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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate **DATE** February 13, 2023
FROM Wade Parkhouse, Provost and Vice-
President Academic, and Chair, SCUP **PAGES** 1/1
RE: Suspension of Admission: MSc in Ecological Restoration (SCUP 23-01)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Parkhouse", is written over the "PAGES" field of the memorandum header.

At its meeting on January 25, 2023, SCUP reviewed and approved the suspension of admission to the Master of Science in Ecological Restoration. It is attached for the information of Senate.

C: Dr. Ruth Joy (rjoy@sfu.ca)
Dr. Karen Kohfeld (sesdir@sfu.ca)
Dr. Naomi Krogman (envdean@sfu.ca)



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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate Committee on University
Priorities (SCUP) **DATE** December 9, 2022

FROM Jeff Derksen,
Chair of Senate Graduate Studies
Committee (SGSC)

RE: Suspension of Admission: Ecological Restoration MSc

For approval:

At its meeting of December 6, 2022, SGSC approved the suspension of admission for the Master of Science in Ecological Restoration within the Faculty of Environment and is recommending it to SCUP for approval, effective **Fall 2023**:

Motion:

That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the suspension of admission for the Master of Science in Ecological Restoration within the Faculty of Environment

To: Jeff Derksen, Chair, Senate Graduate Studies Committee

Re: Suspension of Admission, Ecological Restoration

Date: November 28, 2022

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November 2022

To: Senate Graduate Studies Committee

The Faculty of Environment Graduate Curriculum Committee supports the suspension of admission in the Ecological Restoration graduate program. Please bring the suspension of admission forward to SGSC for approval.

Many thanks,



Dr. Valorie A. Crooks
Associate Dean – Research & Graduate
Faculty of Environment, Simon Fraser University
Professor & Canada Research Chair in Health Service Geographies
Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University
604.417.9007, crooks@sfu.ca

Proposal to Suspend Admission to MSc in Ecological Restoration

In 2015, SFU and BCIT embarked on a joint professional Master of Science program in Ecological Restoration as a unique degree to advance both the practice and science of ecological restoration. The Program has successfully prepared over 150 practitioners to contribute to the recovery of ecosystems and land degradation across the province and beyond.

In spite of many success stories the program has not been without its challenges, the most longstanding of which are deeply entrenched cultural differences between the two institutions. Recently, MER program faculty and leaders from both institutions came together to work toward resolving the most problematic issue. The issues revolve around an applied research project for which specific faculty and student workloads have continually caused discomfort for all those involved. However, efforts to revise the program in a manner beneficial to both institutions have failed. Program admission will be suspended immediately and the program terminated if a mutually agreeable solution cannot be identified.

Rationale

Program admission is being suspended for following reasons:

- Institutional differences – Among many institutional differences, there is one key factor that has created an unresolvable divide between SFU and BCIT in the delivery of the MER program. It is expected that SFU and BCIT share equal responsibility for the program's applied research capstone project and that SFU research faculty support individual supervision of students in the same ways as BCIT instructors. This is an unrealistic expectation given that, in addition to this supervision, SFU faculty are also expected to perform teaching duties, run research programs, publish in scientific journals, contribute to knowledge mobilization in their respective fields, and secure tenure and promotion to Full professor. Our efforts to meet these expectations have created unintended consequences in the School of Environmental Science (EVSC): while most EVSC faculty have the freedom to dedicate time solely to traditional graduate students, the EVSC faculty contributing to the MER program carry 10 – 12 professional students in addition to any traditional graduate students they can afford the time to support.
- Program scalability – The Joint Collaboration Agreement defines the Applied Research Committee as having oversight for each student's applied research project, with a senior supervisor from either SFU or BCIT. In 2017, it was clarified that both institutions would be equally involved in the delivery and supervision of the applied research projects and that a financial adjustment would be made to either institution carrying more than half the supervisory load. This model has become financially unsustainable. Several alternate solutions, including a proposal to develop group project opportunities, were dismissed by BCIT based on yet another institutional difference. Unlike SFU, BCIT is funded based on employment success rates upon graduation. They are adamant that MER students must graduate with eligibility for the RPBio designation offered through the College of Applied

Biologists and that this designation is necessary for biologists to carry out or supervise work in many resource management activities. Given individual supervision is necessary to meet the College's credentialing standards, BCIT is unwilling to consider alternate models that would allow for program scalability.

- Financial Viability – SFU and BCIT split gross tuition revenue 50/50, with SFU's portion distributed to the Faculty of Environment through the Faculty Allocation Model yielding approximately 25% of annual gross revenue. Program expenses continue to eclipse revenue, and in 2022/23, the expected shortfall is \$126K. With tuition increases locked at 2% per year by the Ministry of Advanced Education and no options for program scalability, the Faculty of Environment cannot continue to carry program losses.

Plan for Suspension

The MSc in Ecological Restoration is offered jointly between SFU's Faculty of Environment and the School of Construction and Environment at BCIT. On October 14, 2022, BCIT was given notice that the Joint Collaboration Agreement would not be renewed and that program admission would be suspended immediately.

The admission cycle that normally opens in October will not proceed and students will not be admitted to the program for Fall 2023. There are currently two cohorts of students that will continue in the program, with the September 2021 cohort completing in April 2023 and the September 2022 cohort completing in April 2024. These students will continue with no changes to the program and will be supported through to completion of their respective degrees.

The following steps have been or will be taken to communicate the plan to suspend program admission:

- Instructors and faculty at both institutions have been notified that program admission will be suspended, and planning should be done accordingly.
- Appropriate language will be developed and posted on both BCIT and SFU's websites to reflect that the program will not be offered in 2023.
- Current students will have individual meetings with supervisors to assure them that they will be supported through to the completion of their respective programs.
- The two SFU faculty members dedicated to the MER program will remain in the School of Environmental Sciences and be assigned normal research faculty duties.
- No other departments or Faculties are formally involved in the MER Program however, this change will be discussed at the Faculty of Environment's Academic Leadership Committee meeting.
- Termination of the program will only be pursued once all students in the current cohorts have graduated and if BCIT remains unwilling to address concerns.
- The Faculty will defer to the Graduate and Post Doctoral Studies Office to determine an appropriate entry for the SFU Calendar.

Contact Information and Acknowledgements



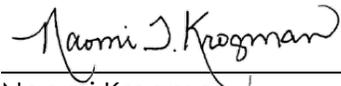
Nov 2, 2022

Ruth Joy
Director, Ecological Restoration



3 Nov 2022

Karen Kohfeld
Director, School of Environmental Science



Nov 7, 2022

Naomi Krogman
Dean, Faculty of Environment

Should more detailed information be required please contact Naomi Krogman (envdean@sfu.ca, 778 782-8797) , Dean of the Faculty of Environment.