SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, February 7, 2022 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

Open Session

Present: Joy Johnson, Chair
Bains, Serena
Bhalloo, Shafik
Bird, Gwen
Brennand, Tracy
Bubela, Tania
Chapman, Glenn
Chessel, Patrick
Chowdury, Saima
Coleman, Gordon
Collard, Mark
Daniel, Bryan
Dauvergne, Catherine
Derksen, Jeff
Elle, Elizabeth
Everton, Mike
Fiume, Eugene
Gardinetti, R. Georges
Gray, Bonnie
Hall, Peter
Hendrigan, Holly
Hoffer, Andy
Kandikova, Alisa
Kayande, Ujwal
Krauth, Brian
Krogman, Naomi
Kumpulainen, Kristiina
Laitsch, Dan
Leznoff, Daniel
Liosis, Gabe
Lu, Joseph
Liu, Connie
Lord Ferguson, Sarah
Malott, Brianna
Martell, Matt
Masri, Kamal
McTavish, Rob
Mirhady, David
Murphy, David

Myers, Gord
Nagy, Judit
Nepomnaschy, Pablo
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Neil, Dugan
O'Neill, Susan
Pahou, Helen
Parkhouse, Wade
Parmar, Abhishek
Percival, Colin
Phangura, Almas
Silverman, Michael
Smith, Judy (for Julia Denholm)
Spector, Stephen
Stockie, John

Absent:

Andreoiu, Corina
Chenier, Ele
Denholm, Julia
Dhesa, Priyanka
Hogg, Robert
Pantophlet, Ralph
Parent, Michael
Schiphorst, Thecla
Shapiro, Lisa
Shinkar, Igor
Vrooman, Tamara
Walsby, Charles

In Attendance:

Broshko, Li-Jeen
Davis, Trevor
Glasser, Uwe
Mahdavi-Amiri, Ali
Wang, Jiannan

Tom Nault, Senate Secretary
Steven Noel, Recording Secretary

1.   **Approval of the Agenda**
        The agenda was approved as distributed.

2.   **Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of December 6, 2021**
        The minutes of the open session on December 6, 2021 were approved as distributed.

3.   **Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of January 10, 2022**
        The minutes of the open session on January 10, 2022 were approved as distributed.

4.   **Business Arising from the Minutes**
        There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.   **Report of the Chair**
        The Chair, on behalf of Senate, welcomed Ujwal Kayande, who began his term as the new Dean of the Beedie School of Business on January 17th. Dr. Kayande was previously an associate dean and professor of marketing at the Melbourne Business School in Australia and was the founding director of the school's Centre for Business Analytics.

        The Chair reported that on January 27th the Burnaby City Council voted to approve the Burnaby Mountain Gondola project Route 1 option, which creates a straight-line route from Production Way-University Station to SFU's Burnaby campus. The gondola proposal will now be considered for inclusion in the Mayors' Council next 10-year vision. This project marks an important infrastructure project for SFU, and thanks was offered to all those who advocated for the gondola.

        The Chair reported that it is Multilingual Week at SFU and Senators are encouraged to check out the Center for Educational Excellence for seminars being hosted related to multilingualism.

        The Chair reported that SFU's January return to in-person leaning has gone smoothly, however some concerns have been raised by the University community. The return of campus activities has caused stress and anxiety and though some generalizations have been made about students not wanting to be on campus, it is believed that while these generalizations do represent individual opinions, they do not reflect the sentiment of the campus community as a whole. Some concern was expressed that the SFU community was not sufficiently consulted, and while not every issue can be addressed, assurance was given that the University administration has spent considerable time over the past few months meeting with different stakeholder groups. Thanks was given to public health officials, and while some data driven decisions are made at the population level that may not seem to be applicable at an individual level, data from health experts provides confidence as to the safety of the return to in-person learning. It was added that the University has heard from students about crowding in study spaces and that the SFSS is in discussions about the Student Union Building. Also, SFU will soon have access to rapid tests, and as per public health guidance and due to their limited supply, such tests should only be used with symptomatic individuals. Based on the guidance from the BC Center for Disease Control, the first shipment of rapid tests will be allocated to priority groups.

