors cannot delegate away its authority over appointment approvals but in future the Board's Academic Operations Committee will be convened to approve academic appointments in those months when meetings of the full Board are not scheduled. At the University level, delays now mostly involve negotiations with individual candidates. Beyond the institution, Immigration Canada remains the primary problem and its delays place all Canadian universities at a competitive disadvantage with our American counterparts when hiring internationally.

(b) Supporting New Faculty

The Task Force recommends paying more attention to welcoming and assisting new recruits and all levels of academic administration should pay more attention to this issue. The Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic, is playing an active role and improved services are being put in place. This September, new faculty members will take advantage of a revised and upgraded orientation program that will be delivered centrally. Other recruitment recommendations in the report also have been put into practice by the Associate Vice-President, Academic. Candidates short-listed for faculty positions can now receive a comprehensive information package. Once a new appointee has accepted the offer of employment, a letter is sent reviewing transition issues. A web page has been created for new faculty which contains additional information about the University and about relocation.

(c) Spousal Hiring

With respect to Recommendation 5.3 at the end of the recruitment section, I will ask the Vice-President, Academic to explore "a partner hiring strategy consistent with university planning." I believe that we need to look at this issue and search out creative and flexible responses. We also should recognize spousal hiring is a matter that is not restricted exclusively to faculty recruitment. But whatever category of University employee might be involved, I take the view that we should not codify an approach to spousal hiring that could limit opportunities for case-by-case innovation.

6. Retirement

The Task Force recommends that a transitional retirement program should be established. While this matter requires negotiation with the Faculty Association, our existing policy provides a good deal of flexibility and already allows for negotiations leading to modified appointments followed by post-retirement contracts. I support the notion implicit in the Task Force recommendation that retired faculty represent a source of academic expertise and institutional commitment that could prove very valuable to us as we move into the coming decade.

7. Conclusion

No issue will be more important to our future than faculty renewal and retention. I am convinced that the entire University is alert to the challenges we face and that collectively we will find effective responses. In this effort, we owe a twofold debt to all members of the *Task Force on Faculty Renewal and Retention*. They helped elevate the discussion and engaged the whole community in dialogue about our options. A number of their recommendations have already engendered change and improved our practices. Other recommendations will become part of the continuing discussion over decentralization within the University and still others will help inform future negotiations with the Faculty Association. I am very pleased to have received their report and I thank each member of the Task Force for their contributions.

REPORT OF THE President's Task Force on Faculty¹ Renewal and Retention

Submitted: Wednesday, April 14th, 1999

By: Paul Delany (English)

Katherine Heinrich (Office of the VP Academic & Mathematics and Statistics, Chair)

Mario Pinto (Chemistry)

Blaize Reich (Business Administration)

Report of the President's Task Force on Faculty Renewal and Retention

"We will welcome and seize grand challenges, nurture our spirit of adventure, and strengthen our support for bold initiatives. This must and will be agenda item number one."

J. Blaney, President's Agenda, 1998

1. Introduction

This task force was established in July 1998 to bring forward strategies for "attracting, keeping and developing our faculty resource [to ensure we] remain a top-ranked institution." In carrying out our task we have read widely, consulted with individuals and groups from the university and the broader community, surveyed both chairs and directors of academic units and faculty hired since 1992, and considered university faculty and budget information.

We see this report as the next stage in a variety of planning initiatives and defining processes which have been taking place over the last several years. In February 1997, the Senate approved in principle the report of the ad hoc Committee on Planning Priorities. As a consequence we now have a university-wide planning process in which all units operate on a 3-year planning cycle. An integral component of this planning is to balance university objectives with the need for flexibility and autonomy at the department² and Faculty level. The first stage was completed in early 1998 when, based on department plans, the Deans and the Vice President, Academic completed three-year plans to guide academic decision-making throughout the university.

However, the university is currently faced with a set of challenges and opportunities that the planning process alone will not address. In this report, we suggest additional steps that are necessary to ensure that our faculty complement is renewed in the years ahead, and that current faculty are recognized and supported in their teaching and research programs. We believe that a clear focus, strong leadership from faculty and administrators, and our own history of innovation, can ensure our future success.

