



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Monday, January 9, 2023 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

Open Session

Present: Stephen Spector, Vice-Chair

Ahsan, Shariq
Andreoiu, Corina
Arseneault, Donovan
Bhalloo, Shafik
Bird, Gwen
Brennand, Tracy
Brooks-Wilson, Angela
Campbell, Lara
Chapman, Glenn
Coleman, Gordon
Collard, Mark
Daniel, Bryan
Derksen, Jeff
Dhesa, Priyanka
Elle, Elizabeth
Everton, Mike
Faris, Reema
Fiume, Eugene
Gray, Bonnie
Hendrigan, Holly
Karaivanov, Alexander
Kayande, Ujwal
Kingsbury, Paul (for Naomi Krogman)
Kumpulainen, Kristiina
Laitsch, Dan
Lam, Allan
Leznoff, Daniel
Liu, Connie
Magnusson, Kris
Martell, Matt
Masri, Kamal
Masri, Lynn
McKenzie, Janis
Muntean, Reese
Murphy, David
Myers, Gord
Nelson, Todd
Neustaedter, Carman

O'Neil, Dugan
Parent, Michael
Parkhouse, Wade
Parmar, Abhishek
Percival, Colin
Rashmi, Samiya
Schiphorst, Thecla
Silverman, Michael
Smith, Judy (for Julia Denholm)
Stockie, John
Tran, Lisa
Van Veen, Melissa
Vrooman, Tamara
Williams, JF
Williams, Vance
Yao, Grace

Absent:

Bubela, Tania
Denholm, Julia
Herrenbrueck, Lucas
Johnson, Joy
Krogman, Naomi
McTavish, Rob
Nagy, Judit
Nepomnaschy, Pablo
Pantophlet, Ralph
Shinkar, Igor
Sidhu, Harneer
Subbiah, Arun

In Attendance:

Bhakthan, Manoj
Dawson, Rachel
Guilbault, Christian
Hira, Andy
Linklater, Kristin
Mirhady, David
Moustafa, Tamir

Tom Nault, Senate Secretary
Steven Noel, Recording Secretary

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. The Minutes of the Open Session of December 5, 2022 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on February 6, 2022

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Report of the Chair

The Vice-Chair had nothing to report.

i) Report of the Provost

The Provost had nothing to report.

ii) SFU: What's Next (S.23-1)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by K. Magnusson

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors SFU: What's Next, the SFU strategy for 2023 onwards.”

Kristin Linklater, Associate Vice-President, Communications & Marketing, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

5. Question Period

No questions were submitted.

6. Reports of Committees

A) Calendar Committee (CC)

i) Academic Dates Fall 2023 (S.23-2)

Citing his role as Chair of the Calendar Committee, the Vice-Chair stepped down from the Chair to address this item and had Senator Leznoff temporarily step into the Chair.

Motion:

Moved by S. Spector, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve the revised schedule of academic dates for the Fall 2023 term, adding Wednesday, December 6th, 2023, as a “Monday”. The examination period would begin Thursday December 7th, 2023 and end as currently scheduled.”

A comment was made that six class lecture hours in the final week of the term may be good for some students, but may also be too close to the exam for others. Senate was informed that

students taking classes in summer-session or inter-session are often attending twice a week, so this is not unusual for the final week of the term. Advanced communication and a judicious approach for the delivery of material during that week would be beneficial to students. Any deviation from the expected pattern must be specified in the information provided to students when they register for a course.

A question was asked regarding the frequency of limited Monday instructional days in the Fall term due to statutory holidays. Senate was informed that this will happen again in 2024, 2028, 2029 and 2030. The Calendar Committee has begun working on options to alleviate this problem going forward.

A comment was made that removing days from the Fall exam schedule may be problematic, since the University often loses one or more scheduled days due to weather closures, necessitating the rescheduling of exams.

A question was asked whether adding a 4-hour block on Mondays is feasible, replacing 13 3-hour lectures (39 hours) with 10 4-hour lectures (40 hours). Senate was informed that the committee did not specifically consider this option given that it is not within its purview to change current scheduling patterns. If an instructor/chair/department wishes to compress their course(s) within the existing scheduling patterns, that is their choice.

In regards to adding Wednesday, December 6th as a “Monday”, a question was asked if a student could be scheduled for an exam on Thursday, December 7th. Senate was informed that a block would be placed on these courses so that an exam could not be scheduled on the next day. In this scenario, the earliest exam scheduled would be on the Friday.

A comment was made that consideration should be given to restricting 3-hour classes on Mondays for the Fall 2023 term and spreading those hours out over the remaining four days. It was noted that such a decision would be beyond the scope of the Calendar Committee, but Senate has the authority to restrict the scheduling of 3-hour classes on Mondays for a single term. The Secretary of Senate, speaking in his role as Registrar, informed Senate that the feasibility of this suggestion would need to be investigated and reported back to Senate. The concern would be with the availability of rooms to accommodate the change.

