

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

To: Senate

From: Allan MacKinnon
Chair, Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

Date: October 18, 2001

Subject: Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue Undergraduate Semester Proposal
(SCUS reference 01-16)

Action undertaken at the September 11, 2001 meeting of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies gives rise to the following motion:

“That Senate approve the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue Undergraduate Semester program on a pilot basis for a two-year period.”

The interdisciplinary program is described in the attached proposal. The program consists of three new courses to be offered at the Centre for Dialogue. SCUS reviewed earlier drafts of the proposal and provided feedback to Dr. Mark Winston, which was incorporated into the attached proposal. A copy of this proposal was sent for information to a September, 2001, meeting of the Senate Committee on University Priorities.

At the end of the two-year pilot a modified proposal will be brought forward for discussion and approval.

Allan MacKinnon

Undergraduate Semester at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Program Proposal: Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

September 11, 2001

Mark L. Winston
Department of Biological Sciences
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I propose that the university initiate an Undergraduate Semester at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. This concept is desirable and timely for two reasons. First, the Centre for Dialogue should become a resource for all levels of the university, and there is no more appropriate role for the Centre than to host courses that teach and encourage dialogue with students. Second, there is a growing interest in developing interdisciplinary and innovative coursework throughout the university, and the Centre for Dialogue provides a unique opportunity to explore curriculum that crosses our current restricted disciplinary boundaries.

The proposed first two years of the program will:

- Establish course numberings, prerequisites, and other curricular standards
- Develop administrative structure
- Teach two semesters
- Actively seek funding for endowments and operating expenses
- Bring forward a modified proposal for a permanent program at the end of the first two years

Why Should the University Implement this program?

The Centre for Dialogue provides a unique opportunity to affirm the major role of a university to educate students into productive, creative, well-balanced, thoughtful, and reflective members of society. The intensive, one-semester experience proposed here, populated by bright students and taught by our best faculty, will provide an unprecedented opportunity for students to achieve at their highest potential, and to obtain the broad and flexible skill set required in today's multi-tasking environment. The program will provide intensive mentoring, strong emphasis on communication skills, an ability to think critically and evaluate effectively, a perspective that encourages discipline-bridging, and an opportunity to learn from and network with stimulating and accomplished individuals from off-campus. The process of participating in the Undergraduate Semester at the Centre for Dialogue (USCD) will transform and mature our brightest students into leaders in their future government, business, education, or research careers.

This program also will reflect and define our university's recently announced values statement. Through this program we can unite teaching and research aspects of scholarship, celebrate discovery and dialogue, and provide an environment where risks can be taken and bold initiatives embraced. More tangibly, the USCD will promote research experience in the undergraduate curriculum, cross interdisciplinary boundaries, and interact strongly and deeply with the community around us, all goals expressed by our vision statement.

The USCD will provide a challenging education for the brightest students. However, I expect it to stimulate, inspire, and blend with other teaching initiatives that encourage interdisciplinary, project-based courses with a strong mentoring component. For example, the program eventually might sponsor individual, one-semester, 3-credit courses of a similar although less intense nature, or by example and experience become part of the growing movement at SFU to develop a core curriculum for incoming students. It also may become part of a College proposal, or merge with other recommendations forthcoming from the newly-formed committee on undergraduate studies.

A third benefit of implementing this program will be to energize faculty who have become jaded with teaching large lecture courses, and provide a more creative outlet for faculty who have become discouraged with limited opportunities for innovative teaching. Also, these courses will encourage faculty to cross disciplines and co-teach with colleagues from varied backgrounds, which will help to build university community and likely lead to the interesting and novel interdisciplinary research opportunities that come through diverse dialogue.

The Undergraduate Semester at the Centre for Dialogue has the potential to develop into a signature program for the university. It will transform the students who take it, spin-off into related courses that will broaden our impact on students, inspire faculty to bridge disciplines, and affirm the university's values. This program is poised to become an increasingly important part of Simon Fraser University's profile, and provide a tangible example of the innovative mind-set we believe underlies our fundamental identity.