The report is divided into a further five sections: Simon Fraser University Today, Renewal, Retention, Recruitment and Retirement.

2. Simon Fraser University Today

"Finding creative solutions to the challenges presented by an ever-evolving world is clearly one of Simon Fraser's greatest strengths." (Maclean's 1996).

To develop our understanding of the context in which Simon Fraser finds itself today, we began by describing the strengths and weaknesses we see within the university, and the opportunities and threats external to the university, focusing on issues with particular relevance to faculty renewal. This description can be found in the appendix.

In our consultations with faculty, we heard strong emotional responses to the current circumstances of the university and the impact they are having on faculty.

Many faculty are tired, frustrated and unsure about the future. They see decreasing faculty numbers and increasing student numbers, decreasing funds for TA support and increasing committee work, fewer resources yet increasing expectations. Many are at the ceiling of their salary scale and see an indefinite future of no salary increases. There is frustration with what is often perceived as inadequate support from the university generally and in particular from the "service areas". For some, there is a wariness of the world of industry and commerce and concern about increasing our dependence on it.

On the other hand there is also enthusiasm and hope. Faculty are seeking new opportunities and participating in new endeavours. Most faculty are still deeply committed to the university, prepared to accept challenges, aware of the need to reallocate resources, and appreciative of society's evolving expectations.

From the consultations, we identified four broad issues surrounding faculty renewal and retention. These are the need for:

- more financial resources,
- reallocation of resources,
- increased autonomy at the department level, and
- enhanced support for and recognition of faculty.

Each issue will be briefly discussed below and recommendations will follow in the remainder of the report.

There is no longer enough money - for student support, for instruction, for salaries, for equipment. In 1998 constant dollars, the university's operating income has decreased annually for the last five years while at the same time enrollment has annually increased and faculty numbers have remained essentially constant. Without increased resources, renewal and retention of our faculty resource will be impossible. In addition to the ongoing discussions between the senior administration of this and other BC universities and the government on university funding, the university itself must, at all levels, seek opportunities for increased revenue. This is particularly important for those areas whose hiring costs are rapidly escalating.

There is substantial support across the university for the academic planning process and the need to reallocate resources within that process to address particular needs and opportunities. Given the difficulties of moving resources, it is essential that the mechanisms for reallocation be open and transparent, whether they take place within the department, within the Faculty or between Faculties.

Many units appear to be using the planning process to identify programs and areas of opportunity or need to which they will give priority for faculty renewal. In order to further encourage innovation and careful management of existing resources, there is a need to continue to increase the autonomy of departments. Such autonomy should allow them more direct control over resources.

In order for existing faculty to remain committed in a time of reduced resources, there needs to be a broader set of opportunities for the recognition of contributions and a more supportive working environment.

3. Renewal

"Most colleges and universities in the country are fundamentally alike. ... Today, they are being forced to make selections ... and make themselves more specialized and unique." Arthur Levine³

To renew means to reestablish, to begin again, to redesign, to reinvent, to restructure. Faculty renewal means not only that we hire new faculty, but that these hirings support new university and new discipline directions. In addition to renewal through hiring, renewal also takes place as we consider new approaches to the way we carry out our work, offer our programs and manage our affairs. Determining these new directions and new approaches will require hard choices to be made.

Renewal involves first knowing where we want to go, and second having an institutional structure and will that enables us to get there.

Many parts of the campus are calling for a vision for Simon Fraser, a clear picture of what we aspire to be - something more than the existing "Statement of Purpose" and President's agenda. During the next few months the President and his Senior Policy Advisor will be meeting with the university community and endeavouring to craft that vision. We hope that with the establishment of a vision the university will be provided with the overall direction for the renewal process.

3.1 Faculty Renewal as our First Priority

The university is facing an unprecedented challenge to its ability to hire and retain faculty. Faculty are being aggressively recruited by industry and other academic institutions with offers of high salaries and new opportunities. The cost of filling new positions in many areas is rapidly increasing. At the same time we face internal pressures to reallocate resources from faculty positions to other areas of need. We cannot both meet these pressures and maintain our existing number of faculty positions. Without a clear priority to faculty renewal, faculty numbers will decrease.

