



8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC  
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.3925  
FAX: 778.782.5876

vpacad@sfu.ca  
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

**MEMORANDUM**

---

**ATTENTION** Senate **DATE** February 15, 2012  
**FROM** Bill Krane, Acting Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Acting Chair, SCUP **PAGES** 1/1  
**RE:** Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Change of First Nations Studies Program to Department (SCUP 11-55)

---

At its December 7, 2011 meeting SCUP reviewed and approved the proposal to change First Nations Studies from a Program to a Department within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Motion:

That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the proposal to change First Nations Studies from a Program to a Department within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Encl.

c: J. Craig  
E. Yellowhorn



Academic Quadrangle Room 6168  
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC  
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL 778.782.4415  
FAX 778.782.3033

fassdean@sfu.ca  
www.fass.sfu.ca

MEMORANDUM

---

ATTENTION	Jon Driver, VP, Academic	DATE	February 15, 2012
FROM	John Craig, Dean	PAGES	1/1
RE:	First Nations: creating a department		

---

With the transfer of the Department of Archaeology to the Faculty of Environment effective 1 April 2011, we have given close consideration to the future of the First Nations Studies program (formerly housed within Archaeology) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The attached document presents the case for creating a Department of First Nations Studies. I would be grateful if you might bring the proposal before SCUP and Senate for their consideration and approval.

I believe that this development is timely and needed. Several months ago, we held a referendum on whether the program in First Nations Studies should become a department and an overwhelming majority of faculty colleagues in Arts and Social Sciences voted in favour of such a change.

It is clear that the program in First Nations Studies has been growing steadily, both in teaching and research profile. The closure of the Kamloops campus has increased the administrative responsibilities of the program staff most notably with the courses offered in conjunction with various First Nations communities around the province.

SFU declared its commitment, in its university-wide strategic plan, to address the higher education needs and aspirations of aboriginal students. The vision was to remedy the deficiencies that created obstacles for their presence at SFU's lower mainland campuses. With the closing of the Kamloops campus, the creation of a Department of First Nations Studies is a vital affirmation of SFU's commitment to First Nations communities in the province and across Canada.

Sincerely,

John Craig,  
Dean

JC/jl

cc: Eldon Yellowhorn, Director, First Nations Studies  
William Lindsay, Director, Office for Aboriginal Peoples  
Paul Budra, Associate Dean, FASS

February 15, 2012

## **Rationale for a First Nations Department**

Initially the First Nations Studies program was designed for students attending SFU's Kamloops campus on the Kamloops Indian Reserve in the early 1990s. Designed for an undergraduate student population, the program began with five core courses augmented with special topics and directed readings courses. Its courses appeared on the Burnaby campus in the fall semester of 1998. One half-time faculty member serviced the core courses, offering one course each semester. Students could receive enough credits from the program for a minor. Through incremental steps, FNST is now a physical place on campus and is an academic unit offering a Bachelor of Arts degree. There are five faculty members who teach a diverse range of courses, and two adjunct professors.

In the First Nations university-wide strategic plan, SFU declared its commitment to addressing the higher education needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students. The vision was to remedy the deficiencies that created obstacles for their presence at SFU's lower mainland campuses. With the closing of the Kamloops campus in 2010, a Department of First Nations Studies initiative is vital to affirming the ongoing institutional commitment to higher education among First Nations communities. Moreover, the recent decision to move the Department of Archaeology from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) into the Faculty of Environment precipitated the current discussion. There was a strong desire for FNST to remain in FASS in order to maintain our academic autonomy and to sustain our links to those academic units, such as the departments of English and Anthropology, where our faculty have joint appointments. Although a Department of First Nations Studies would be small initially, it could contribute to the integrity of the FASS mission in the university. For example the Department of Archaeology is the current institutional host for the Bill Reid Centre for the Study of Northwest Coast Art, but its imminent move to the Faculty of Environment means a new arrangement within FASS will be necessary. Departmental status will inject clarity over such matters and also over the existing administrative procedures pertaining to tenure and promotion.

With the Department of Archaeology refocusing its institutional affiliation to the Faculty of Environment, the First Nations Studies program must evolve in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in order to be an anchor for facilitating FNST courses across the province and articulating with the First Nations Languages Centre, which has an active research mandate, and with the Indigenous Research Institute. As SFU embarks on the next stage of its First Nations Strategic Plan, there will be a demonstrable need for a strong academic unit to fulfill its objectives. Presently, the infrastructure is in place, including office resources and academic and support staff, to grow the program to departmental status.

