



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, March 30, 2020 at 5:30 pm via Zoom Video Conferencing

Open Session

Present: Andrew Petter, Chair

Andreoiu, Corina
Bartram, Lyn
Bird, Gwen
Brennand, Tracy
Bubela, Tania
Burley, David
Chapman, Glenn
Chenier, Elise
Chou, Jennifer
Collard, Mark
Dastmalchian, Ali
Denholm, Julia
Derksen, Jeff
Driver, Jon
Dunsford, Russell
Elle, Elizabeth
Favere-Marchesi, Michael
Fiume, Eugene
Forde, Nancy
Fowler, Colin
Gajdics, Sylvia
Gray, Bonnie
Gunn, Alexandra
Hall, Peter
Hendrigan, Holly
Heng Hartse, Joel
Hillman, Sterling
Ho, Shuna
Hoffer, Andy
Hogg, Robert
HoSang, Giovanni
Johnson, Joy
Keliipio, Kau'i
Kench, Paul
Kim, Woo Soo
Krauth, Brian
Krogman, Naomi
Laitsch, Dan
Leacock, Tracey
Lord Ferguson, Sarah

Luelfesmann, Christoph
Luu, Susan
Mirhady, David
Myers, Gord
Nepomnaschy, Pablo
O'Neill, Susan
Parkhouse, Wade
Parmar, Abhishek
Percival, Colin
Plettner, Erika
Poitras, Geoffrey
Pulkingham, Jane
Raza, Samad
Shapiro, Lisa
Stockie, John
Somers, Julian
Tingling, Peter
Underhill, Owen
Weldon, Steve
Walsby, Charles
Zanette, Amanda

Absent:

Aistov, Nikita
Giardini, Anne
Kimathi, Natasha
Parent, Michael
Planchenault, Gaelle
Shaw, Chris
Tavakoli, Kimia
Taykandy, Mason

In Attendance:

Birnie, Steve
Khan Hermani, Rummana
Osborne, Judith

This is a special meeting of Senate focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on academic activities and students. However, the Chair will allow broader discussion of the impact of COVID-19 across the University.

1. **Report of the Chair**

The Chair reported that the COVID-19 crisis has challenged the University community and necessitated significant changes in a short period of time and acknowledged the collective efforts of faculty, students, staff and administration in meeting this challenge under difficult circumstances. Noting that some difficult decisions have been made and that a number of concerns and anxieties have resulted from these decisions, and given the implications on the academics of the University, the Senate Committee on Agenda on Rules felt that having a special meeting to allow the sharing of information and to provide a forum for questions and comments would be both timely and beneficial.

The Chair reported that in January, when concerns about the coronavirus first surfaced, SFU activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) process. John Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, was designated as the operational lead and that process comprises an operations group, a critical issues advisory group and, where necessary, a policy group, to approve decisions that affect University policy. In early March, when the issue became more pressing in terms of operations, Judith Osborne, former Vice-President, Legal Affairs, was brought in as a Special Advisor to the VP Academic to help oversee the operational management of the process. At the same time, the Policy Group was operationalized and activated to review and approve decisions with policy implications for the University. The Policy Group, it was noted, does not preclude the policy rule of Senate, which remains intact.

The primary mission throughout has been to protect the health and safety of the SFU community, while at the same time maintaining operational integrity. In terms of health and safety, SFU has been guided by the advice and direction of the Provincial Health Officer and by Provincial and Federal authorities. Close contact has also been kept with partner institutions and the *Research Universities Council of BC (RUCBC)* to ensure awareness of what other institutions are doing and to share each other's knowledge and expertise. Importantly, all public post-secondary institutions have been in regular contact with senior leadership in both the Provincial Ministry of Advanced Education and the Provincial Ministry of Health to discuss operations and receive guidance. Though the Province has stressed the importance of measures to guard against the spread of the virus and to preserve social distancing and other requirements issued by the Provincial Health Officer, it has also been very clear that it is their wish to see all post-secondary institutions in operation even while in-person teaching activities have been halted and lab research has been restricted. The Province's goal is to try to have some policy consistency across the sector, while leaving it to individual institutions to make choices about how and when to operationalize their responses based on the circumstances faced by each institution. It was noted that one area the University does not have authority over is with respect to the identification and communication of COVID-19 cases. It's been made very clear by the Province that Provincial Health Authorities have authority over the identification of COVID-19 cases, over the communication about those cases, and SFU is not permitted to undertake communications or to take actions without their specific authority.