Recommendation 3.1: Existing planning processes should make renewal their first priority. This means that in making decisions, the need to maintain and strengthen our faculty complement will be given first place among other competing priorities.

3.2 Resource Reallocation

A unifying theme of much we heard and read, and an important aspect of renewal, is selectivity: the need to be focused on those things we can do especially well and that will best serve the future of the university, our students and our communities. Selectivity implies a reallocation of resources.

We have been convinced that selectivity is taking place at all levels of the university through the existing planning processes and that these plans should be the preferred vehicles for renewal. In the department the Chair leads the discussion on how this will be accomplished. Within each Faculty, the Dean has the responsibility to allocate Faculty resources. In both cases an open, transparent and inclusive process is essential.

The Vice President, Academic allocates resources across Faculties. Funds that support reallocation at the Vice Presidential level arise in three ways - new non-recurring funds, new base-budget funds and the reallocation of base-budget funds from each Faculty budget to a central pool. At the moment this central pool is termed the Strategic Initiative Fund (SIF). Its value in 1998/99 was approximately \$600,000 and it was made up of the latter two sources of funds described above. It was allocated by the Vice President, Academic with input from the Deans and in line with the Vice Presidential plan. In 1998/99 the SIF provided funding for eleven positions; eight of them faculty.

The SIF is the only mechanism we have for ensuring flexibility at the university-wide level and funding initiatives which cannot be supported within Faculty budgets. Such a reallocation mechanism is essential to the university. The allocation of these funds should be based on the university vision, Faculty plans, the advice of the Deans, and be informed by external circumstances. Because of its central nature and the fact that it is partly funded by a tax to all units, particular care must be taken to ensure an open and accountable process, with decisions made publicly available⁴.

Recommendation 3.2: A Strategic Initiatives Fund should continue to be established annually with terms of reference and selection mechanisms clearly described, open and accountable.

We suggest that the following criteria be considered during the assessment of academic programs and initiatives being considered for SIF funding:

- consistency with the university vision and Faculty plans;
- existing research and teaching strength;
- ability to attract excellent students, provide a superior instructional and intellectual environment, and offer students future prospects;
- significant potential for internal and external partnerships⁵;
- strong support from faculty participants; and
- the potential to contribute to the well-being of the province.

It must also be acknowledged that while we need to foster mutually advantageous relationships with the province's emergent knowledge industries, we must at the same time ensure the advancement of the humanities and curiosity-driven scientific research.

3.3 External Relationships

Over the years we have built good relationships with the external community through both research and teaching initiatives; in some cases leading to the creation of new types of appointments. Such new appointments may require new policies and the "Special Appointments and Continuing Appointments Without Annual Review" policy is now being developed.

Many areas of the university have created opportunities for members of external organizations to join the university for limited periods of time and provide their expertise to us. Examples include speakers in seminar courses, members of advisory boards, instructors in certain programs, and "specialists in residence" for extended periods of time. They should be continued and expanded, where possible.

Recommendation 3.3: Units, in their 3-year planning, should consider new initiatives with external agencies and individuals, to create more opportunities for faculty renewal.

3.4 Support for External Revenue Generation

All areas of the university whose faculty renewal costs are increasing rapidly due to escalating salaries and equipment costs, and who have opportunities for external funding, have a particular responsibility to seek it.

In addition to external partnerships that fund faculty positions, several areas of the university are in the process of introducing instructional programs offered at full cost recovery or with tuition fees supported by external partnerships. The pursuit of such resources should be consistent with established planning priorities and the funds generated should be returned in large part to those units generating them. This should allow the units to cover their additional costs and moderate their need to place additional demands on general university resources.

Units involved in these initiatives will require the support of the offices of the Vice President, Academic, University Advancement and the Vice President, Research.

Recommendation 3.4: The Vice President, Academic should ensure the university has good mechanisms to support revenue-generating initiatives and appropriately apportion the revenues generated.