Courses

The one-semester, 15 credit curriculum will consist of two components, a core Dialogue section and individual topics that will vary for each course (New Course Proposal Forms attached). Underlying each course will be a subject that encourages broad approaches and provocative issues. The first set of courses will be offered in September 2002.

The courses will consist of seminar discussions led by faculty, frequent guest visits from relevant off-campus experts, a heavy reading load, and a number of individual and group student projects. Learning will be active rather than passive, stimulating

students to research, explore, and discuss rather than following a lecture format. A typical week might involve morning seminars led by faculty or guest speakers and field trips to relevant businesses, government agencies, and non-government organizations. Students would conduct research and interviews for their projects in the afternoons, and meet singly or in small groups with their faculty supervisors.

The core Dialogue section will focus on teaching students to speak, write, research, and interact. Dialogue itself as a discipline will be examined, and communication skills stressed. Students will develop skills in consultation, decision-making, collaborative learning, and bridging gaps between stakeholder communities, using examples and approaches specific to that semester's topic.

Each semester's focus topic will consider a broad question, approached from many perspectives. The first course will be:

Nature, Environment, and Society, which will encompass analyses of environmental issues, history of our human relationship with nature, philosophical approaches to the identity of nature, practical aspects of environmental protection, examination of the environmental movement, the impact of industry and new technologies on environmental and human health, the role of government as a regulatory authority balancing benefits and risks, and the interaction between job creation and environmental protection.

Subsequent courses will depend on the interests of faculty. Applications to teach in the program and proposed course descriptions will be solicited a year prior to each offering, and faculty whose proposed courses are accepted will receive teaching relief for their participation. Another example of a possible submission to the program would be an offering titled "Religion and Politics," including historical perspectives, topical issues in religion and government, constitutional questions, examination of governments based on fundamentalist religious movements, and discussions on ethical aspects of political and government decision-making. Another potential semester might cover "**Biotechnology and the Human Experience**," examining wide issues in biotechnology from scientific, medical, ethical, legal, business, trade, regulatory, environmental, philosophical, fiction, media, and other perspectives.

Grading will be broken down into three courses, one for the core Dialogue curriculum (5 credits), a second for short-term projects and class participation (5 credits) and the third for a final assignment (5 credits). For their final project, each student would produce a manuscript for submission to a major magazine (The New Yorker, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, Saturday Night, etc.) on a topic relevant to the course focus for that semester.

Students also will take part in other programs and conferences offered at the Centre for Dialogue during their semester "in residence."

Choosing Faculty and Students

I expect considerable interest in this program. The students selected should represent the academic elite at the university, and faculty should be our finest teachers and scholars. Students will be chosen through annual competitive applications, adjudicated by the Director and an Advisory Board, and will include balanced representation from all faculties, although there will not be a formal "quota" system. I will direct and teach the first two courses, with another faculty member seconded to each course to co-teach it.

Students will apply for the program six-nine months prior to its offering, with decisions on their applications completed four months prior to the course. Qualifications considered will include high scholastic standing, other academic and non-academic accomplishments, motivation, collegiality and ability to work with others, verbal and written skills, a personal statement, strong references, and an interview. Competition is expected to be stiff; students with whom I have talked view the USCD as an exceptional educational opportunity.

Location

The program will be located at the Harbour Centre campus. Office space, classrooms, student computer access, and a small lounge/meeting area for students are available.

Administration

Secretarial assistance will be provided through the Centre for Dialogue (approximately one day a week). An Advisory Board will be appointed by January 2002 to oversee the program, including four faculty members and two undergraduate or recently graduated students. Their primary responsibilities will be 1) promoting the courses and encouraging students to apply, 2) selecting the faculty to co-teach each course, 3) choosing the students who participate through an application process, 4) setting policies, overseeing the academic content and performance of courses, and 5) revising the program at the end of the first two years.