The Chair reported that throughout this process SFU, through *Universities Canada*, has been in regular contact with Federal Government agencies. For example, *Universities Canada* has assisted in working with the Federal Government on issues such as immigration and student

visas, as well as in modifications to regulations concerning research grants. The University is hoping there will be more clarity in the coming days regarding research grants from the Tri-councils. With respect to both the Federal and the Provincial governments, SFU has been working with *RUCBC* and *Universities Canada* to communicate to both levels of government the financial pressures being faced by the University. It was added that the University community has been stepping up in efforts to combat COVID-19 through research activities relating to COVID-19, with inventories of potential equipment and supplies that can be helpful, by faculty members providing expert commentary through mainstream or social media, and through organizations like SFU Public Square and the Wosk Center for Dialogue developing community platforms for the sharing of information and helping reduce the stresses of isolation during social distancing.

2. Report on the University response to COVID-19 (Jon Driver, VP Academic and Provost pro tem)

Senate received a Report on the University response to COVID-19 for information.

Senate was informed that in dealing with this complex situation, four primary principles have been followed:

1. The health and safety of our students, faculty and staff are the top priority.
2. The core business of the University should continue in the short term and the long term and practices will be adapted to make this happen.
3. As far as possible, SFU will utilize existing management and government structures to make decisions and implement change.
4. SFU will communicate regularly to the University community and to our external partners and will conversely listen carefully to advice and feedback.

As stated by the Chair, SFU is talking guidance from the Federal and Provincial governments, as well as the Chief Medical Officer of BC. Collaboration is also occurring with other research universities in BC and more broadly with the post-secondary sector in Canada. Management and decision making structures have been established around COVID-19 issues, and as mentioned, Judith Osborne has moved to a dedicated position to coordinate activities and share some of the workload. Major decisions and communications are discussed and approved by a senior policy group chaired by the President, but also a number of working groups have been created to focus on particular issues such as remote studying, what to do about final exams, managing HR, and the implications of working from home. These working groups play a critical role because they are composed of experts in a wide variety of topics.

Due to the rapidly changing nature of this situation, it is impossible to provide a detailed account of everything done, but so far there have been two important areas of focus. Firstly, SFU has shut down international travel and assisted employees and students in returning to Canada if they wished to do so. Most notably, all international field schools for the Summer term have been cancelled. Secondly, SFU has heeded government instructions to decrease the rate of infection by dramatically reducing the number of activities where people are in close physical proximity to one another. Two obvious changes are teaching practices for the remainder of this term and the Summer term will no longer involve students and instructors being in close physical proximity and large numbers of employees have been authorized to work remotely. It's also recognized that employees and students are being affected by these sudden changes and that many people are experiencing uncertainty and worry about the future. A number of steps have been taken to

accommodate pressures placed on people by all these changes and try to reduce uncertainty. For example, some student deadlines have been extended and grading options around how grades will be recorded in light of the sudden change in teaching practices will be provided. Also, student services are still in operation and housing is still being provided, with help being offered for students who wish to leave residence early. For faculty members, deadlines have been extended for major career steps such as applying for tenure and there will hopefully be an announcement on plans for individuals who wish to defer study leaves. Deans were instructed that all planned employment for limited term faculty members, sessional instructors and teaching assistants for the Summer term should proceed, except in cases where courses have to be cancelled because it can only be offered via face to face instruction.

