

# enVISION SFU

S.11-2

Simon Fraser University is Canada's leading comprehensive university, with deep commitments to undergraduate teaching, advanced research, graduate studies and community betterment. As President, I believe the time is right to articulate a vision of SFU that embodies these commitments. I am therefore undertaking a consultation process called **enVISION SFU**.

*The purpose of enVISION SFU is to develop a strategic vision that reflects SFU's strengths and enhances its reputation as an institution that is student-centred, research-driven, and community-engaged.*

SFU's achievements have resulted from the initiative of its faculty, students, staff, alumni and community partners. It is your energies and commitments, supported by government and other funders, that have enabled SFU to grow in size and gain in stature. **enVISION SFU** is intended to provide a forum not only to express your views, but also to engage with others, to seek common ground, and to discover synergies that will help SFU direct its efforts where it can enjoy the greatest success.

*This process will produce a strategic vision that I hope will be embraced by the entire SFU community.*

Building on SFU's Academic, Research and other plans, this discussion paper provides a framework for the consultation. As well as focusing on the academic mission of the university, I am seeking input about SFU's commitments to the communities we serve. This will also highlight the significant social and economic benefits provided by SFU and by post-secondary education generally.

In addition to consultations with Senate, Board of Governors, faculty, students, staff, alumni and community associations, there will be opportunities for discussion through the **enVISION SFU** web site, focus groups, open sessions, social media, and surveys such as the one attached to this paper.

*I am eager to hear from each of you about your vision and ideas for SFU's future.*

I anticipate that a rich and diverse set of perspectives on the University and its future will emerge from this process. A White Paper drawing upon these perspectives will be prepared and further input sought over late spring and summer of 2011. Beginning in the fall of 2011, SFU's strategic vision will provide a set of goals and values to help position and guide us over the next five years.

I look forward to your views and ideas as we work together to shape an exciting future for SFU.

[signature]

## *We want to hear from you...*

*What is distinctive about SFU?*

*How can SFU increase its **impact** and **relevance**?*

*What **prospects** and **opportunities** is SFU missing?*

*How can SFU improve its **teaching** and **learning**?*

*How can SFU improve the **quality** of **student experience**?*

*How can SFU enhance the **quality** and **impact** of its **research**?*

*How can SFU strengthen its **community engagement**?*

*How can SFU **maximize synergies** between **teaching**, **research** and **community engagement**?*

*What **other values** need to be reflected in SFU's strategic vision?*

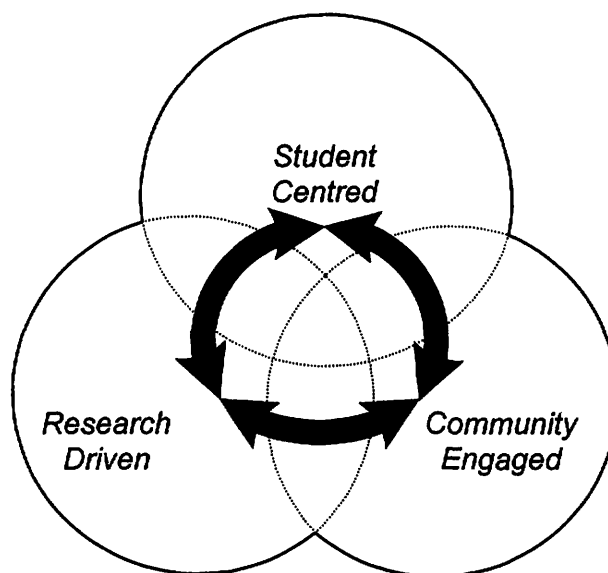
*How can SFU ensure it has the **resources** to achieve our goals?*

# enVISION SFU ... commitments and synergies

This discussion paper assumes that Simon Fraser University's strategic vision will build upon our defining strengths: our commitment to students; our dedication to research; and our engagement with community.

This is the very foundation of SFU's success as a **comprehensive university**: SFU provides an exemplary undergraduate program in an academic milieu that celebrates world-class research and graduate studies. Our students inspire and energize the level of intellectual and academic enquiry, even as they benefit from their exposure to accomplished scholars, talented graduate student mentors, and advanced research practices. And they do all this in an academy that is arguably more connected to community than any other in the country.