Funding

Funding for the first two years has been approved by the VP-Academic, but subsequently will move in part or full to a donor base, including local friends of the university, corporate donors, and foundations that support innovative teaching initiatives (Rockefeller, Templeton, Vancouver, and others). A considerable part of my time during the first two years will be devoted to fund raising, with the involvement of the University Development Office.

Calendar Entry
Undergraduate Semester at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver V6B 5K3, (604) 291-5075 Tel., (604) 291- 5818 Fax
www.sfu.ca/(to be established)

Director

Mark L. Winston PhD (Kansas), Professor and Fellow, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Undergraduate Semester at the Centre for Dialogue (USCD)

The Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue provides a unique opportunity to affirm the role of a university to educate students into productive, creative, well-balanced, thoughtful, and reflective members of society. The full-time, one-semester, 15-credit USCD program will provide intensive mentoring, strong emphasis on communication skills, an ability to think critically and evaluate effectively, a perspective that encourages discipline-bridging, and an opportunity to learn from and network with stimulating and accomplished individuals from off-campus.

Each semester's program will consist of a core Dialogue section (DIAL 390, 5 credits) that will be similar for each offering, and individual topics varying with each offering that are focussed on a subject that encourages broad interdisciplinary approaches (DIAL 391 and DIAL 392, 5 credits each). Admission to the program will be by application, and students should consult with their Department prior to their Dialogue semester to determine the application of DIAL credits to fulfill major, minor, or elective course requirements.

All three courses must be taken simultaneously. Prospective students should apply eight months prior to the USCD program they wish to participate in, and admission decisions will be made no later than four months prior to the program. A course outline for each offering of DIAL 390, 391, and 392 will be available prior to the application deadline.

Program Admission Requirements

Students must have completed 50 credit hours prior to beginning the USCD program. Individual courses may have other prerequisites. Application forms, information about course content, and other information are available from the program office.

These courses also are eligible to fulfill electives in the Post Baccalaureate Diploma Program.

Undergraduate Courses

Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

DIAL 390-Undergraduate Semester: Dialogue

The Dialogue component of the Undergraduate Semester at the Centre for Dialogue will immerse students in the art and practice of thinking and communicating. The focus will be on strategies and methods to use in understanding diverse perspectives. Students will have an opportunity to expand their verbal and written communication skills as well as explore Dialogue as a developing academic field. The specific focus of the course and the assignments will be linked and interwoven with the current semester's offering of DIAL 391 and 392, which must be taken simultaneously with DIAL 390.

DIAL 391-Undergraduate Semester: Seminar

Topics covered each semester will vary, but generally each course will examine a subject that encourages broad approaches and probes provocative issues. The course will consist of discussions led by faculty, frequent visits from relevant off-campus experts, a heavy reading load, and a number of individual and group student projects. Learning will be active rather than passive, stimulating students to research, explore, and discuss rather than following a lecture format. This course must be taken simultaneously with DIAL 390 and DIAL 392.

DIAL 392-Undergraduate Semester: Final Project

For their final project, each student will produce a manuscript suitable for submission to a major current affairs magazine (The New Yorker, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, Saturday Night, etc.) on a topic relevant to the course focus for that semester. This course must be taken simultaneously with DIAL 390 and 391.

**Simon Fraser University
New Course Proposal**

Course Number: DIAL 390

Credit Hours: 5

Vector: 0/5/0

Title of Course: Undergraduate Semester: Dialogue

Calendar Description

The Dialogue component of the Undergraduate Semester at the Centre for Dialogue will immerse students in the art and practice of thinking and communicating. The focus will be on strategies and methods to use in understanding diverse perspectives. Students will have an opportunity to expand their verbal and written communication skills as well as explore Dialogue as a developing academic field. The specific focus of the course and the assignments will be linked and interwoven with the current semester's offering of DIAL 391 and 392, which must be taken simultaneously with DIAL 390.