4. Faculty Retention

"Membership in [prestigious] enterprises confers status - and status is a form of capital. ... [But] status can turn stagnant, and no-one wants to be affiliated with an organization that has lost its vital energy. When that happens, talented people can be as easy to lure away as they were to lure in - and the best people are usually the first to go." Robert B. Reich⁶

A university's success is determined in large part by the commitment, contributions and leadership of its faculty. It is therefore essential that we work to enrich and enhance the environment in which faculty work by providing supportive and collegial working conditions in which achievement is recognised and appropriate financial reward provided.

4.1 Departmental Leadership

The department is the place in which a faculty member spends most of their time and to which their first allegiance lies. Faculty must feel part of a strong, supportive department in which they are an important contributor. The most critical person in developing such a department is the Chair.

A successful Chair has strong leadership abilities, effective management and motivational skills and a broad knowledge of policies and decision-making processes across the university. Chairs require appropriate training and support in carrying out their responsibilities. Their work should be recognised and rewarded based on departmental performance measured through the realization of department plans and the development of faculty and staff.

Recommendation 4.1: The Vice President, Academic should ensure ongoing leadership training for Chairs and recognition of their accomplishments.

One vehicle for such recognition might be the introduction of "Presidential Leadership Awards".

4.2 Department Autonomy

In developing their 3-year plan, Chairs lead their departments in first establishing a collective vision and strategy and then putting it into practice. To do this effectively requires consultation within the department and considerable departmental autonomy. In accord with the planning process approved in 1997, departments should be authorized within their annual budget, and in compliance with their plan, to decide whether or not to fill an authorized position, whether or not to hire sessionals, TAs or limited term faculty, and most importantly, how to restructure the department and its operations.

Departments also need incentives to be fiscally and operationally efficient, such as a guarantee that a significant portion of the moneys released by initiatives they undertake will remain in the department. To be able to support early retirements and requests for modified contracts, departments must know that resources will be available to assist them in meeting their immediate teaching needs.

Recommendation 4.2: Shortly after the university budget is known, departments should receive from their Dean an annual budget with which to make commitments for the coming year consistent with their department plan.

4.3 Faculty Work Plans

Having established a plan and negotiated annual resources, the department must now implement the plan. Fundamental to this is the need for each faculty member to contribute significantly to the attainment of both individual and collective goals. This will be accomplished through the development of individual 2-year work plans negotiated between the faculty member and the Chair in accord with the faculty workload policy (A30.03). Given that for many faculty "Related Outside Activities" (as described in Policy A 30.04) are an important aspect of their contribution to the university, it seems appropriate to address them in the work plans.

For many faculty, the work plan will support existing career paths. For others it has the flexibility to allow them to move in new directions, to reinvigorate careers and to take advantage of new opportunities. During biennial reviews, work plans should be considered by the DTC in evaluating contributions and subsequently recommending merit and other rewards. As stated in A30.03, this is particularly important for those whose work plan describes an alternate career path.

Recommendation 4.3: Faculty and Chairs should use work plans creatively to address changing career paths and aspirations of faculty, to ensure the talents of all faculty members are used optimally and to achieve department goals.

Timelines are currently being developed to ensure Chairs can implement the workload policy in step with the biennial faculty review process.

4.4 Faculty Support

Through the support they provide to faculty, service areas such as Finance, Research Services, Graduate Studies, Ancillary Services, Library, Computing Services and Human Resources have a major role to play in the research and teaching activities of the university. As such they enhance the working environment and assist in the retention of faculty. It is incumbent on them to ensure they are providing the highest possible levels of support and there is broad satisfaction with their services.

Recommendation 4.4: Service areas should develop regular assessment processes by which they measure and respond to the needs of the university community.

4.5 The Salary Scale

One way to keep the best people at Simon Fraser is to ensure compensation reflects accomplishment and contribution to the attainment of department and university goals. We have identified three practices that make it difficult to reward our best people: the current merit system, the salary cap and the assistant professor salary scale. The overall themes in our recommendations are to apply greater selectivity in our reward systems and to make rewards available to all faculty⁷.

Recommendation 4.5(a): The merit allocation process should be restructured through a variety of avenues that might include:

- close ties between merit assigned and the two-year faculty workload plans;
- merit steps to be held by the Dean to ensure intra-Faculty equity;
- reassignment of faculty between the two biennial review groups; and
- a finer gradation of steps including a step that corresponds to the Faculty average.