**This interplay of strengths defines and differentiates Simon Fraser University as *the best of its kind*.**



- **Student Centred:** Our vision will describe an environment that contributes to engaged learning and creates an enriched experience for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- **Research Driven.** Our vision will celebrate and support SFU research, through which faculty and student curiosity and creativity contribute to knowledge and to community well-being.
- **Community engaged.** Our vision will acknowledge and promote our dynamic presence in local, national and international communities, and our engagement with a multiplicity of groups and interests.

**Our challenge is to unite these components into a vibrant and compelling strategic vision** – one that describes a university that offers students and faculty rich and diverse learning and research opportunities while extending the academy's contributions to the communities it serves.

## enVISION SFU... Context

It is increasingly recognized at all levels of government and society that Canada must have a well-educated population to participate in ‘the knowledge society’ – to meet challenges to our social fabric and our environment. With rapid changes around the world and in every sector, we must respond with intelligence and agility. The economic and demographic landscape is changing. There are changes in expectations for teaching, research and learning – changes in student expectations; changes in the postsecondary world; changes in research funding structure.

77% of new jobs require some kind of postsecondary education, but only 66% of the current labour force have this level of education.

In BC, the population is stabilizing, but an expanded number of undergraduate universities now offer unprecedented choices for BC students. Accordingly, we can expect a reduced rate of growth in the 18- to 24-year-old sector – the traditional student population – and more interest in post-secondary education among mid-career students and new immigrants, who will have diverse educational goals. With 15 per cent international undergraduates, from 155 countries, SFU is a leader in providing a diverse and enriched environment for learning.

In British Columbia, new immigrants will be required to fill one-third of the 1.1 million job openings to 2019; yet BC’s share of immigration to Canada has decreased from 19% to 16% over the past decade. With international students who transition to immigrant status experiencing an 86% approval rating, the number of transitions doubling in the last five years, and Canadian work experience and education accounting for a \$10k wage difference, SFU is contributing in a demonstrable way to the reduction of the labor deficit.

Research and development in Canada are concentrated in the university sector and are largely government funded. In turn, universities play a central role in knowledge mobilization. SFU is committed to this transformative process through its fundamental research, the *Venture Connection* initiative, its high rate of technology transfer, and its community-focused research.

Confidence in the world economy has declined, as have returns on investment – compromising the ability of governments and donors to respond to demand. The downturn has also affected students’ ability to pay fees, which are a significant component of SFU’s operating budget. Nevertheless, opportunities for funding exist for innovative and compelling initiatives.

With its distinguished research, student-centred learning and commitment to community, SFU is particularly well positioned to respond to this challenge. To do so, we must provide experiential learning and other evolving pedagogies that enrich the student experience without lengthening completion times. SFU must achieve its objective of expanding the number of Aboriginal students. SFU’s strong international focus and its ties to diverse and multicultural communities will continue to provide opportunities.

# enVISION SFU ... who are we now?

SFU's **mission** is to advance knowledge through teaching, research, and engagement with the community.

## Values and Commitments

- We are an open, inclusive university whose foundation is intellectual and academic freedom.
- Our scholarship unites teaching and research: we celebrate discovery, diversity and dialogue.
- Our students and communities can expect teaching that is personal and learning opportunities that are lifelong.
- We champion the liberal arts and sciences and pioneering interdisciplinary and professional programs.
- We are a university where risks can be taken and bold initiatives embraced.

**Upon these foundations, we will engage all our communities in building a robust and ethical society.**

Throughout its 45-year history, SFU has thrived as a unique, vibrant institution. Committed to excellence in teaching, we have seen our students graduate and flourish as engaged and successful citizens. Our researchers are celebrated and rewarded. We value our increasing alumni group and the diverse communities with whom we interact.