Now that the first phase of the activity, which is largely concerned with reducing risk to people, slowing the spread of infection and getting through the end of the Spring term, is nearing an end, attention will next be turned to continuity of University activities and planning for the future. Because it's impossible to predict how the epidemic will progress locally, nationally or globally, it's difficult to provide specifics on where priorities will lie over the next few months. Some general points, however, can be made. The first is about continuity of operations. This situation is frightening for many people and help and stability can be provided by showing that SFU is committed to delivering education, conducting research and engaging with external communities and partners. Continuity is also important for the financial health of the institution and its many employees and that continuity will also contribute to rebuilding Canada economically over the next few years. The second is about communication. It's very challenging to effectively communicate enough information so people can get on with their activities without overwhelming them with details. It's a continuous learning process to effectively communicate during times of rapid change, especially when misinformation can be spread so easily via social media. Recognition should be offered to the work of the University Communications team, lead by Kristen Linklater, in establishing and updating the website and for working tirelessly to help craft announcements to the University community. The third is about the considerable amount of work that lies ahead to keep the university running. Acknowledgement should be given to how the University community has worked together to manage this unprecedented situation by displaying remarkable positivity, resilience and creativity. This response can only serve to move SFU forward and emerge as a stronger community and a better university.

3. Report on actions taken at SCUS and related matters (Wade Parkhouse, Vice-Provost and Associate VP Academic)

Senate received the Report on actions taken at SCUS and related matters for information.

Senate was informed that in addition to dealing with SCUS' standard business in terms of new programs and course changes, efforts are being made to address time sensitive issues falling under its purview between Senate meetings. Some of the pressure coming from students was to address withdrawals in a timely fashion, with students wanting a better understanding of available grading options, noting that students are aware of what other institutions were doing in terms of grading policies. The document presented to Senate contains the motions prepared for SCUS, but it should be noted that considerable discussion took place amongst members prior to drafting. Feedback was shared with all committee members, with ample opportunity to respond to concerns that were raised or to suggestions from community members. There was no concern with changing the withdrawal deadline or the pass/fail option, although there were some comments as to whether or not the option should be provided before or after final grades have been determined. There were discussions around P grades and how they would be used for pre-

requisites, and also whether individual faculties or departments could have different rules for use of the P grade to meet the prerequisite. Students were passionate in their comments about wanting to have a grading system that would be fair given the challenging circumstances in which they find themselves. At the next meeting of SCUS, discussions will be held on end grades, Summer term deadlines, the F grade system for this semester and the repeat policy. SCUS will continue to work on grading policy and other matters that affect both students and faculty, and it will continue to address issues as they arise.

4. Report on the transition to remote teaching (Elizabeth Elle, Associate VP, Learning and Teaching)

Senate received the Report on the transition to remote teaching for information.

Senate was informed that faculty have been doing an amazing job adapting, with many sharing best practices with their colleagues and with the Center for Educational Excellence. As part of SFU's overall response, an Academic Continuity Working Group has been formed to support the needs of instructors. The group already made recommendations for interpretation of policy, some of which have been sent to committees like SCUS for their consideration or to the Registrar. The essential philosophy of the group is to keep things as simple as possible while at the time thinking as broadly as possible as to how best to support students in this difficult time. It is also important to consider accessibility both in terms of the hardware and software that students will have access to. Faculty have been encouraged to not go synchronous for large classes because of accessibility issues and to recognize that no alternative will offer perfect solutions. The Center for Educational Excellence, having just recently come through a reorganization, was able to quickly pivot to provide dozens of website resources featuring options for effective remote teaching, running exams online, and how to enhance academic integrity. They have run 26 workshops in the last three weeks and their ticketing system has been very popular with more than 170 requests over the past three weeks. Looking ahead to the Summer term, they will be creating new workshops to run during the break between Spring and Summer terms. They are also working on best practices for remote instruction and will be adding a TA/TM day to support teaching assistants in how to teach remotely. Finally, they will be developing bespoke workshops, designed to address specific needs as directed by departments or faculties.

