

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.80-164

(in conjunction with S.80-134)

MEMORANDUM

SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGENDA AND RULES

Subject REPORT - SENATE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Date NOVEMBER 17, 1980

On recommendation of the Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules, the above mentioned Report was placed on the agenda for the November meeting of Senate for discussion but not for the formal placing of motions on the recommendations and actions thereon. The intent was that the Report be placed on the agenda for the December meeting of Senate for formal action with motions at that time.

SCAR has considered with some care the nature of various meetings which have been held in and across Faculties since release of the Report in mid-October and the nature of discussion at the November meeting of Senate. It has now been recommended to the Chairman of Senate, and it has been accepted by him, that action proceed as follows:

MOTION 1 "That Senate consider the Report of the Senate Committee on Student Representation."

Notes: (a) If the vote on this motion is in the affirmative then Senate will proceed with discussion and action on the eight recommendations, and their components, of the SCSR Report, seriatim.

Under this procedure each of the eight recommendations can be debated upon individually, with amendments if desired, and voted upon individually. When that is completed Senate may then vote upon the Report, as amended, in its entirety and/or consider any other appropriate motion.

(b) If the vote under Motion 1 is in the negative, motion will be made as follows - i.e. a Notice of Motion for debate and action at the December 1 meeting.

MOTION 2 "That each Faculty be directed to discharge its responsibilities under Section 39(b) of the University Act and to report back to the Chairman/Secretary of Senate by February 10, 1981.

This motion, if placed, is open to amendment.

(Note: The Universities Act is now called the University Act; Section 40(b) of the previous Act is now Section 39(b).)

If Motion 1 has been in the affirmative, debate and action will be undertaken on the following, seriatim:

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RECOMMENDATION # 1:

*That Senate adopt the following statement of general principle regarding the participation of student representatives in the academic governance of the Faculties and their respective departments.**

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Student representation is provided for in Section 40 of the Universities Act and is desirable in all academic decision-making bodies in the Faculties and their respective departments.
2. To this end, Senate encourages students to form and maintain departmental student unions to promote student participation in the academic governance of the University.
3. Students, as members of the academic community, have an obligation and a responsibility to actively participate in the academic governance of the University.
4. The right of students to participate in the meetings and proceedings of the Faculties and their respective departments includes the right of duly elected student representatives to participate with full voice and vote in all academic decisions of departments and Faculty, including decisions concerning such matters as:
 - a) class and course scheduling
 - b) curriculum planning
 - c) department speakers' programs and conferences
 - d) establishing and amending procedures concerning student appeals
 - e) establishing meeting times and agendas
 - f) new faculty appointments
 - g) practicum and work-study programs
 - h) selection of the departmental chairperson
 - i) selection of the departmental committee chairpersons or coordinators
 - j) space planning and equipment purchases
 - k) student/faculty relations
 - l) teaching support staff appointments
 - m) other substantive academic matters and issues concerning the department and/or the Faculty.
5. The extent of student representation should be the subject of an agreement between the faculty of a department or Faculty and the recognised departmental student union; and the proportion of

* The term "department" includes all academic departments and academic administrative units including area studies programs in the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies and other academic programs including programs leading towards graduate and/or advanced degrees (e.g. M.Sc., M.A., Ph.D., M.B.A., M.P.M.)

students to faculty initially established shall not be less than the minimum specified in the regulations of Senate.

6. In the absence of a recognised departmental student union, students shall nevertheless be invited and encouraged to participate in the meetings and proceedings of a Faculty and/or a department through an appropriate number of student representatives voting on all academic department or Faculty decision-making bodies.

The extent of student representation and the procedures for obtaining student representatives shall be consistent with Senate guidelines, and shall be the subject of an agreement between the Faculty and the student Forum of the Simon Fraser Student Society, who shall assume responsibility to assure that all established student positions are filled.