### **A. The First Nations Studies Program**

The nature and objectives of the First Nations Studies program appear in the calendar as follows:

The objective of the program is to present and examine critically [traditional and contemporary] issues, taking into account the perspectives of aboriginal peoples. In addition, it exposes students to research methods pertinent to past, present, and future issues affecting aboriginal peoples. In this respect, it is especially relevant for First Nations students who wish to put knowledge of indigenous issues and research skills to practice in serving their communities and nations.

Such a focus on an interdisciplinary, holistic and rigorous process – the deliberate blending of historical, literary, scientific, and aesthetic perspectives in analyzing Aboriginal people in contemporary society – gives courses in First Nations Studies their unique and important role in the university's curriculum. While traditional knowledge is still the program's primary focus, additional courses offerings in art and environmental activism, autobiography and heritage stewardship enhance the potential for comparative and cross-cultural perspectives. First Nations Studies exists to observe and chronicle the experiences of Aboriginal people in contemporary society and strongly endorses the mandate to be inclusive in this objective. Faculty members work closely with other academic departments and cognate disciplines in terms of curriculum and whenever possible to participate in joint research ventures. Presently, the First Nations Studies Advisory Committee includes representation from six academic units within the university, each being chosen because they teach in cognate disciplines. This committee meets regularly to make recommendations for improving the program, to coordinate amongst faculty members and their respective departments, and to provide advice and input on program, policy and planning decisions.

Faculty in First Nations Studies strive to make positive contributions to the university by designing and implementing a specially created interdisciplinary curriculum, with the aim of ensuring the intellectual coherence and distinctiveness of the program's approach in the arts and social sciences and to complement other academic programs at the university. By utilizing a subject and problem approach to issues of critical thinking about ancient and modern manifestations of aboriginal culture, students of First Nations Studies and their counterparts in other disciplines will gain an interdisciplinary perspective on their chosen field of study.

## **B. Program Growth**

The First Nations Studies program performs many of the functions of a normal department and its director is a member of the Dean's Advisory Council. Five continuing faculty contribute to its success. The program currently recognizes two adjunct professors.

In academic year 2002/03, First Nations Studies offered seven courses at SFU Burnaby and counted 125 students in them. With each new faculty member added the number of courses on offer, as well as the student population, have grown steadily. By 2009/10 this had climbed to eighteen courses with a total enrollment of 470. Over the last two semesters of this academic year, there have been twenty-five courses taught, with 413 enrolled in 2010/10 and 543 enrolled in 2011/12 so far. (See Figure One)

Prior to the fall semester of 2010, students could earn a minor in FNST, a post-baccalaureate diploma, or a research certificate, or declare a joint major with Archaeology or Linguistics. Creating the major was in response to student interest and currently four undergraduates have declared First Nations Studies as their major, and twenty-five have opted for the minor program. In cooperation with the Office for Aboriginal Peoples, FNST has established links with the Fraser International College as a potential partner and revenue stream for courses delivered for its students. Courses are offered at Harbour Centre and Surrey campuses and through Online and Distance Education. Several courses are designated as fulfilling breadth requirements, and one is designated a writing intensive course, that can count toward programs students are completing in other departments, and this will continue to be an important role of a Department of First Nations Studies.

In response to the recommendations contained in a three-year plan written by the chair of archaeology in 2006, the First Nations Studies program expanded to four faculty members and can offer more variety in course selection. It occupies office space in Saywell Hall and has one seminar room dedicated to the program. In addition, two faculty members have lab space in archaeology.

### **C. Research Profile**

Faculty in the First Nation Studies Program are fully engaged in a range of research topics that are making significant contributions to the academic discipline and to Aboriginal communities through applied research methods. The research conducted by our faculty falls into the themes identified in the SFU strategic research plan as: 1) Culture, Society and Human Behaviour; and 2) Environment.

Under the rubric of examining the Native experience in the modern world, our faculty are involved in research projects that exercise their expertise in varied disciplines. Archaeology, contemporary arts, and English are some of the subjects that inform our research into the traditional knowledge of Aboriginal people. While some academic departments, such as Gerontology, French and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, have a smaller faculty contingent, they have established reputations for excellence in teaching, research and reaching out to an audience that extends beyond academe. Disseminating the results of research to the broader community establishes the university as a stakeholder in the daily life of the nation. Just as gerontologists from SFU contribute insights about Canada's rapidly changing demographic profile, research in FNST will generate new knowledge about a fast growing segment of the national population.