5. Report on Student Services and other matters relating to student well-being (Rummana Khan Hemani, Associate VP, Students and International pro tem)

Senate received the Report on Student Services and other matters relating to student well-being for information.

Senate was informed that the vast majority of student services continue to be delivered remotely to students, with the exception of the Health Clinic and Residence and Housing, which are still operating in person at the Burnaby and Vancouver campuses. The only area that had to shut down completely were the recreation and athletics facilities. Consultation is ongoing with both the SFSS and GSS to ensure that the most important needs of students are being addressed. Close attention is being paid to the impact of online teaching on students, especially with respect to students with disabilities. As of this meeting, there are still approximately 700 students in Residence, with those able to do so encouraged to go home. International learning opportunities have also been impacted with outbound, inbound, and co-op opportunities abroad being cancelled. Work is being done with ISS to connect with students in places where they have either chosen to stay because it's a good option for them or try to help those that wish to return home.

In terms of Financial Aid, students are coming forward with a number of additional needs, some of which is related to technology, so an emergency fund has been created for students and assistance can be offered both with their technology needs and needs for housing or travel costs.

Discussions are being held to prepare for the Summer term, but much will depend upon how things look closer to that time, especially in terms of things relating to fees, deadlines and Upass. For Recruitment and Admissions, activities have moved online, particularly those targeting high school students. Athletics and Recreation will continue to be monitored, especially for varsity programs and SFU Summer Camps. Health and Counseling services are still available on campus in Burnaby but they are offering many of their services remotely, notably counseling and mental health support.

6. Report on SGSC and related matters (Jeff Derksen, Dean and Associate Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)

Senate received the Report on SGSC and related matters for information.

Senate was informed that on top of the regular work of approving new programs and course changes, SGSC has been working to accommodate graduate students in the shift to remote instruction and have had to deal with other disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, SGSC passed three motions that bring the graduate withdrawal deadline and the extended grading option into harmony with undergraduate changes for the Spring 2020 term. The first motion is to extend the course withdrawal deadline to the last day of classes for the Spring 2020 term. The second is the grading option, which is different than the undergraduate Pass/Fail grades, and instead has Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades. After final grades are submitted students will be allowed to either accept their final course grade or request an S/U designation from the course instructor. This will be done after consultation with their supervisor or graduate program chair. The third motion allows students easier access the existing option of an AE grade. An AE grade is aegrotat grade which allows, under exceptional circumstances, a student to get an AE grade in recognition that they were unable to complete the course for medical or compassionate grounds. Both the S/U and AE grades are listed outside the calculation of cumulative grade point average. Additionally, the deferred grade deadline has been extended to graduate courses taken in the Spring term until the final day of the Summer term. So if graduate students find themselves in a situation where a final project for a course required specific type of research that they haven't been able to do, they will have the length of the Summer to complete that and receive a final grade in consultation with the faculty member teaching it. This will allow graduate students to move forward with their degrees without further financial burdens

In addition to the motions, other steps taken to alleviate stress for graduate students include establishing an FAQ page on the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website, moving thesis defenses online, and extending deadlines for thesis submissions to the library. In consultation with SPCSAB, new emergency funding has been established for graduate students, with information available through the Graduate Studies website and Financial Aid websites. Also, compassionate leave has been extended and made easier to claim for the Summer term and the date for tuition payment for the Summer semester has been extended. Work is being done with the GSS to hear the concerns of graduate students and with the VPR Office to ensure that research and graduate students get paid for their work over the Summer. Finally, discussions on how to handle Fall admissions are commencing with graduate program chairs and graduate program assistants.