There is particular concern for those faculty at the top of the ceiling of their rank (currently 42% of all faculty) many of whom are making exceptional contributions to the university. While they are awarded merit steps, they do not see them reflected in any salary increment. We must recognize and reward the valuable leadership roles senior faculty can play in the institution.

Recommendation 4.5(b): Outstanding leadership and achievement by faculty at the salary ceiling of their rank should be recognized through university professorships, additional salary steps and/or one-time bonuses through salary or grants.

There is also concern related to the current salary scale for assistant professors. Being appointed at the assistant professor step 4 level and then awarded significant merit increases during the first few years puts many assistant professors at the top of their scale prior to normal promotion. The result is that some of our best-performing faculty are not being recognized adequately and as a result may be discouraged from making a full commitment to the university and more easily recruited by other organisations.

Recommendation 4.5(c): The assistant professor salary scale should be revised to ensure that all assistant professors will be eligible for the awarding of merit increments during their pre-tenure years.

4.6 Recognizing Faculty Contributions

The preceding recommendations address the need for recognition through salary. However, this is not the whole story. There is also a need to create more opportunities to publicly acknowledge faculty success; be it at the department, Faculty or university level. Further, it will at times be necessary to allocate time and resources to some of our most outstanding faculty to enable them to carry out projects of particular value to their departments and the university. This will be accomplished through the creation of endowed chairs and the reintroduction of a university professorship program; having first reviewed the existing terms of that program to ensure a breadth of rank and type of contribution can be recognized.

Recommendation 4.6: The office of University Advancement should work to increase the number of endowed professorships and chairs, and the President should reintroduce a university professorship program.

5. Recruitment

The quality of the university is directly linked to the quality of its faculty. Therefore, the most important decisions that are made are the hiring decisions. Since it opened, Simon Fraser has been characterized as an innovative institution. We now need to apply this innovative spirit to our recruitment practices.

Prior to our recommendations we describe two possible "ideal" scenarios - one written from the perspective of a new faculty member, and the other from the perspective of a department Chair.

Perspective of the new faculty member

I am a post-doctoral fellow at a research-oriented university and receive a call from a colleague at SFU. Her department has a position vacant and she urges me to apply. I decide to apply and my contact helps me put together a CV and package of materials focused on the specific needs of the SFU position.

Soon after, I learn that I have been shortlisted and my partner and I are invited to Vancouver for the interview. At SFU, we go our separate ways — me with the SFU contact from the department and my partner with the Recruitment Coordinator. The Coordinator discusses SFU policies on moving allowances, mortgage assistance etc., and arranges a tour of areas where we might live. They also discuss schools for the children and we are assured that an SFU daycare space will be available. The coordinator helps my partner identify companies to contact regarding employment and since my partner is also interested in an academic career provides information on employment opportunities at SFU and in other local post-secondary institutions and assists in making appropriate contacts. After the job talk and interviews with faculty and the Dean, my partner and I spend a day with the Coordinator, real estate and employment counselors etc.

My contact keeps in touch and answers questions that occur to us after we leave SFU. I am offered a position. In addition to start up funds and research space, we negotiate the workload for my first two years, ensuring adequate opportunities for me to meet the research and teaching requirements of the position. The formal offer from the President arrives shortly after we complete negotiations. I have been talking with more than one school and receive a second offer. I ask SFU if they can increase several of the compensation and support items in their original offer. A response comes in a couple of days. It is not quite as good as my alternatives, but we feel more comfortable and confident about the SFU environment. I accept the position.

We arrive at SFU and I am pleased to find my office available and to learn that my equipment has arrived and the lab will be ready within the week. The Coordinator assists me with other departmental and university details that must be addressed. We are personally welcomed by the Dean, the Chair and other faculty members within the first week. To my surprise the President also comes by to meet me.

In the first few months, things are very busy. Grant proposals are put together with help from the departmental research mentor and I am given lots of support in my teaching — course outlines and notes and help from the university teaching centre. I am not expected to serve on departmental committees this year. My partner and I are made welcome by the SFU orientation programs.