**Marianne Ignace** focuses her research on the Secwepemc (Shuswap) people of the Plateau. Her interests include aboriginal land use and occupancy, ethnobotany, traditional ecological knowledge, ethnohistory, and the linguistic and anthropological analysis of Aboriginal language discourse. In recent years, she has worked with First Nations communities and elders on various language revitalization projects, including Secwepemctsin, St'at'imcets, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Haida and Sm'algyax.

**Deanna Reder** considers Indigenous literature, specifically Canadian Indigenous autobiographies, not only from conventional literary perspectives but also through the use of tribal or nation-specific frameworks. Currently she is also examining the formation of the Indigenous literary canon and its integration into Canadian university curriculum over the past two decades.

**Rudy Reimer/Yumks** integrates Indigenous Knowledge within a scientific milieu to foster understanding of our environment through time. His interest focuses on the places that become imbued with meaning for Indigenous peoples in the past and how this reflected their cultural values.

**annie ross** brings her insights from the visual arts to investigate the impact of modern times on Indigenous people, their communities and their environment. Her field research ranges from oral history interviews to workshops and installation arts.

**Eldon Yellowhorn** brings an internalist perspective to archaeology in his study of the Piikani First Nation. His research triangulates data from oral history, archival and material culture sources to interpret the dynamics of the forces that sculpted the community culture and lived experience of individuals during the historic period.

#### **D. Community Outreach**

A major feature of First Nations Studies at Simon Fraser University is the blending of the academic program with the community oriented research strategies of the faculty. With grants from agencies such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, faculty members conduct research with host communities. Archaeology, fine arts, anthropology, literature and environmental studies are some of the topics that motivate collaborative research initiatives between our faculty and Native peoples in Canada and the United States. Inviting artists and scholars from first nations to participate in scholarly activities, facilitating the repatriation of human remains and cultural property and delivering academic courses to remote communities raises the profile of Simon Fraser University. For example, First Nations Studies hosted an extremely successful weaving conference that brought together traditional artisans from aboriginal communities in British Columbia and Washington who are revitalizing their customary arts. The Honourable Stephen Pointe, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, gave the opening address and welcomed the delegates to our campus.

#### **E. Academic and Administrative Resources**

Currently the First Nations Studies program is administered through the Office of the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences. The infrastructure is built and include office resources and academic and support staff (which consists of **Lorraine Yam, Manager, Academic and Administrative Services** and **Linda Abbinante, Undergraduate Assistant**) to grow the program to departmental status. No additional academic resources are required for the proposed Department of First Nations Studies to operate as a stand-alone entity.

**F. Conclusion**

First Nations Studies at Simon Fraser University is committed to building on a strong foundation of interdisciplinary teaching and research, community liaison and institutional innovation in making the transition from program to department. As a department, First Nations Studies will be better able to meet the undergraduate demand for multi-disciplinary courses and programs, will be a more effective voice for cross-disciplinary approaches within the faculty of arts and social sciences, will be better able to serve the academic and professional needs of its faculty members, and will be able to develop further the presence of first nations in the broader community.

Dr. Eldon Yellowhorn  
Director, FNST

## Appendix A

### **First Nations Studies**

Ethnic Studies emerged as a distinct discipline in 1969 at UC Berkeley, with Native American Studies being among the charter programs. That same year, Trent University began offering Native Studies courses that ultimately evolved into the first such department in Canada. Today, it is a thriving discipline that has expanded across North America, and beyond. Over one hundred universities and colleges in the United States and twenty-eight universities in Canada have programs or departments. In Europe, the University of Copenhagen offers undergraduate and master degrees in Eskimology and Arctic Studies. Leiden University in the Netherlands has a graduate program in Indian American Studies leading to a Master of Arts degree.