6.   Question Period

i)   Senator Liosis submitted the following question:

UBC Vancouver's Senate recently approved a motion extending its course drop deadline to February 6 to "extend [a] compassionate and flexible approach" to students during the unusual start to the Spring semester. My understanding of SFU's approach to course and tuition deadlines is that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS) discussed potentially implementing a similar measure, but at the end of the day, decided against such a measure.

i. Can the Senate be provided with a thorough overview of SCUS's discussion on implementing such measures (what the arguments for and against the measures were), and why SCUS decided against recommending such a measure.

ii. How is SFU going to show compassion to the students this semester who weren't able to make a though-out and informed decision on withdrawing from classes based on the unusual start to this semester?

Elizabeth Elle, Vice-Chair of SCUS, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that course expectations, assessment mode, course content and information about the instructor would have been clear during those first two weeks of the term. The student members of SCUS helped the committee understand that a major concern of students was the uncertainty regarding how the term would unfold, the feeling that the University had not been clear in communications and that if the University was going to remain with emergency remote teaching, they would want to drop their classes. Recognizing that this level of uncertainty was unacceptable, SFU communicated to all on January 11th, the second day of the term, that the University would be returning to in-person leaning on January 24th. SCUS also discussed the reason for the current drop with full refund date, which is seven days. Drop deadlines are set with the recognition that it's important for students to make decisions in a timely manner so that other students that are on waitlists can add courses by the add deadline, which is set so students do not miss a substantial amount of work. This is an issue of fairness, and it's in place to improve course access to students.

SCUS has made a number of compassionate decisions over the past two years in support of students during the pandemic. The drop date without academic penalty was moved on an ongoing basis from the end of week five to the end of week eight to give students additional time to receive feedback from their instructors before making that decision, a pilot was introduced until the end of the Fall 2023 term for elective grading, and students should be aware that there are ways for them to withdraw under extenuating circumstances, if those are needed. Further, temporary modifications have been made around the requirement to submit medical notes in support of concessions for medical absences of under 5 days and detailed information has been developed to support students to apply for academic concessions. Also, following the submission of this question, SCUS explored what other institutions have done about drop deadlines (with the exception of UBC) and found that no other postsecondary institutions having adjusted their drop deadlines as a result of delaying the start of in-person instruction by two weeks.

ii)   Senator Liosis submitted the following question:

Student and community leaders have been calling on the University, since the beginning of the pandemic and remote instruction, to invest in a hybrid model of learning and increase class accessibility, by mandating measures such as lecture recordings, live streaming classes, and removing penalties for students who are unable to participate via in-person means. These measures have been opposed by SFU every-time the discussion of such measures are brought up.

> *i. What are the University's reasonings behind opposing a hybrid model, despite these strong calls to action? Why not give students the choice to attend in-person classes based on their level of comfortability and their level of risk?*

Secondly, the absence of such a measure disproportionately impacts marginalized students and those who are more vulnerable to the virus. The reason why such a mandate cannot be implemented, supposedly, is because of "academic freedom" - the belief that instructors have the ability to teach a course in any way they wish in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes. This is why SFU won't mandate lecture recordings, instead leaving it up to individual profs.

> *ii. If a motion was brought to Senate to mandate either of the following: (1) lecture recordings or (2) live stream (without it being recorded) for all courses at SFU, would such motion(s) be binding on instructors? Would either of these measures be in violation of so-called "academic freedom"?*

Lastly, I have received numerous tips from students and professors that despite the in-person return on Jan. 24th, some teachers wanted to keep their class online, to ensure accessibility for everybody. However, in many of these instances, instructors have been denied on their request to continue teaching online. This contradicts the whole concept of "academic freedom," in that instructors are being denied the ability to teach their class online, even though that is the way they wish to instruct in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

> *iii. Why are professors being denied the choice to teach their course online, if they wish, in an attempt to make their course more hybrid and accessible? Are there written guidelines in place that remove agency from instructors to make such a decision?*

Catherine Dauvergne, Vice President, Academic, and Wade Parkhouse, Associate Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that hybrid courses need to be designed such that students can choose to be in-person remote but synchronous or asynchronous on any given day, and for any given course component. While flexibility is understandably appreciated by students, these courses are difficult to build and to teach. Faculty effectively have to build both an online and an in-person course, and the synchronous but remote option is essentially a third course type that faculty have to plan and teach. Ensuring that the learning experience is equivalent between the modes is difficult, as is attempting to interact with students in three modes at the same time. Hybrid courses require high level technology for both instructors and students and time spent on technology is time that is not spent on learning or teaching. The tech requirements can become

an accessibility issue for some students, as other universities have found that students frequently requested sessions because they have different needs across these different modes of teaching. Further, hybrid teaching works better for some types of courses than others and is almost completely dependent on the discipline and course content and assumes a faculty member standing in front of the camera, not interacting with their class in-person. Thus, given the workload issues, the difficulty in ensuring an equivalent learning experience in all modes, the issue of interacting with technology, and the realization that it's not appropriate for all classes, a decision was made not to mandate a hybrid model.