We are a leading comprehensive university, combining the attributes of a research intensive university and a strong commitment to an outstanding undergraduate student experience. Building on traditional strengths in science, the social sciences, and humanities, SFU has continued to transform the breadth, size, and shape of its learning and research environment. Recent initiatives include: a renewed focus on improving the student experience; new faculties of Health, Environment, Communication, Arts and Technology; the Office for Aboriginal Peoples; the Surrey Campus; Vancouver's Segal Graduate School of Business and School for the Contemporary Arts.

We have strong international partnerships in research and student programming. We excel as well in cognate disciplines of deep concern to British Columbia and the world – health, business, technology, education, and the environment. We are a leader in technology transfer and have productive partnerships with the private sector.

### Over five years, SFU has seen growth of...

19% in undergraduate students  
22.6% in graduate students  
18.5% in academic employees  
7% in operating grant

SFU is nationally and internationally recognized for its student success, advanced research, employment relationships, and architecture – providing external measures of the quality of our education, scholarship, community engagement, and physical infrastructure. It is this level of quality and accomplishment that enables SFU to equip learners, researchers, and community partners both with insights into the important issues of our time and with the critical capacities and knowledge associated with a liberal education and an understanding of the scientific world.

### SFU has over...

100 undergraduate major and joint major programs  
45 graduate program offerings.  
100,000 graduates

## Research Matters

With its supportive research environment and a strategic research plan that encourages collaboration, SFU seeks to engage all of its communities in research. Investments in state-of-the-art infrastructure enable us to pace the world in research areas such as micro- and nanofabrication, drug research, infectious disease research, and population data analysis and modeling. Many of SFU's 68 Research Centres and Institutes work closely with communities to formulate relevant research questions and to provide them with practical solutions. SFU's expertise in knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer ensures that the public receives the maximum benefits from its research investments. Benefiting from the guidance of high-calibre research and entrepreneurship mentors and exposure to modern research and incubator facilities, SFU's students have unique opportunities to discover how *research matters* to their undergraduate experience.

### Over the last decade, SFU has:

Quadrupled its research income, to more than \$85 million  
 Secured \$500 million in capital funds for state-of-the-art research facilities to attract and retain the best students and faculty  
 Consistently exceeded national success rates for NSERC and SSHRC grant competitions  
 Established 50 new Research Chairs  
 Provided \$4.5M in seed funding to support interdisciplinary research teams in areas of strategic importance  
 Developed research partnerships with health authorities, school districts, rural and urban communities, business, and other community groups  
 Filed over 250 patent applications to protect SFU's intellectual property  
 Established 23 spinoff companies and received \$4.6M in royalty income

## An International Model of University-Community Engagement

Each of SFU's three campuses is a distinctive model for community engagement. The Burnaby Mountain campus now includes UniverCity, a visionary development that supports and enhances the university even as it demonstrates best practices in sustainability. In downtown Vancouver, SFU has become what the *Vancouver Sun* describes as the "intellectual heart" of the city. In addition to Harbour Centre, the Vancouver campus encompasses the Wosk Centre for Dialogue, the Segal Graduate School of Business, and the School for the Contemporary Arts in the reincarnated Woodward's complex. Across the Fraser River, SFU Surrey is, with the enthusiastic support of Surrey municipality, the nucleus of a vibrant new Surrey city centre.

Last year, the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) honoured SFU with a gold award for public sector leadership in education. IPAC noted that SFU had "turned around the fortunes of struggling communities and set the stage for new levels of university-stakeholder partnerships that enhance the region's ability to support growing knowledge-based economies with a highly trained workforce." The Institute went on to note that SFU has "built a template for institutionally-driven urban renewal that schools across the country are now studying."

SFU is partnering with Yennadon Public School in Maple Ridge to develop and evaluate a new curriculum that will take students out of the classroom and into the natural environment.

SFU's connection to community enables it to deliver different programs in different ways – and provides exciting learning and research opportunities. It also gives rise to important new challenges: in the South Fraser region, SFU is committed to addressing the post-secondary education needs of a diverse and rapidly growing

population; in Vancouver, the university is reaching out to residents of the Downtown Eastside through community programming associated with its new School for the Contemporary Arts.