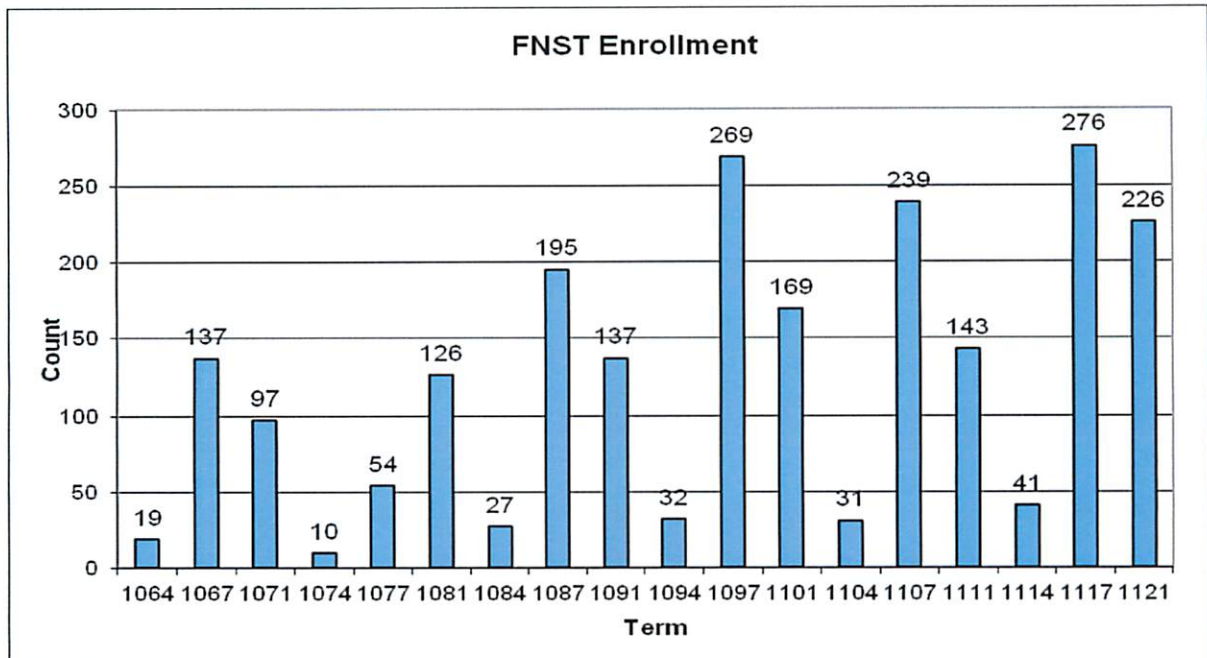
The American Indian Culture and Research Journal, which began publishing in 1971 at UC Los Angeles, is the premier journal in Native Studies. American Indian Quarterly and Wicazo Sa Review also express a mandate to examine aboriginal perspectives and issues in contemporary and historical contexts. In Canada, there are six journals that provide a forum to disseminate the results of scholarly research. The Canadian Journal of Native Studies and Native Studies Review are the most widely cited, while others emphasize specific topics such as law, education or social work.

Five major universities in British Columbia offer some combination of undergraduate and graduate programs in Native Studies and related fields. Many provincial colleges offer foundational courses in First Nations Studies that are transferable credit for university undergraduate programs. The Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University offers a professional development program with a first nations focus because it is a teachable subject in B.C. high schools. One Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Peoples of North America was awarded to the Department of History in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. One CRC (Tier II) held jointly by the faculties of Applied Sciences and Environment, examines First Nations Cultural and Environmental Resource Management.



Figure 1

## "FNST" Enrollment

(Per Term Count<sup>†</sup>)

<u>Term #</u>	<u>Enrollment*</u>
1064	19
1067	137
1071	97
1074	10 *
1077	54
1081	126
1084	27 *
1087	195
1091	137
1094	32 *
1097	269
1101	169
1104	31
1107	239
1111	143
1114	41
1117	276
1121	226 ◊

◊ Term count as of February 10, 2012.

\* Burnaby offers only one FNST course (FNST 201-3) during summer terms.

† Community Academic Outreach (FNEP)'s FNST course enrollment excluded.

## Appendix B

### **SFU Courses with First Nations Content**

The following pages list courses from across the university that contain significant content relating to Aboriginal people. Courses from other departments are sometimes forwarded to the FNST programme to be evaluated as potential substitutions for those listed in our major. Courses that transfer students bring to SFU from other institutions are evaluated by the FNST faculty to determine their equivalency, or to consider if unassigned credit is more appropriate.

