

To: Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)
From: Enoch Weng, Student Senator, Beedie School of Business
Date: August 26, 2015

Re: Academic Accommodation Motion – Tuesday, September 22, 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.

The 2014 AGM saw the highest student turnout in recent history. The SFSS Board of Directors was ecstatic to see so many undergraduate students interested in the 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. Of students who were able to vote, the debenture and bylaw motions both passed with strong majorities (93% and 97%, respectively).

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 were presented at a Special General Meeting (SGM) on January 21st for approval and affirmation. Unfortunately, the 75% threshold for approval of the special resolutions was not met at the SGM.

Since that time, the SFSS Board of Directors has made several important changes to the project such as allowing students to vote separately on the student union building and stadium debentures. The SFSS will be presenting three special resolutions regarding the Build SFU project at its upcoming AGM on September 22nd, 2015.

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 Tuesday, September 22nd, 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 Annual General Meeting taking place on September 22nd from 3:00pm - 5:00pm, Senate encourages all instructors to accommodate, without academic penalty, any students who communicate in advance their intention to participate in the Annual General Meeting.

Sincerely,

Enoch Weng, Student Senator, Beedie School of Business