7. Question Period

a) Response to written questions submitted as of Friday, March 27th (Jon Driver, VP Academic and Provost pro tem)

1. Senator Stockie submitted the following questions:

- i) *Many faculty members (myself included) were told by students about the change in grading policy to allow a pass/fail grade. Some of us contradicted students when they wrote to us about this. Others of us suggested that perhaps students were paying too much attention to social media and should wait for an official university announcement. Others were just confused. Regardless, this makes the faculty seem ill-informed and inept. Why were students notified of this change AND NOT the faculty? It's great that my Dean's office is still on the ball to warn us the day after, but I would like to know why we had to find out about this major decision indirectly through our Dean.*

Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that this occurrence was the result of poor a communication decision and illustrates some of the difficulties the University faces in terms of communication. Upon the motions being passed at SCUS, the intention was to send out information to students, instructors and academic administrators the following day, but unfortunately, social media got ahead of the official communication and students were already informed by other students of the results of the SCUS meeting. As news spread and students began asking question, it was decided it was important to get the correct information out to students as soon as possible so a message was sent in the evening. At the same time, a message was sent to Deans for distribution to instructors in their faculties but the message to students got out much more quickly than the message to the instructors.

- ii) *As of 3PM on Wed Mar 25, I am aware of no official justification having been provided for the university's decision to implement this P/F option. My department was strongly opposed to this change for clear pedagogical reasons, and this opinion was shared by other Science departments. I understand that students had petitioned for this P/F option, but can you please explain the complete reasoning behind this change so that I can communicate this to my colleagues.*

Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that the answer to this question was already addressed in the SCUS Report to Senate.

2. The following represents a summary of questions from students submitted by Senator Chou and answered by Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic:

- *Can SFU offer late withdrawals after students have seen their final grades? This was not approved by SCUS.*

- *Given that the job market is so difficult right now, what are SFU's plans to support its students?* The biggest assist SFU can provide is to keep post-secondary education operational. In addition, all financial assistance programs will continue at the provincial and federal levels, and SFU will work with other universities and colleges to promote better financial aid to students as part of any future economic stimulus packages and will keep the financial concerns of students front and center when making decisions about continuity of operations.
- *Will consideration be given to mandating optional finals for everyone to ensure equity for people with disabilities or difficult life circumstances?* Optional finals will not be mandated and such a decision will be up to individual instructors and individual cases. Students who are registered with the Center for Accessible Learning will continue to receive support from the Centre and SFU will continue to accommodate students who need accommodation in order to complete their final assignments. Students can contact instructors or the Center for Accessible Learning for more information.
- *Can instructors stop marking on a bell curve and what is the impact of moving to pass/fail systems or optional pass/fail systems?* Grading falls under the discretion of individual instructors. Also, department chairs and the directors of schools are empowered to ensure fairness in grading practices in their programs.
- *What is the status of Residence and Housing?* Residence will remain open in the Summer and there is no plan to close residences unless instructed to do so by the Health Authority or if conditions in residence became unsafe.
- *What is the situation for international students who can't leave Canada and maybe getting to the end of their term and looking for housing?* Students who want to extend their student contracts into the Summer term can contact the Residence Office to set this up. Assistance will be provided to students who cannot find accommodation.
- *Is it healthy/safe to live in Residence?* Physical distancing measures are in place, food availability is take out only, deep cleaning is being undertaken in high usage areas, wellness programs and educational programs are being operated through remote means and a process is in place for students who are required to self-isolate while living in residence. At this time rent rebates will not be provided, but SFU will be asking the Province to provide rental assistance to students who pay rent in residence as is being proposed for others in rental situations. However, students in residence can ask for residence fees to be deferred or to set up a payment plan and students should talk to Financial Aid and Awards to deal with these kinds of issues. Also, there will be employment opportunities in the Summer term for students who wish to work in the residence.
- *What is the impact of P/F grades on scholarships?* Spring term scholarships have already been dispersed and there is no plan to modify those scholarships based upon student's decisions to either do a late withdrawal from courses or take the P option. All courses, with the exception of co-op, completed with a P grade in the Spring will count towards credits completed and will count towards the minimum credit required when determining eligibility for scholarships for future terms. As is always the case, courses for which students get an F or WD are not counted towards courses completed.
- *What is the status of Summer courses?* Courses in the Summer term will be taught remotely for the entire term. There will be no in-person activities even if

restrictions are lifted, given that international and non-local students who participate in classes remotely may not have time to get back to the lower mainland to resume studies. Classes that effectively require in-person participation, such as field schools and some labs, may have to be cancelled. On the other hand, it's possible that more space in fully online classes may be opened up. These decisions will primarily be made by academic units. As noted, the decision to cancel international field schools and international co-ops for the Summer has already been made.