Source: <http://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples/files/Aboriginal-Indigenous-Courses.pdf>



**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
OFFICE FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLES



AQ 3140-8888 University Drive TEL: 778.782.8924 wlindsay@sfu.ca  
Burnaby, BC Canada V5A 1S6 FAX: 778.782.8926 www.sfu.ca

Below are a list of undergraduate and graduate courses with significant or recognized Aboriginal/Indigenous content that are currently being offered at Simon Fraser University. These have been identified as such by the SFU Faculties themselves.

This is a preliminary list and will be amended as required or requested. As well, a yearly message will go out to Faculties to provide updated information.

For specific information concerning these courses please see the unit web links below, google the courses on SFU's main web page, or contact the Faculties themselves.

Please note that some of the courses listed below are cross-listed which means only one of the two courses may be counted for credit. Where possible, course credit and *Writing, Quantitative, and Breadth* (WQB) designations are also listed for the courses.

## Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

<http://www.fass.sfu.ca/>

### The School of Criminology

<http://www.sfu.ca/criminology/ugrad/courseinfo/index.html>

CRIM 311 Minorities and the Criminal Justice System – 3 credits

CRIM 315 Restorative Justice – 4 credits (Breadth-Social Sciences)

CRIM 419 Aboriginal/Indigenous Justice – 3 credits

CRIM 429 Indigenous Peoples and International Law – 3 credits

CRIM 442 Correctional Practice: Advanced Topics – Restorative Justice Models and Techniques – 3 credits

### Department of English

<http://www.english.sfu.ca/undergrad/courses/ugrad>

ENGL 360 Popular Writing by Indigenous Authors – 4 credits

ENGL 453W Aboriginal Literatures – 4 credits (Writing)

ENGL 840 Studies in American Literature – 4 credits

ENGL 841 Studies in Canadian Literature – 4 credits

ENGL 843 Studies in Colonial, National, and Diasporic Literatures – 4 credits

ENGL 844 Studies in Aboriginal Literatures – 4 credits

ENGL 853 Studies in Postcolonial Literature – 4 credits

### First Nations Studies Program

<http://www.sfu.ca/fns/courses/>

FNST 101 The Cultures, Languages, and Origins of Canada's First Peoples – 3 credits (Breadth-Humanities/Breadth-Social Sciences)

FNST 201 Canadian Aboriginal Peoples' Perspectives on History – 3 credits (Breadth-Social Sciences)

FNST 212 Indigenous Perceptions of Landscape – 3 credits

FNST 222 Selected Topics in First Nations Studies – 3 credits

FNST 301 Issues in Applied First Nations Studies Research – 3 credits

FNST 322 Special Topics in First Nations Studies – 3 credits

FNST 325 History of Aboriginal Peoples of North America – 4 credits

FNST 326 History of Aboriginal Peoples of North America – 4 credits

FNST 327 Aboriginal Women in Canada – 4 credits  
 FNST 329 Sexuality and Gender: Indigenous Perspectives – 3 credits  
 FNST 332 Ethnobotany of British Columbia First Nations – 3 credits  
 FNST 360 Popular Writing by Indigenous Authors – 4 credits  
 FNST 363 Indigenous Poetry, Poetics, Printmaking – 4 credits  
 FNST 376 Indigenous Weaving Technologies: Community of Beings – 4 credits  
 FNST 383 Indigenous Technology: Art and Sustainability – 4 credits  
 FNST 401 Aboriginal Rights and Government Relations – 3 credits  
 FNST 402 The Discourse of Native Peoples – 3 credits  
 FNST 403 Indigenous Knowledge in the Modern World – 3 credits  
 FNST 419 Aboriginal/Indigenous Justice – 3 credits  
 FNST 429 Indigenous Peoples and International Law – 3 credits  
 FNST 433 Indigenous Environmental Activism – 4 credits  
 FNST 442 Directed Readings in First Nations Studies – 3 credits  
 FNST 443 Aboriginal Peoples, History, and the Law – 4 credits  
 FNST 462 Indigenous Oral Testimony: Theory, Practice, Purpose, Community – 4 credits

#### **Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies**

[http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/course\\_offerings/index.html](http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/course_offerings/index.html)

GSWS 301 Special Topic: Topics in Contemporary First Nations Women's Art — 4 credits  
 GSWS 310 Who's Your Momma: Earth, Women, and Duty — 4 credits  
 GSWS 327 Aboriginal Women in Canada – 4 credits

