



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, October 6, 2014 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)

Open Session

Present: Andrew Petter, Chair

Abramson, Neil
Birmingham, Elina
Budra, Paul
Bueckert, Chardaye
Burley, David
Chapman, Brandon
Chapman, Glenn
Chong, Dion
Craig, John
Driver, Jon
Easton, Stephen
Elle, Elizabeth
Escarcha, Shirin
Gajdics, Sylvia
Gallilee, Patty (for G. Bird)
Glässer, Uwe (for N. Rajapakse)
Hedley, Nick
Johnson, Joy
Jozaghi, Ehsan
Kelm, Mary-Ellen (for W. Parkhouse)
Laitsch, Dan
Leacock, Tracey
Leznoff, Daniel
Liu, Ting (Emma)
McTavish, Rob
Myers, Gordon
Pappas, Panayiotis
Paterson, David
Percival, Colin
Percival, Paul
Quarmby, Lynne
Ruben, Peter
Schellenberg, Betty
Shapiro, Lisa
Simpkin, Madelaine
Spector, Stephen
Szymczyk, Barbara
Tingling, Peter
Underhill, Owen
Yoon, Paul
Wussow, Helen

Absent:

Antle, Alissa
Arzanpour, Siamak
Brennand, Tracy
Chapman, Nicholas
Chu, Colin
Cupples, Claire
Delgrande, Jim
Eikerling, Michael
Fatoba, Kayode
Flodr, Sarah-Sophia
Giardini, Anne
Guttman, Julian
Jermias, Johnny
Kessler, Anke
Magnusson, Kris
O'Neil, John
Ossinsky, Dimitri
Pilarinos, Athina
Reich, Blaize
Shaw, Chris
Somers, Julian
Stefanovic, Ingrid

In Attendance:

Hinchliffe, Jo

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session on September 8, 2014

The minutes of the open session on September 8, 2014 were approved as distributed.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

i) Academic Dates 2014-2017 (S.14-102a)

Moved by J. Driver; seconded D. Leznoff

“That Senate approve the revised Schedule of Academic Dates 2015-2017”

Jo Hinchliffe, Secretary to the Calendar Committee, was in attendance to respond to questions.

The Registrar’s office was thanked for responding to Senate’s request to review and revise the Spring 2017 exam schedule.

Question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) Re: S.14-77 and S.14-97

Senate had requested information about the prerequisite statement for MACM 203 and 204. The prerequisite “Students in excess of 75 units may not take....” was changed to “...in excess of 80 units....” Senate was informed that the Department of Mathematics wants students to take these courses early in their academic career while also accommodating students who transfer into Mathematics programs.

It was explained that students have the option of taking two fourth year mathematics courses instead of MACM 203 and 204. MACM 203 and 204 are not prerequisites for third year mathematics courses because those are open to non-mathematics students.

iii) Re: S.14-113

Senate was informed that the wording of the grading policy for FPA 827 has been revised to give the faculty member complete responsibility for grading the course, while the supervisor at the organizational level will simply be providing information.

4. Report of the Chair

On behalf of Senate, the Chair welcomed its new members: Dr. Mary-Ellen Kelm, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, who will be Acting Dean of Graduate Studies until January 2015; and Dr. Uwe Glässer, Associate Dean of Applied Sciences, who will be Acting Dean of Applied Sciences until February 2015.

The Chair reported on the recent call for proposals for the SFU Community Trust Endowment Fund (CTEF), which channels revenue from the UniverCity development to support the Strategic Research Plan. Funding decisions are expected in early 2015. Up to three projects may be awarded \$200,000-300,000 per year over five years.

The Chair reported on world rankings of universities. In the QS ranking of the world’s top universities, SFU leapt 22 places to 222nd in the world and 12th in Canada. SFU moved up one position in the Top 50 Under 50 ranking to 16th in the world, 3rd in North America, and 2nd in

Canada. In the Times Higher Education ranking, while other Canadian universities dropped, SFU held its place in the 226th–250th group. These rankings add to the compelling evidence that SFU, nearing its 50th anniversary, is increasingly recognized around the world for its research excellence and the educational quality of its programs.

The Chair reported that Senator Nick Hedley from Geography is the co-designer of the CLIVE 3D geovisualization program that won the People's Choice Award sponsored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

The Chair reminded Senate of convocation on October 9th and 10th. He noted that two outstanding individuals would receive honorary degrees at those ceremonies: Sir Mason Durie, an expert on Indigenous and Maori development and professor emeritus at Massey University in New Zealand; and Dr. Ahmed Zewail, the Linus Pauling Chair, professor of chemistry and physics at the California Institute of Technology, and recipient of many international awards for his contributions to science and public life, including the 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

The Chair reported that he, Vice-President, Research Joy Johnson, and others would be joining the BC premier's trade mission to India the week of October 13th. The mission is an opportunity to advance SFU's presence in India and to showcase SFU's emerging innovation initiatives and research relationships. SFU is expecting to sign an agreement, supported by the Indian government, to create a visitorship for Indian scholars to come to SFU.

The Chair reported that the SFU Public Square Community Summit 2014 will take place October 19th to 24th under the theme "Innovation: the Shock of the Possible". A number of events and dialogues are scheduled, including "Will Innovation Save Us?", a discussion with futurist Ray Kurzweil of Google and urban theorist Richard Florida and moderated by CBC's Amanda Lang. Senators are invited to attend the event at no charge.

5. Question Period

i) A question was submitted by Senator Quarmby asking if Senate would call upon the President or his designate to make a public statement on behalf of SFU acknowledging the scientific realities of climate change and the negative impacts of fossil fuel extraction and export. The Chair responded that this request is outside the jurisdiction of Senate, which is responsible for academic governance. Further, it would not be appropriate for the University to make a statement regarding public policy. Such a statement would have a chilling effect on academic freedom.