SENATE GUIDELINES:

The Universities Act of B.C. provides that the academic governance of the University is vested in the University Senate. Among Senate's powers is the power to consider all matters reported by the Faculties affecting their respective departments and programs. Senate must, in fact, approve any general rule or regulation of a Faculty before it can become effective and enforceable.

To ensure that the rules and regulations of Faculties and their respective departments regarding student representation are properly adopted, enforceable and uniform, the Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION # 2:

That Senate require each Faculty and its departments to establish rules and regulations concerning the participation of student representatives in its meetings and proceedings and submit them for approval to Senate.

To promote equity of treatment within and between the Faculties and their departments, and to ensure the maintenance of reasonable minimum standards of student participation in the academic governance of the University, the committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION # 3:

That Senate adopt the following guidelines and approve only those rules and regulations of a Faculty which substantially comply with the following guidelines:

1. DUE PROCESS:

The rules and regulations regarding department and Faculty committees and other academic decision-making bodies shall contain the following:

- a) a statement of the terms of reference and membership composition of all committees and decision-making bodies, and
- b) the procedures that must be followed for establishing regular meeting times and the convening of special meetings including the minimum period of notice that must be given, and
- c) the minimum number of voting members of the committee or decision-making body required to convene and to conduct a meeting, and
- d) a requirement that a written record be maintained at all meetings including the time and place, the names of the members who were present, and the outcome of any votes which are taken.

2. MINIMUM EXTENT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATION:

Within each Faculty and its departments, students shall be entitled to elect voting representatives on committees and other decision-making bodies equal in number to at least one-third (1/3) the number of voting members of the committee except that:

- a) in the case of committees dealing with matters concerning the undergraduate curriculum, the minimum total voting student representation shall be one-half (1/2) the number of total voting members, and
- b) in the general assemblies and general meetings of a Faculty and of its departments, the minimum number of student representatives entitled to be present and to vote shall be the lesser of:
 - (i) one-third (1/3) the number of faculty entitled to be present and to vote, or
 - (ii) the number of student representatives who are from time to time holding voting positions on all committee and decision-making bodies in the Faculty or department.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

The rules and regulations regarding student participation in the academic governance of a Faculty and its departments shall include:

- a) a fixed and definite term of office for all elected student

representative positions of no less than one semester and no more than one year, and

- b) a procedure which enables members of the student union to remove an elected representative during his/her term of office for failing to adequately represent the interests of students, and
- c) a procedure which enables students to fill any student representative position which becomes vacant during the term of office of the position.

4. RIGHTS OF STUDENT REPRESENTATION:

The rules regarding department and Faculty committees and other decision-making bodies shall state that all duly elected student representatives shall have the same rights, privileges and obligations as all other voting members of the committee or decision-making body; and

- a) It is required that student representatives be recognised by faculty and University administrators and that student representatives not, in any way, be discriminated against for opinions voiced, nor for positions taken in the performance of their duties and responsibilities; and
- b) Student representatives shall have reasonable access to administrative support services required to carry out their duties; and

Student representatives shall have access to information including all data and communication required to carry out the duties of their offices. Without limiting the foregoing, this shall include access to the written record of all decisions made by the decision-making body of which they are members; and

Student representatives shall be entitled to the same advance notice of meetings as all other members of a committee or decision-making body, and the rules regarding advance notice of the items of business shall be sufficient to enable consultation and discussion between student representatives and their department student union; and

- c) The rules shall state that a voting student member of a committee or decision-making body shall have the right to cast his/her vote in all cases regardless of the method of voting selected by the committee or decision-making body, except in the non-voting chair position.
- d) The student representatives shall be entitled to all other rights and privileges as accorded to all other voting members.

5. DEPARTMENTAL STUDENT UNIONS:

A recognised departmental student union is the appropriate body from which student representatives are to be obtained for student participation in the academic governance of the Faculties and their departments.