- *What is the situation with textbooks?* 60% of the textbooks planned for Summer use are available in digital format and work is being done to ensure that all students will be able to access digital resources for required readings. SCUS will be considering a motion to extend the deadline for dropping courses in the Summer term in order to provide more time for students to evaluate the impact of remote learning on their performance.
- *What is the status of UPass fees and other non-tuition for the Summer term?* The decision about Upass payments and whether the Upass program will be suspended for the Summer will be made across the entire post-secondary system in conjunction with TransLink. SFU will be waiving athletics and recreational fees this Summer due to the lack of access to those services. .
- *What is the status of co-op and will SFU allow students who are nearing degree completion to end their studies on a coop work term, which is currently not allowed?* Various options are being considered for students and programs that have mandatory co-op, and final decisions have not yet been made. Co-op is continuing for the Summer and SFU is working with employers to find remote work for students. It is likely that the number of co-op placements will go down in the Summer, however, students should not assume there will be no co-op. The Co-op Office remains open via remote means and we will continue to provide services to students.
- *What are the implications for students who have a P grade on their transcript if they are transferring to other programs within SFU or if they are going to grad school?* Individual programs will consider how this is managed but will be encouraged to make some exceptions from the normal rules for guiding students or transferring from one program to another. Consideration is also being given for some flexibility around P grades used in pre-requisite courses. For graduate school, particularly graduate schools outside of SFU, P grades do not impact an individual's grade point average. It's also worth remembering that these issues are not unique to SFU and universities across the country will be making accommodations in their admissions to graduate school.
- *How does the P or F grade affect someone on academic probation?* P grades will not be counted to the GPA so that will be not counted in the GPA calculation for academic standing.
- *If students choose a fail option, does this count as one of the five allowed retake?* This will be determined in the next meeting of SCUS but it's likely that this will not be counted.
- *What is the status of convocation?* Students will receive the credentials they have earned at the end of the Spring term, however, decisions are still being made on how convocation will be managed.

- *How do students deal with professors who don't respond to their emails?* The standard protocol for students having difficulty in communicating with their professors or do not like the decision the professor has made about how the course is being handled as we move towards the end of the term is to contact the department chair, who can manage these issues as they normally would.

b) Questions from the floor

A question was asked about implementing an optional grade freeze in which students would have the option of taking a grade based on the work done up to a particular point in the semester when the class moved from in person to remote teaching. Senate was informed that a grade freeze was seen as an inadequate assessment for student learning given the amount of time remaining in the semester. In many courses students have received very little feedback, making it unfeasible to assign grades.

A question was asked to provide an update on Senior Administrator vacancies and pending vacancies, some of which have already had search committees formed, and if there has been any consideration given to postponing them until this crisis has passed. Senate was informed that the Vice-President, Advancement Alumni Engagement, recently announced he will be vacating his position, but will stay on until the end of August as a special advisor on Principle Gifts to maintain continuity. Joanne Curry, Vice- President, External Relations, will step in during this time, and a search committee will likely be formed in the next month, with the actual search process not commencing until the Fall. With respect to the Vice President, Research position, Dugan O'Neil, currently Associate Vice-President, Research, has been appointed on a pro tem basis for one year, and a search will be undertaken prior to the end of that one year term. For the Vice-President, Academic and Provost, position, the search committee has already been formed and has already had its first meeting. Applicants are currently being considered and the committee is monitoring the current situation to see how it can move forward with the committee process. Finally, in the search for a new Chancellor, the committee has already met, there was a call for nominations, and the committee will be meeting this week to review submitted nominations. It's hoped that the announcement of a new Chancellor can be made before the current Chancellor's term expires in mid-June.