On the subject of lecture recordings and live streaming, it was noted that while SFU has invested significantly in improving Wi-Fi and recording capabilities across campuses, the technology is still not where it needs to be. Instructors have been encouraged to stream or record their lectures whenever feasible, however, recording lectures is not always appropriate and can stifle discussion, particularly when sensitive material is being discussed. In other cases, faculty members do not want their intellectual property available online for others to use.

On the question of instructors keeping their classes online, SFU is ultimately a bricks and mortar campus that, as an institution, values in person, classroom and campus experiences. Planning for delivering courses is a complicated process and requires decisions to be made months in advance of each semester. Part of the reason for this is students need to register and plan their courses. Many students want the in-person experience and many students have moved to the Lower Mainland from faraway places to take courses in-person and not delivering them in-person when public health indicates it's safe to do so is unacceptable. It's recognized that some students will prefer the flexibility of recorded lectures and asynchronous online courses, and as such, SFU has increased the number of courses offered in this fashion and introduced a pilot of blended courses to support this accessibility. It was added that academic freedom is a centuries old principle that protects ideas but has never extended to the mode of delivery of courses or to the concomitant procedural constraints, such as hours of instruction, numbers of credits awarded, or penalties for academic misconduct. Academic freedom does not prevent a department head from assigning teaching or requiring reports, it does not prevent a university from requiring the provision of reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, and it does not preclude requirements for the use of civil or respectful language. Thus, while academic freedom is integral component of the University, it does not generally cover procedural matters.

A follow-up question was posed by Senator Liosis to ask if a motion brought to Senate mandating either lecture recordings or live streaming would be binding. Senate was informed that such a motion would not be binding.

A comment was made in disagreement with the belief that a motion brought to Senate mandating lecture recordings or live streaming would not be binding. Given that Senate is the academic governing body of the University and the means in which courses are taught falls under the jurisdiction of Senate, it was argued that if Senate did mandate that instructors must provide lectures online, then instructors must provide lectures online. No decision was made as to if such a mandate would be binding.

7.   Reports of Committees

A)   Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)
i)   SCAR Guideline Amendment (S.22-15)
Moved by C. Dauvergne, seconded by S. Spector

"That Senate adopt the Principles on University Policies and the Involvement of Senate and approve the revised Section 3 of the guidelines of the Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules."

Li-Jeen Broshko, General Counsel and University Secretary, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A concern was raised that the current SCAR guidelines provide SCAR the authority to look at any policy and determine whether it has implications for the academic mission in the university, whereas the revised guidelines state that SCAR shall review anything sent by a policy authority, thereby removing agency from the committee and placing it in with the policy authority. Senate was informed that the problem with the current policy is that it requires every policy, irrespective of its purpose, to come to SCAR for a determination as to whether it should come to Senate.

A comment was made to note that the policy outlined in the SCAR guidelines with respect to university policies has not been followed for at least a decade. The fact that SCAR and Senate has not been overwhelmed by policies to review is not indicative of how things should have worked under the current guidelines.

A comment was made that just because the policy hasn't been used appropriately doesn't mean that it shouldn't be used appropriately going forward. Also, it was argued that it would be disadvantageous to limit the power of Senate to review all of the policies for the University for their impact on academic outcomes. It doesn't mean that every policy needs to be reviewed in depth or brought to Senate, but SCAR should have the right to look at any policy for its academic implications.

A comment was made the revised SCAR guidelines around University policies are based on principled decisions around which policies should come to Senate and what level of Senate engagement is appropriate based on the University Act.

A question was called and a vote taken.   MOTION FAILED

ii)   University Policies (S.22-16)
Senate received University Policies for information.

Li-Jeen Broshko, General Counsel and University Secretary, was in attendance to respond to questions.

iii)   Updated Policy GP37 (S.22-17)
Senate received Updated Policy GP37 for discussion.