The first year has been a whirlwind of activity and challenge, but we have not only survived, we feel a part of the department and the SFU community. My partner and family are settled and I have a plan for the next year's research and teaching activities. This is essential as in the second year I will go through my first biennial review. Before I submit my biennial report, I will meet with the Chair who will help me clarify the expectations of the department and the university.

Perspective of the Chair

Having participated in the 3-Year planning process and regular meetings with the Dean and other Chairs, the Chair knows by late summer how many positions the department is authorized to fill in the next year. The role the new faculty will play within the department, and the expected rank, start-up costs and market differential needed to attract suitable candidates have been discussed and a range of possibilities determined. Given that one of the positions is a leadership role within a priority program, that candidate will be hired as an Associate Professor and it is expected that the appointment will be made with tenure.

The search process is successful. The shortlisting is done quickly and approved by the Dean. A member of the search committee is appointed to contact and mentor each of the shortlisted candidates. This early mentoring process ensures that the personal and professional concerns of each candidate are well understood before their visit.

The Chair attends all job talks, meets with each candidate, takes them to their meeting with the Dean and provides them with a package of information about the university, highlighting employee benefits, and the many research and teaching opportunities at SFU. Since all shortlisted candidates have other suitors, each person is treated as a potential new hire and made feel as welcome as possible. SFU is already known as an innovative, collegial school, and those perceptions are strengthened throughout the selection process.

Negotiations with the selected candidate are assisted by the Dean, the office of the Vice President, Academic, and the Board who work together in an efficient and coordinated effort. This is particularly important when there is a need to consider a "spousal" (partner) appointment. Once negotiations are complete the Chair puts all that has been agreed upon (teaching, research funds, office and lab space etc.) in writing and sends it to the candidate.

During the next year the Chair ensures the faculty member is aware of all policies and procedures related to the biennial review, renewal, promotion and tenure and is clear about both departmental and university expectations. The new faculty member is encouraged to attend orientation sessions. In the coming years the faculty member is kept informed of his/her progress through annual meetings with the Chair and is provided with appropriate opportunities for development. Although new faculty members are enthusiastic about involvement in departmental administration and the development of new courses and programs, the Chair ensures that they maintain a healthy balance so they have adequate time to build a strong research program and excel as teachers.

In the preceding paragraphs, we have described a recruitment process that is proactive, efficient, and caring. The following recommendations address the structural and cultural changes we believe necessary to facilitate such a process.

5.1 The Hiring Process

It no longer suffices to put an ad in the paper or on the web and hope that the best candidates will find us. More proactive approaches are necessary and they are supported by more long-term recruitment planning. While it is true that our budget is annual and future budgets must not be compromised, it is also true that we will have many retirements in the next decade. It seems possible that some of those positions could be authorised several years in advance and the unit could search extensively - starting with people still in graduate school and new post-doctoral fellows - and appoint them well before their actual start date. What is recommended is the very least we should do in terms of forward planning in this regard.

Recommendation 5.1(a): The annual budget and planning process should ensure new positions are authorized at the department level by September 1st each year and are not subject (even if unfilled) to cancellation or "freezing".

Once a candidate has been identified, rank, salary and start-up funds must be determined as quickly as possible. With appropriate pre-planning it seems reasonable to expect each step of the negotiations to be completed in 2 to 3 days and the candidate to have a detailed offer (in writing) within two weeks of the department's decision to hire them. The formal offer from the President should be delivered within two weeks of informal acceptance.

Recommendation 5.1(b): Each Dean, the Vice President, Academic and the Board should review the appointment process with the goal of identifying and eliminating bottlenecks.

5.2 Supporting New Faculty

Making new faculty welcome and helping them to be successful researchers and teachers is the first step in ensuring their success and commitment to the university. Mentors support new faculty by being available to answer questions, provide information and ensure new faculty receive the appropriate support and advice from relevant areas in a timely manner.

Recommendation 5.2(a): To each new appointee, a faculty member should be assigned as mentor as soon as the offer of appointment is made.

New faculty face many challenges relocating and becoming familiar with a new culture and new environment; from finding schools and accommodation, to ensuring appropriate medical coverage. An extensive orientation and support package is currently being prepared by the Associate Vice President, Academic and will be available for the Fall 1999 appointees. This is the right beginning and will be enhanced by more proactive initiatives.