#### **Department of History** [http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/history/HIST\\_courses.html](http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/history/HIST_courses.html)

HIST 323 The Canadian Prairies – 4 credits  
 HIST 325 History of Aboriginal Peoples of North America to 1850 – 4 credits  
 HIST 326 History of Aboriginal Peoples of North America Since 1850 – 4 credits  
 HIST 427 Problems in the History of Aboriginal Peoples – 4 credits  
 HIST 443 Aboriginal Peoples, History, and the Law – 4 credits

#### **Department of Linguistics**

[http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/linguistics/LING\\_courses.html](http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/linguistics/LING_courses.html)

FNLG 130 Practical Phonetics for First Nations Languages – 3 credits  
 FNLG 158 First Nations Language Immersion I – 3 credits  
 FNLG 231 Introduction to First Nations Language I – 3 credits  
 FNLG 232 Introduction to First Nations Language II – 3 credits  
 FNLG 258 First Nations Language Immersion II – 3 credits  
 FNLG 331 Description and Analysis of a First Nations Language I – 3 credits  
 FNLG 332 Description and Analysis of a First Nations Language II – 3 credits  
 FNLG 335 Topics in First Nations Language I – 3 credits  
 FNLG 433 First Nations Language Mentoring I – 3 credits  
 FNLG 434 First Nations Language Mentoring II – 3 credits  
 FNLG 435 Topics in First Nations Language II – 3 credits  
 LING 430 First Nations Languages – 3 credits

#### **Department of Political Science**

[http://www.sfu.ca/politics/undergrad/ug\\_courses.html](http://www.sfu.ca/politics/undergrad/ug_courses.html)

POL 324 The Canadian Constitution – 4 credits  
 POL 329 Canadian Government and Politics: Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives – 4 credits

#### **School of Public Policy**

<http://www.sfu.ca/mpp/student/courses/>

MPP 812 First Nations Policy – 5 credits

#### **Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

[http://www.socanth.sfu.ca/undergraduate/course\\_offerings](http://www.socanth.sfu.ca/undergraduate/course_offerings)

SA 100W Perspectives on Canadian Society – 4 credits (Writing/Breadth-Social Sciences)  
 SA 101 Introduction to Anthropology – 4 credits (Breadth-Social Sciences)  
 SA 141 Sociology and Anthropology Practicum I – 3 credits  
 SA 150 Introduction to Sociology – 4 credits (Breadth-Social Sciences)  
 SA 201W Anthropology and Contemporary Life – 4 credits (Writing)  
 SA 245 Cultures and Images – 4 credits  
 SA 286 Aboriginal Peoples and British Columbia: Introduction – 4 credits  
 SA 300 Canadian Social Structure – 4 credits  
 SA 301 Contemporary Ethnography – 4 credits  
 SA 302W Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism – 4 credits (Writing/Breadth-Social Sciences)  
 SA 326 Ecology and Social Thought – 4 credits  
 SA 364 Urban Communities and Cultures – 4 credits  
 SA 371 The Environment and Society – 4 credits  
 SA 386 The Ethnography of Politics – 4 credits  
 SA 388 Comparative Studies of Minority Indigenous Peoples – 4 credits  
 SA 402 The Practice of Anthropology – 4 credits  
 SA 421 Commodities and Substances: Bodies, Consumption, and Ingestion – 4 credits  
 SA 429 Sex, Work, and International Capital – 4 credits  
 SA 460 Special Topics in Sociology and Anthropology – 4 credits  
 SA 486 Aboriginal Peoples and British Columbia – Advanced Seminar – 4 credits

#### **World Literature**

<http://www.fass.surrey.sfu.ca/wl/courses>

WL 101W Writing about Literature – 3 credits (Writing/Breadth-Humanities)

#### **Faculty of Business**

<http://beedie.sfu.ca/courses/index.php?level>

BUS 493 Selected Topic: Corporate Aboriginal Relations - Social Responsibility and Sustainable Business Development – 3 credits

#### **Faculty of Education**

<http://www.educ.sfu.ca/undergrad/course-information.html>

EDUC 311 Foundations in Aboriginal Education, Language, and Culture – 3 credits (Breadth-Humanities)

#### **Faculty of Environment**

<http://www.fenv.sfu.ca/programs/course-outlines.html>

##### **Department of Archaeology**

<http://www.sfu.ca/archaeology/courses/index.html>

ARCH 273 Archaeology of the New World – 3 credits (Breadth-Social Sciences)