More generally, the ethnic and cultural diversity of Lower Mainland represents a critical strength that can assist SFU to attract international students and to promote other forms of internationalization. Domestically, SFU must expand its work with K-12 and postsecondary institutions to ensure an integrated and successful progressive learning experience. Through its Aboriginal Strategic Plan, SFU is also working to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners and to forge closer links with Aboriginal communities.

SFU Business Learning Strategies Group is a partner in the Industry Council for Aboriginal Business Leadership Exchange

SFU's community commitment extends to wherever our students originate: the tri-cities, the north shore – to British Columbia and the whole world.

### **Bringing students, research and community together**

SFU engages communities in university research, in technology, industry, business, health, rural and urban settings, preschool-12 education, la francophonie, Aboriginal communities and in immigrant communities. Our track record in downtown Vancouver demonstrates SFU's capability to inspire bold urban renewal projects in Surrey and around the Great Northern Way campus. We have a unique opportunity for the School for the Contemporary Arts to engage the Vancouver community with its cultural infrastructure – to firmly ensconce SFU as the cultural, as well as the intellectual, heart of the community.

We must continue to avoid the artificial divide between research, teaching, and community without compromising the integrity of the core social sciences, humanities and scientific disciplines. We live in a pluralistic society, culturally, racially, and ethnically. SFU must provide leadership in educating students about human differences in a diversified world in order to help develop civil citizens and a civil society. Through our teaching and research, we must instil in our students appreciation of societal structures and social and scientific responsibility for a sustainable world.

# enVISION SFU

In envisioning our future, we seek to generate a broad vision and an associated set of goals that leverage our strengths and help to define and differentiate SFU as the best Canadian university of its kind. Through this process, we will foster a culture of collaboration and inclusion, aligning priorities, developing widely supported criteria for success, encouraging initiative and celebrating achievement.

**Recognition** All of us – students, researchers, alumni, and community members – will recognize our role within SFU’s strategic vision, just as we recognize the contributions of others to SFU’s and to our own success. Those less familiar with or new to SFU will come to understand the quality and importance of SFU’s contributions to higher education, as well as to local and international engagement. We will celebrate SFU’s history and build on its successes, taking account of our 'Values and Commitments', academic, research, and other institutional plans, and the aspirations of our Alumni and the communities we serve.

**Differentiation** We will know and celebrate what is special about SFU. From its inception, SFU has offered a distinctive learning and research environment, and has provided an educational experience that extends well beyond the classroom to engage students and faculty with external communities. We will articulate a vision that highlights and strengthens these distinctive features to define and position SFU as the best university of its kind.

**Direction** Our vision will lay out a path for the next five years, building from where we are today toward an exciting yet realistic future. This vision will help us to evaluate and seize opportunities that fit within our strategic framework while rejecting those that do not. It will help us to advocate for SFU’s priorities to our communities and to the world.

**Inspiration** Our contributions to society through research and learning are made better through being a part of the mutual adventure that is SFU. Our vision will demonstrate to the rest of the world SFU’s unique contributions to the development of knowledge and to the betterment of society. It will invite and inspire others to join us in achieving our goals.

## What next?

Discussion and engagement throughout the Spring of 2011 will provide invaluable input into a comprehensive white paper, which will be issued in June 2011 to stimulate further discussion and feedback. SFU’s strategic vision will be launched in Fall 2011.

But that is hardly the end. On the basis of the strategic vision, an action plan will be developed over Fall 2011. A key part of the vision and action plan will be to monitor our progress in achieving the vision and where we are deficient, work to improve.

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*What **other values** need to be reflected in SFU's strategic vision?*

*How can SFU ensure it has the **resources** to achieve our goals?*

- Sign up for the President's campus consultation (date, time, place, link)
- Participate in a Presidential 'café' (dates, times, locations, link)
- Participate in a focus group (dates, times, locations, link)
- Participate in the Alumni consultation (TBD)
- Contribute to the online discussion, follow the Blog (link)
- Fill in the comments form (print and mail it in or fill in online -- link)
- Email us (envision@sfu.ca)
- Organize your own event

A series of community consultations are being scheduled.

- Keep up to date by following the discussion at <http://envision.sfu.ca>