Recommendation 5.2(b): Within the office of the Associate Vice President Academic, an individual should be assigned the role of "Concierge" with the responsibility to assist new faculty and their families in all aspects of their move to Simon Fraser.

New faculty members need time, especially in their first two semesters, to become oriented to their new environment, to establish their research directions and to prepare for their teaching assignments.

Recommendation 5.2(c): New faculty members should be assigned reduced teaching and administrative responsibilities in their first year.

Housing costs remain a significant barrier to attracting and recruiting new faculty. Efforts to assist new faculty in this matter should continue.

Recommendation 5.2(d): The university should consider initiatives to better assist new faculty with housing. This might include improvements to the current mortgage assistance program and/or the establishment of housing for new faculty in the Burnaby Mountain Development.

5.3 Spousal Hiring

Many new faculty have partners who are also seeking professional careers. While the concierge can assist with seeking positions off-campus, the university should develop a policy for assisting with positions on campus. Possibilities range from post-doctoral positions (at Simon Fraser or in partnership with other organisations), to limited term appointments to tenure-track positions. It is essential for the university to have a clear strategy on how partners will be assisted in finding employment⁸.

Recommendation 5.3: The Vice President, Academic should develop a partner hiring strategy consistent with university planning.

6. Retirement

Over the next decade 211 mandatory retirements will occur. Forty-one positions are currently vacant and in the coming years there may be an increased number of early retirements, resignations and faculty seeking modified contracts. As a

consequence, many departments will see substantial fluctuations in the size of their faculty complement, in the leadership and experience available and possibly in their short-term ability to supervise graduate students.

It is appropriate to consider the development of mechanisms to retain some of our retirees through a transitional retirement program. For example, selected faculty might choose to go on modified contract in their last two years with a similar arrangement via a post-retirement contract over the next two years. This would allow faculty renewal to begin two years earlier than planned - recognizing that there would be no overall cost saving.

Recommendation 6: A transitional retirement program should be created.

7. Conclusion

In this report we have suggested changes to our policies, our priorities and our practices at many levels within the university. It is our belief that such changes are necessary to position us for what is becoming an unprecedented challenge to our ability to recruit and retain outstanding faculty. We compete not only with universities nationally and internationally, but also with organisations outside our traditional academic boundaries. Furthermore, we are having to do this in a time of severely restricted resources. Our hope for success lies in our current academic strengths and our ability to think innovatively and seek new approaches. It is our hope that this report will help position us to meet that competition and continue to build a truly exceptional university.

¹ In this report the term faculty refers only to tenured and tenure-track faculty.

² Throughout this document we will use the term department to refer to departments, schools and programs.

³ Arthur Levine, "Higher Education Becomes a Mature Industry", About Campus, August 1997

⁴ A model similar to what is proposed here is provided by the University Initiatives Fund of the University of Washington (www.uwashington.edu/uif/).

⁵ Examples of external partnerships include - cooperative education, off-campus research sites, NSERC Industrial Chairs in Science and Applied Science, endowed chairs in a variety of disciplines, consulting fees through centres and institutes, contract work with overhead, the Burnaby Mountain Development, partnerships that (partially) fund faculty positions (e.g. a mathematics appointment with Waterloo Maple Inc., limited term positions in psychology funded by Riverview Hospital and B.C. Forensic Services, physics and chemistry appointments with TRIUMF and a faculty member in computing with a part-time appointment at Mainframe).

⁶ Robert B. Reich, "The Company of the Future" Fast Company, November 1998

⁷ While the recommendations focus on reconsidering existing policies and practices, it may indeed be the case that a better approach would be to redesign the entire salary structure. In fact, market pressures that require us to pay higher salaries to faculty in an increasing number of disciplines may make this imperative.

⁸ The University of Toronto has recently developed "Spousal Employment Relocation Services and Procedures" in which spousal tenure-track appointments at the University are discussed. As seems to be typical of such policies, they propose an arrangement whereby a spousal appointment is funded one third by each of the originating department, the department of the spousal appointment and the university.

Appendix