ARCH 301 Ancient Visual Art – 3 credits (Breadth-Humanities)

ARCH 386 Cultural Resource Management – 3 credits

##### **School of Resource and Environmental Management**

<http://www.rem.sfu.ca/programs/>

REM 601 The Social Science of Natural Resources Management – 5 credits

REM 661 Qualitative Methods in an Interdisciplinary Context – 5 credits

REM 662 Special Topic: First Nations and Co-Management – 5 credits

REM 670 Introduction to Forestry – 5 credits

#### **Faculty of Science**

<http://students.sfu.ca/programs/science.html>

##### **Department of Chemistry**

<http://www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/programs/aboriginal-pre-health-program/courses.html>

CHEM 109-4 Introduction to Chemistry for Health Careers- 4 credits



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLES



AQ 3140-8888 University Drive  
Burnaby, BC Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.8924  
FAX: 778.782.8926

[windsay@sfu.ca](mailto:windsay@sfu.ca)  
[www.sfu.ca](http://www.sfu.ca)

May 2, 2011

**Letter of Support Re: First Nations Studies Program Gaining Departmental Status**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very happy to provide a letter of support for the First Nations Studies Program at Simon Fraser University as it applies to gain departmental status. First Nations Studies is a subject area very dear to my heart. I believe the program can flourish, with departmental status being a key to this. I know the whole Aboriginal population at our university is very excited about this possibility.

As highlighted below, there are numerous excellent reasons for First Nations Studies attaining departmental status. This includes expansion of Aboriginal-oriented courses/programs and the expansion of Aboriginal research initiatives, both of which are mentioned in the university's First Nations University-Wide Strategic Plan.

Regarding such initiatives, the First Nations University-Wide Strategic Plan for SFU says the following on pages 20-21:

**1. Major Strategic Plan Initiative: Academic Program Development**

Major Strategic Plan Goal: Integrate innovative First Nations culturally relevant content into the curriculum and assist academic departments or units in the development of courses and programs that include a First Nations perspective.

Action Item: Identify academic units of strategic potential for developing new academic programming and seek to develop new programming in those areas.

Action Item: Increase visibility of Aboriginal peoples, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and Aboriginal community members and issues at the center of academia and in educational contexts.

Action Item: Identify needs of First Nations peoples and communities for *graduate programming (italics mine)* and seek initiatives to develop and support the development of these programs within academic units across the university.

Regarding these particular programming initiatives, Simon Fraser University could/would be leading the way in British Columbia in the field of Aboriginal Studies with such program expansion, going beyond what other institutions are currently and generally doing. For example, increased program offerings in Métis and Inuit studies and increased involvement by Aboriginal elders at SFU could/would set the future Department for First Nations Studies apart from similar programs around the province and make it attractive to potential applicants. Future Graduate Studies offerings in this field would set it further apart. Gaining departmental status is certainly a key development point for making such happen.

## 2. Major Strategic Plan Initiative: Research Development

Major Strategic Plan Goal: Establish a comprehensive framework for the promotion, encouragement, and support of First Nations research.

Action Item: Work with faculty across the university to develop research networks, centers, and *institutes* (italics mine) that will work to create new connections among students, researchers, and First Nations communities and advance innovation in First Nations research.

Action Item: Collaborate with First Nations peoples and communities to identify priority areas for research and establish research initiatives in these strategic areas.

Action Item: Create awareness and visibility for researchers in First Nations at Simon Fraser University through the development of a communications strategy, research infrastructure, and promotional materials.

Action Item: Develop partnerships with First Nations peoples and communities to inspire increased community-based research opportunities for faculty and students engaged in First Nations research.

Regarding these particular research initiatives, an existing ad hoc committee at Simon Fraser University is currently working on the creation of an *Indigenous Research Institute*. Such an institute, almost unique in the province, could/would work along closely with a Department for First Nations Studies to attain the above concomitant and important research goals.

I thus see great benefit to the creation of a Department for First Nations (or Aboriginal) Studies at Simon Fraser University. I know that our great university would most certainly become a provincial and national leader in this subject area with the creation of such. I thus pray you will give this initiative serious and positive consideration.

Sincerely,



William G. Lindsay  
Director, Office for Aboriginal Peoples  
Simon Fraser University