A question was asked to clarify if P/F grades will be used in GPA calculation. Senate was informed that a decision was made have all courses entered as pass/fail when a student fails a course, thereby saving students the administrative burden of needing to submit to the Registrar's Office that they wanted to change to a different type of F and potentially jeopardize their ability to progress, earn scholarships or student loan funding. If a student decides they do need to have an F count towards their GPA, a solution would have to be sought in such cases.

A question was asked about FAN and FAL courses and if a P grade would allow students to complete requirements with a potentially lower grade lower than the normally required C. Senate was informed that this issue has not yet been considered by SCUS and will be taken up at the next meeting.

Noting that the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) is not accepting new registrants until May, a question was asked about students requiring accommodation before May registration. Senate was informed that at this point in the term students already registered with CAL are the ones receiving support. However, given that remote learning can create challenges for students with

disabilities, it was added that there is always room for students needing accommodation that didn't ask for accommodation earlier in the term.

A concern was raised about students living in other countries facing significant time differences and how they would be affected by the teaching of live classes in the Summer term. Senate was informed that instructors are being encouraged to use asynchronous teaching and not to expect people to be present at specific times. It was noted, however, that there are some situations where building a community of students and having the opportunity for face time and interaction is essential. So while instructors are discouraged from using too much synchronous learning, there will be some and it's up to individual instructors to decide how best to proceed with their courses.

A question was asked about term limits for graduate completion, notably Master's program term limits, and if recommendations have been sent out on relaxing term limits for graduate students who are having difficulties completing their degrees for a variety reasons. Senate was informed that this issue will be taken up by SGSC. Given that the number of terms can act as a performance metric and also affect funding levels, it was noted that such considerations would be taken into account.

A question was asked about the Summer term and if standard grading practices will be in effect. Senate was informed that at this point, grading practices have not been changed for the Summer term. It is believed that instructors have plenty of time to design their courses and assessment methods in such a manner that will allow students to receive grades for the work they do in the Summer.

A question was asked about the implications the shutdown is having on research and notably graduate thesis work. Senate was informed that at the end of last week a communication was sent out encouraging people to move their research online if possible and that special permission would be required to keep labs open. A process is in place where people are completing the requisite forms to seek permission to keep their labs open and work is being done with department heads and deans around this request. Some labs will remain open, particularly those involved in studying COVID-19, because adequate safety measures have been put in place. Given the unprecedented nature of this situation, considerations are being given to how graduate students can remain engaged in their lab work. It was added that if graduate students are not able to complete their research, Graduate Studies has instituted greater flexibility around companionate leave.

A question was asked if there will be any adjustments made to student and course fees for the Summer term given that all courses will be online and distance education courses typically cost \$40 more per course. Senate was informed that tuition fees for the Summer term will be managed in the same way as for regular terms. Courses identified as online courses will continue to charge the standard fees for online courses. Many courses being taught in the Summer will be offered through a variety of remote teaching methods, so the tuition fees for a course normally taken in a classroom will still be the same.

A question was asked about the status of contract staff, such as cleaning and security, and if they are receiving their full pay. Senate was informed that there's a distinction between contract people, people who are on contract with the University, and people who are employed by companies who are in contract with the University. Given that cleaning and security personnel

are not contract staff of the University, but are rather employees of contracting companies with the University, SFU has no say in their arrangements.

A concern was raised about the ease of navigating the COVID-19 FAQ webpages to find information, especially on undergraduate and graduate specific topics like grading. Senate was informed that work is ongoing on the FAQ webpages and that this feedback is appreciated.

A question was asked about international students potentially facing visa issues and thereby incurring higher tuition if they have to leave the country. Senate was informed that only those students who are citizens or have obtained PR status are assigned domestic tuition fees. Attention is being given to a number of issues for students on study permits, including eligibility for a study permit or a post-graduate work permit when studying via remote means.

Open session adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Kris Nordgren
Senate Secretary pro tem