A comment was made that much of the issue around scheduling is due to SFU operating on a trimester system and that this could be alleviated by moving from 13 weeks of instruction to 12 weeks, thereby holding one week between the end of classes and final exams. Though this would lead to fewer classroom hours, it was argued that such a change could benefit student learning outcomes. Senate was informed that the committee is examining moving to a 12-week semester for future years, but that this would require more time than is available for implementation for Fall 2023.

Concerning the idea of not making any alterations to the Fall 2023 calendar, a question was asked about how problematic would it be to have only 10 teachable Mondays. Senate was informed that having 10 teachable Mondays would mean that students taking Monday-only classes would have approximately 77% of instructional days compared to other students.

Following a lengthy discussion, and noting that the Registrar would report back to Senate on the feasibility of replacing 13 3-hour lectures with 10 4-hour lectures and the feasibility of restricting 3-hour classes on Mondays for the Fall 2023 term, a motion to table the motion was proposed.

Moved by S. Spector, seconded by E. Elle

“That motion 1 in S.23-2 be tabled.”

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION TO TABLE CARRIED

With the motion to table having been approved, motion 2 of S.23-2 was withdrawn from consideration. With Calendar Committee business having concluded, the Vice-Chair stepped back into the Chair.

B) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

i) External Review for the Department of Biological Sciences (S.23-3)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by T. Schiphorst

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Biological Sciences that resulted from its external review.”

An update was requested on hiring plans and approvals for hiring as requested in the external review. Senate was informed that there have been no requests for new hires since the last time it was approved in June.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

ii) External Review for the Department of French (S.23-4)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by S. Ahsan

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of French that resulted from its external review.”

Christian Guilbault, Chair - Department of French, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Citing concerns over department-based funding and the potential for this to be a barrier for graduate students joining the program, a question was asked as to why this issue was omitted from the Action Plan. Senate was informed that funding has not been big problem in the past. The department has a fairly small graduate program and students are being funded, though not for the entirety of their program. It was added that funding could become an issue if enrollment is increased.

Noting that graduate funding was referenced in almost all of the external reviews before Senate, a concern was raised that this speaks to a broader problem at SFU.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iii) External Review of the Department of Geography (S.23-5)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by C. Liu

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Geography that resulted from its external review.”

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

iv) External Review for the Department of Global Humanities (S.23-6)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Global Humanities that resulted from its external review.”

David Mirhady, Professor and Chair - Department of Global Humanities, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

v) External Review for the Department of Political Science (S.23-7)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by D. Laitsch

“That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Political Science that resulted from its external review.”

Andy Hira, Professor and Chair – Department of Political Science, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED,
with one abstention.

vi) Revised Terms of Reference for the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies Endowment (S.23-8)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by K. Masri

“That Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies Endowment.”

Tamir Moustafa, Professor and Stephen Jarislowsky Chair - School for International Studies, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

C) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)**i) Program Changes (S.23-9)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Criminology, School of International Studies), the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School for the Contemporary Arts), the Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences, Statistics and Actuarial Sciences).

ii) New Course Proposals (S.23-10)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Communication), and the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences).

iii) Course Changes (S.23-11)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Beedie School of Business, the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School for the Contemporary Arts), and the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences).

D) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Course Changes (S.23-12)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Communication, Art, and Technology (School for the Contemporary Arts).

E) Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries (SPCSAB)**i) Annual Report 2021/22 (S.23-13)**

Senate received the Senate Policy Committee on Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries (SPCSAB) Annual Report 2021/22 for information.

Manoj Bhakthan, Director, Financial Aid and Awards, and Rachel Dawson, Director, Administrative Services - Graduate Studies, were in attendance to respond to questions.

F) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.23-14)**

Senate received a summary of the nominations, positions elected by acclamation, positions requiring an online vote, and outstanding vacancies for Senate committees.

7. Other Business**i) Addition of Policy and Procedures for Granting and Revoking Honorary Degrees and Changes to the Current SCUH Terms of Reference (S.23-15)**

Senate received Addition of Policy and Procedures for Granting and Revoking Honorary Degrees and Changes to the Current SCUH Terms of Reference for information.

Citing a comment by the Chair at the December Senate meeting, a question was asked about how these SCUH changes dovetail with work being done around hiring and scholarships. Senate was

informed that these changes are not specifically looking to dovetail with other practices, but that the process for nominating and revoking honorary degrees around confirming Indigenous identity may offer input for hiring and scholarships practices.

With the intention to bring SCUH's terms of reference and a draft of the policy and procedures for granting and revoking an SFU Honorary Degree to the February 6th Senate meeting for approval, a concern was raised that this may not allow enough time for Senators to properly consider the proposed changes. Senate was informed that there is some urgency with respect to the need to have a policy in place and it is expected that Senate will engage in a proper discussion and in-depth review of what is being proposed. Senate is well within its authority to send the proposal back to committee with additional feedback, should it wish to do so.

8. Information

i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, February 6, 2023

Open session adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Tom Nault
Senate Secretary