A comment was made that there may be conflicts of interest, particularly in startup companies and other similar areas, with a shared jurisdiction between the dean and the VPA or VPR. There is a limit in the dollar amount of things that deans can sign off on which could come into play with some of the larger contracts that engage in issues of conflicts of interest. Senate was informed that this would be taken under advisement.

Trevor Davis, Executive Director - Research Operations, was in attendance to respond to questions.

B)   Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)
i)   Full Program Proposal for a Master of Science in Professional Cybersecurity (S.22-18)
Moved by C. Dauvergne, seconded by E. Fiume

"That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the Full Program Proposal for a Master of Science in Professional Cybersecurity in the School of Computing Science within the Faculty of Applied Sciences, effective Spring 2023 or later."

Uwe Glasser, Professor - School of Computing Science, and Jiannan Wang, Associate Professor - School of Computing Science, were in attendance to respond to questions.

A concern was raised that this program seems to be taught entirely by instructors on the academic and theoretical side of the field and that it would be advantageous to students to have some contact with people working in the field, tackling actual cyber security problems as they arise. Senate was informed that the primary mission of this program is to be application oriented and to focus on hands-on training. At the heart of the program is two 6 credit lab courses that train students on cyber security tools in collaboration with industry leading partners.

A question was called and a vote taken.   MOTION PASSED

ii)   Full Program Proposal for a Master of Science in Professional Visual Computing (S.22-19)
Moved by C. Dauvergne, seconded by E. Fiume

"That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the Full Program Proposal for a Master of Science in Professional Visual Computing in the School of Computing Science within the Faculty of Applied Sciences, effective Spring 2023 or later."

Jiannan Wang, Associate Professor - School of Computing Science, and Ali Mahdavi-Amiri, Assistant Professor – School of Computing Science, were in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked if the effective date of *Spring 2023 or later* is due to the program requiring Ministry approval. Senate was informed that *or later* has been added due to the requirement for Ministry approval.

A question was called and a vote taken.   MOTION PASSED

iii)   Strategic Research Plan Progress Report (S.22-20)
Senate received the Strategic Research Plan Progress Report for information.

On the subject of Canada Research Chairs and Distinguished SFU Professors, a question was asked if there is any plan to deal with the retention of these scholars given that these positions expire after a set period of time. Senate was informed that SFU does consider positions like Canada Research Chairs to be an important recruitment tool, however, most people going into those positions realize that they do not last as long as tenured faculty positions. On a case-by-case basis, the University does look for opportunities to create endowed positions or to allow somebody who's built up a strong research program to continue that program. It was added that numerous discussions have been held over the years on how to transition and support the transition of a faculty member out of a chair position and into regular faculty position, but that the solutions vary by department and by the type of research that's being done.

A comment was made that it would be helpful in future reports to have a graph that not only tracks the number of SFU publications and citations, but to have a graph that also tracks how SFU is doing in comparison to other institutions.

A question was asked as to why money from the SFU Community Trust and how it has been allocated across the University has not been included in this report. Senate was informed that a report on where that money has been or will be allocated was brought to Open Session of the Board of Governors in September, and that anyone seeking that report can reach out to the VP Research Office.

C)   Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)
i)   Program Changes (S.22-21)
Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences, Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology).

ii)   New Course Proposals (S.22-22)
Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Environment (Geography).

iii)   Course Changes (S.22-23)
Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences, Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology, Chemistry).

iv)   Annual Report 2020/2021 (S.22-24)
Senate received the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS) Annual Report 2020/2021 for information.

D)   Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)
i)   Program Changes (S.22-25)
Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a program change in the Beedie School of Business.

ii)   New Course Proposals (S.22-26)
Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Beedie School of Business.

iii)   Course Changes (S.22-27)
Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Sciences), the Beedie School of Business, and the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School for the Contemporary Arts).

iv)   Annual Report 2021 (S.22-28)
Senate received the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC) Annual Report 2021 for information.

E)   Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)
i)   Senate Committee Elections (S.22-29)
Senate received a summary of the nominations, positions elected by acclamation, positions requiring an online vote, and outstanding vacancies for Senate committees.

8.   Other Business

9.   Information
i)   Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, March 7, 2022

Open session adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Tom Nault
Senate Secretary