- a) A departmental student organisation shall be recognised as a Department Student Union provided it has been recognised by the Simon Fraser Student Society and meets the following criteria:

To be recognised the organisation must:

- i) maintain and comply with the requirements of a written constitution; and
- ii) recognise as automatic voting members all University students who are members of the department, including graduate students, declared undergraduate majors and minors, and all students who are presently enrolled in a University course offered by the department.

- b) A recognised departmental student union shall be entitled to elect its representatives to participate in the academic governance of the department and the Faculty in a manner of their own choosing and without interference or influence by or from a member or members of the faculty or administration of the University.

6. RE-EVALUATION OF RULES AND PROCEDURES:

These guidelines are intended to provide minimum standards for student participation in the academic governance of the University, in the meetings and proceedings of the Faculties. The Faculties and their departments are permitted to exceed these standards with respect to the minimum proportion of student representatives in their committee and decision-making bodies.

The Faculties, the members of their respective departments, and the members of the departmental student unions, shall periodically review and re-evaluate their rules and procedures for student representation. The Senate expects that this review process will result in the submission of proposed amendments by the Faculties to improve, and where appropriate, extend the participation of student representatives in the academic governance of their departments and Faculties.

To implement recommendations 2 and 3, the Committee further recommends:

RECOMMENDATION # 4:

- a) *That having established its guidelines, Senate invite the*

members of the Faculty and the departmental student unions to carefully review the current rules and practices of their departments and Faculties, and, through consultation and discussion, attempt to develop appropriate revisions and amendments to satisfy the requirements of the Senate guidelines.

- b) At the Faculty level, these discussions shall occur between the Dean and an appropriate committee of the Simon Fraser Student Society with student representation from within that Faculty.
- c) After this review, the Faculties and their respective departments shall submit to Senate for its approval written statements of their rules and regulations concerning the participation of student representation.

Because it is only reasonable to expect that disputes may arise between parties, the Committee further recommends:

RECOMMENDATION # 5:

That the University President or a special Senate Committee be made responsible for attempting to mediate between students and faculty whenever this assistance is requested by either or both of the parties. If a committee is chosen, it shall be composed in the same manner as the Senate Committee on Student Representation, that is composed of two faculty elected by and from Senate, two students appointed by the SFSS Student Forum, and one lay member of Senate, elected by and from Senate, the Chairperson elected by and from Committee members.

RECOMMENDATION # 6:

That whenever the addition of student representatives on a committee threatens to make it unreasonably large and too unwieldy to carry out its functions, the total number of members should be reduced, retaining the appropriate ration of students to faculty.

Tenure and Promotion: The Committee acknowledges the concern that has been expressed by faculty and by departmental student unions concerning the faculty tenure and promotion decisions. We understand that the procedures contained in the current agreement between the University and the SFU Faculty Association exclude the participation of student representatives. Although the Committee agrees that student representatives ought to be able to participate in these kinds of decisions, we also agree

that we are not well enough informed about the present agreement to provide specific recommendations as to the most appropriate method of obtaining student participation in the tenure and promotion process. The committee therefore recommends:

RECOMMENDATION # 7:

The Senate strongly recommends that the University Board of Governors adopt a policy which would ensure that students have been appropriately consulted before recommendations concerning the promotion, tenure, dismissal or nonrenewal of any member of the teaching staff of the University.

Senate further recommends that the President establish a special committee of representatives of the Student Society, the S.F.U. Faculty Association and lay people to recommend an appropriate mechanism for the participation of student representatives in this area of University governance.

Thursday Free Period: The committee heard a number of complaints and expressions of concern and frustration with the problems experienced by faculty members and by students in arranging meetings at times when all of the members could attend. Although not the only factor, the current practice of scheduling classes and tutorials into every working hour of the week creates a significant problem for the scheduling of committee meetings of departments and Faculties and student unions. The Committee therefore recommends:

RECOMMENDATION # 8:

That Senate require a two-hour time period be set aside at a standard time during each week in which there will be no scheduled classes, tutorials or labs, but will be available for the scheduling of meetings of departmental student unions, departmental and other committees.