Prerequisites/Special Instructions

50 credit hours prior to beginning the Undergraduate Semester at the Centre for Dialogue. Students should apply two semesters before the semester in which they wish to enroll. This course must be taken simultaneously with DIAL 391 and 392.

Courses Dropped: None

Rationale

The Centre for Dialogue provides a unique opportunity to affirm the major role of a university to educate students into productive, creative, well-balanced, thoughtful, and reflective members of society. The one-semester course proposed here, populated by bright students and taught by our best faculty, will provide an unprecedented opportunity for students to achieve at their highest potential, and to obtain the broad and flexible skill set required in today's multi-tasking environment. The course will provide intensive mentoring, strong emphasis on communication skills, an ability to think critically and evaluate effectively, a perspective that encourages discipline-bridging, and an opportunity to learn from and network with stimulating and accomplished individuals from off-campus.

Enrollment: 20 students

Audience: Third and fourth year undergraduate students, Post Baccalaureate Diploma Program.

Scheduling: Spring semesters

Present Faculty: Mark Winston (Biological Sciences and Fellow, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue) will direct the program and teach in the first two semesters the USCD is offered. Additional faculty will be appointed for each course as well from any Department in the university.

Student Fees: Standard SFU tuition rate.

Duplicate Current Course: No

Resources

Library: No additional resources are necessary.

Space or Equipment: Office space, a student lounge, and classroom space are available at the Harbour Centre campus.

Computing Resources: No additional resources.

Faculty: Variable.

Approvals

Director and Fellow, Undergraduate Semester at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Date

VP-Academic

Date

Chair, SCUS

Date

Scheduling: Spring semesters

Present Faculty: Mark Winston (Biological Sciences and Fellow, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue) will direct the program and teach in the first two semesters the USCD is offered. Additional faculty will be appointed for each course as well from any Department in the university.

Student Fees: Standard SFU tuition rate.

Duplicate Current Course: No

Resources

Library: Depending on topic and holdings at Harbour Centre, some assistance with interlibrary access may be necessary (see attached memo from Lynn Copeland, 17 July)

Space or Equipment: Office space, a student lounge, and classroom space are available at the Harbour Centre campus.

Computing Resources: No additional resources.

Faculty: Variable.

Approvals

Director and Fellow, Undergraduate Semester at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Date

VP-Academic

Date

Chair, SCUS

Date

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Library: No additional resources are necessary.

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Faculty: Variable.

Approvals

Director and Fellow, Undergraduate Semester at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Date

VP-Academic

Date

Chair, SCUS

Date

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Draft Course Outline: Fall 2002

Undergraduate Semester at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

DIAL 390, 391, 392: Nature, Environment, and Society

This is a full-time, one-semester suite of courses that must be taken simultaneously. Prospective students should apply no later than 1 March 2002, and admission decisions will be made no later than 30 April 2002. For application information, contact (to be determined). Students should consult with their Department prior to their Dialogue semester to determine the application of DIAL credits to fulfill major, minor, or elective course requirements.

Topic: The Fall 2002 courses will focus broadly on nature, environment, and society, including analyses of environmental issues, history of our human relationship with nature, philosophical approaches to the identity of nature, practical aspects of environmental protection, examination of the environmental movement, the impact of industry and new technologies on environmental and human health, the role of government as a regulatory authority balancing benefits and risks, and the interaction between job creation and environmental protection.

Format: The three courses will be presented together, in a format including discussions led by faculty, frequent visits from relevant off-campus experts, and a heavy reading load. Students will conduct individual and group projects presented to the class on a regular basis, prepare a number of written assignments, and organize a mini, dialogue-style conference towards the end of the semester. Learning will be active rather than passive, stimulating students to research, explore, and discuss rather than following a lecture style. Typically, morning class sessions will be used for seminars led by faculty or guest speakers, field trips to relevant businesses, government agencies, and non-government organizations, and project presentations. Students will conduct research and interviews for their projects in the afternoons, and meet singly or in small groups with their faculty supervisors.