Senator Quarmby clarified that she was not asking for a public policy statement but rather a statement of factual reality on an issue that is "in no one's jurisdiction".

A comment was made that it is not the place of the President or Senate to make pronouncements on scientific issues or offer any other sort of intellectual opinion. Concern was raised for the precedent such a pronouncement would create.

A question was asked whether there was a way for SFU, as a site of scientific research, to assert the established fact of the Earth's changing climate. The Chair responded that faculty members, whose expertise is validated through the peer review process, are best equipped to communicate research findings and that these are often the subject of public discourse and debate. The Chair

noted that while he will speak personally about climate change, he would not do so on behalf of the University.

A suggestion was made that the University sponsor a public forum where these issues can be discussed. It was noted that the SFU supports public policy research through the Centre for Natural Hazards Research and as a partner of the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS).

The Chair noted that support for public events is available through the President's Dream Colloquium speaker series, the Vice-President, Academic conference fund and SFU Public Square.

ii) A question was submitted by Senator Jozaghi asking what steps are taken to ensure that the instructor/TA/student relationship and SFU's academic integrity are safeguarded against interference in relation to the academic standing of athletes. Senator Ruben, SFU's Faculty Academic Representative (FAR) to the NCAA, responded that every NCAA institution has an FAR that serves as a liaison between the academic and athletic branches of the University. SFU follows the NCAA Division II motto "Life in the Balance", which recognizes that most student athletes in Division II schools will graduate and pursue careers outside of athletics. He detailed the advising opportunities and scheduling accommodations for student athletes and concluded by stating that SFU Athletics, the President and he as the FAR make every effort to respect the integrity of the academic process and safeguard the Code of Conduct.

A comment was made that accommodations should also be considered for other reasons, for example medical concerns and for artists and musicians with exhibitions/performance schedules. A suggestion was made to make a general presentation to future TAs regarding issues for which it is reasonable to make accommodations, rather than having a presentation specific to students requesting particular accommodations.

Senator Jozaghi noted that a document entitled "Information for Professors and Teaching Assistants" asks for instructors and TAs to monitor student athlete performance and to notify the Athletics department of any problems or issues that arise regarding attendance or academic performance. Senator Jozaghi asked whether instructors or TAs were allowed to disclose a student's information without the student's permission. Senate was informed that student-athletes' marks are transmitted to the Department of Athletics because NCAA regulations stipulate that any student-athlete with a GPA lower than 2.0 is disqualified from competition.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

i) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Applied Sciences (S.14-118)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, added new courses and made revisions to existing courses in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering).

A question was asked why a new writing (W) course, MSE 405, was created instead of making MSE 400 a W course. Senate was informed that a response would be forthcoming at a future Senate meeting.

ii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (S.14-119)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to an existing program in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (Publishing Program).

iii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Health Sciences (S.14-120)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to an existing program in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

B) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Applied Sciences (S.14-121)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, added a new course in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering).

A question was asked why the textbook for MSE 884 was from 1997. Senate was informed that this course is in the established field of Advanced Dynamics and the textbook has been in use for some time.

ii) Curriculum Revisions – Beedie School of Business (S.14-122)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to an existing course in the Beedie School of Business.

iii) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Education (S.14-123)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing programs in the Faculty of Education.

iv) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Environment (S.14-124)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, added new courses in the Faculty of Environment (School of Resource and Environmental Management).

v) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Health Sciences (S.14-125)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, made revisions to existing courses and programs in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

vi) Curriculum Revisions – Faculty of Science (S.14-126)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, added a new course in the Faculty of Science (Physics).

C) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.14-127)**

Senate received a summary of the nominations, positions elected by acclamation, positions requiring an online vote, and outstanding vacancies for the Senate committees.

7. Other Business**i) NWCCU Accreditation – Mid-Cycle Self Evaluation Report (S.14-128)**

Senate received for information the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) Mid-Cycle Self Evaluation Report - September 2014.

A question was asked regarding the scope of the document given that governance is mentioned four times and the financial model is mentioned twice. Senate was informed that both the financial management and governance of the University are discussed in different documents. The Mid-Cycle document has very specific requirements that come from the accreditors. If the accreditation team required more information regarding governance and financial management, they would have access to the first report produced three years ago.

A comment was made that the change to the method of measuring IT Services' performance, how IT Services supports the University's priorities, was a welcome improvement.

A question was asked whether the metrics for IT Services are measuring if the right services are being provided to support the University's priorities. Senate was informed that in an academic environment, establishing a manageable set of indicators that can be replicated year after year is difficult. The University does review and refine the indicators over time. In order to do a full assessment of any administrative unit an external review process would be required.

A question was asked why the metric for measuring alumni engagement puts more value on alumni who make donations versus alumni who volunteer and participate in other ways. Senate was informed that the indicator is meant to be additive in that alumni who are involved are also informed and alumni who are invested are also involved and informed.

A question was asked regarding the assessment of educational goals, with the example of BUS 360W that was modified to change the method for assessing students' writing skills. Senate was informed that this example was used to show the process that SFU has developed to assess a course and make changes to improve student performance. The assessment metric in BUS 360W was changed from the first assignment to the second assignment with the goal of providing students with an opportunity to receive feedback, improve their skills and then demonstrate their learning.

8. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, November 3, 2014.

Open session adjourned at 6:33 pm and Senate moved into the closed session.

Mark Walker
Registrar and Executive Director, Student Enrolment