

To: Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

From: Brady Wallace, Student Senator, Faculty of Environment

Date: December 11, 2014

Re: Academic Amnesty Motion – January 21, 2015

In 2012, undergraduate students voted to support and fund the construction of a 65 million dollar Student Union Building and Stadium at SFU's Burnaby campus. The project is an initiative of the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) which represents and advocates for SFU's 30,000 undergraduate students.

On October 22nd, 2014, the SFSS held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) where undergraduate students were asked to vote on whether or not to approve a debenture (mortgage) for the project and to add a bylaw which would provide security to the lender that the loan would be repaid.

In order to add special additions to the agenda, SFSS General Meetings require a quorum of 250 students. In the past, it has been both difficult and rare to achieve quorum at these meetings. Thus, having recognized this as a challenge, the SFSS committed to a significant amount of outreach to encourage undergraduate students to attend.

This past meeting saw the highest student turnout in recent history. The SFSS Board of Directors was ecstatic to see so many undergraduate students interested in this year's event. However, this unprecedented turnout presented some difficulties to safely accommodating everyone in the meeting room; the AGM was hosted in one of SFU's largest indoor venues, the SFU Theatre, which has the capacity to hold 420 people. Due to the capacity of the Theatre being reached, some students who wished to participate in the meeting were unable to be present for certain business conducted at the AGM. This business included granting the SFSS the authority to enter into a debenture (mortgage) for the Build SFU project.

The SFSS is committed to ensuring that all members have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights to participate and vote in SFSS business and takes this matter very seriously. Therefore, the motions regarding the Build SFU project will be presented at the Special General Meeting (SGM) on January 21st for approval and affirmation.

The Build SFU project is a significant undertaking of the SFSS, to undergraduate students, and to the university as a whole. Therefore, I request that Senate consider providing academic amnesty to undergraduate students on the afternoon of Wednesday, January 21st, 2015, in order to allow all undergraduate students the opportunity to participate in this important vote, without fear of academic repercussions.

Motion:

*In recognition of the Simon Fraser Student Society's commitment to ensuring that all members of the Society are able to attend and participate fully in the upcoming Special General Meeting taking place on January 21st from 1:30-3:30, Senate encourages all instructors to accommodate, without academic penalty, any students who ~~wish to~~ **communicate in advance their intention to*** participate in the Special General Meeting.*

Sincerely,

Brady Wallace, Student Senator, Faculty of Environment

* amended and approved by Senate, January 5, 2015.