The Dialogue component will immerse students in the art and practice of thinking and communicating. The focus will be on strategies and methods to use in understanding diverse perspectives. Students will have an opportunity to expand their verbal and written communication skills as well as explore Dialogue as a developing academic field. Assignments will be linked and interwoven with the course focus on nature, environment, and society.

Topics and Sample of Sources for Assigned Readings

- Week 1** **Dialogue and Communication**
- William Isaacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*
Robert Grudin, *On Dialogue*
- Week 2** **Man, Nature, and Wilderness**
- Gary Snyder, *Earth House Hold*
Henry Thoreau, *On Walden Pond*
Max Oelschlager, *The Idea of Wilderness*
Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature*
- Week 3** **Philosophy and the Identity of Nature**
- William Shore, *The Nature of Nature*
Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*
Daniel Halpern, *On Nature*
- Week 4** **The Environmental Movement: History, Strategy, and Impact**
- Bjorn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*
- Week 5** **Business, New Technologies, and Environmental Protection**
- Maurice Strong, *Where on Earth Are We Going?*
Gretchen Daily, *Nature's Services*
- Week 6** **Endangered Species**
- Charles Mann and Mark Plummer, *Noah's Choice*
- Week 7** **Biotechnology and Genetically Modified Crops**
- Mark Winston, *Travels in the Genetically Modified Zone*
U.S. National Research Council, *Genetically Modified Plants*
- Week 8** **Government, Environmental Protection, and Law**
- Percival and Alevizatos (ed.), *Law and the Environment*
Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*
- Week 9** **Water and Canadian Policy**
- Marq de Villers, *Water*

Week 10	Case Studies
Week 11	Case Studies
Week 12	Student-Organized Mini-Conference (Dialogue-based, Topic to be chosen by students)
Week 13	Final Student Project Presentations

Grading

Dial 390

Class Participation	20%
Mini-Conference	20%
Group Projects	40%
Individual Projects	20%

Dial 391

Class Participation	20%
Individual Projects	60%
Group Projects	20%

Dial 392

For their final project, each student will produce a manuscript suitable for submission to a major current affairs magazine (The New Yorker, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, Saturday Night, etc.) on a topic relevant to the course focus.

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science-based focus (Biotechnology and the Human Experience or Nature, Environment and Society). Currently only around 6% of Belzberg's titles have a science focus; for example, there are about 100 biology titles. There are other social science and humanities titles that may play a part in the information needs of the USCD students but again the majority of materials will reside at Bennett. Because the Library generally purchases only single copies, to transfer a significant amount of material to Belzberg for the purposes of the USCD courses would render the material unavailable to people on the Burnaby campus who also will use it for their courses, and require that materials also located at the already full Belzberg Library be relocated. Thus we recommend, at a minimum, that second copies of the material for which there is anticipated heavy use (including course reading material) should be purchased and put on reserve at the Belzberg Library. Beyond that, course assessments will be prepared as the courses are developed. Although typically a course assessment does not consider the location of materials already held by the SFU Library, in this case it will be, given the multidisciplinary nature of the programme.

The Library provides delivery on request between the two campus libraries. The funding of 1 FTE at the Bennett Library and use of existing staff at Belzberg has been sufficient to support this service in the past, largely because most students in broadly based programmes are on both campuses and can use the Bennett Library in person. In other instances, access to full-text online has been sufficient to relieve the potential library workload. Because the nature of the USCD suggests that students will be located only at Harbour Centre during their tenure in the programme, we believe that a relatively few students, to make the most effective use of their experience, will disproportionately increase the number of materials requested. As the individual assigned to the Bennett Library is fully occupied with the current requesting load, either additional staff resources need to be provided or the USCD programme will be supported at the expense of services to Bennett Library users. Again, this staffing issue will need to be considered in the context of other new Harbour Centre programmes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this interesting proposal at this early stage of development. The Library welcomes the opportunity to work with you and the course developers to determine what resources are required and what the Library can do to support the USCD program. Please feel free to call me to discuss this further.