



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on  
Monday, January 8, 2024 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)  
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

## Open Session

**Present:** Joy Johnson, Chair

Abu-Samhan, Mishael  
Barlow, Leanne  
Bird, Gwen  
Brooks-Wilson, Angela  
Bubela, Tania  
Bullock, Cécile  
Chapman, Glenn  
Collard, Mark  
Denholm, Julia  
Dhesa, Priyanka  
Eigenfeldt, Arne (for Carman Neustaedter)  
Everton, Mike  
Faris, Reema  
Fisher, Brian  
Fiume, Eugene  
Fung, Aaron  
Gray, Bonnie  
Hall, Peter  
Herrenbrueck, Lucas  
Kerr, Jeannie  
Krogman, Naomi  
Laitsch, Dan  
Leznoff, Daniel  
Liu, Connie  
Magnusson, Kris  
Martell, Matt  
Masri, Kamal  
McKenzie, Janis  
Muntean, Reese  
Myers, Gord  
Nelson, Todd  
O'Brien, Mary  
O'Neil, Dugan  
Parmar, Abhishek  
Percival, Colin  
Pratt, Elspeth  
Rassier, Dilson  
Sawan, Amani  
Singh Walia, Harkirat  
Stockie, John

Sutherland, Jill  
Szymczyk, Barbara  
Thornton, Allen  
Traversa, Marissa  
Tucker, Rochelle  
Vrooman, Tamara  
Weldon, Laurel  
Whitehurst, David  
Williams, Vance

**Absent:**

Bhalloo, Shafik  
Brennand, Tracy  
D'Silva, Tyler  
Eftenaru, Cristina  
Hodaly, Alexander  
Karaivanov, Alexander  
Kayande, Ujwal  
Kessler, Anke  
Lysova, Alexandra  
Manzer, Mussaab  
Nahmiash, Amanda  
Neustaedter, Carman  
Pantophlet, Ralph  
Parent, Michael  
Rincon, Laura  
Schiphorst, Thecla  
Schmidt, Michèle  
Shinkar, Igor  
Vuong, Quang  
Williams, JF  
Zuluaga, Natalia

**In Attendance:**

Chauve, Cedric  
Heer, Karamjeet  
Ortabasi, Melek  
Trummer, Manfred

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 4, 2023 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on February 5, 2024****3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

**4. Report of the Chair**

The Chair reminded Senate that the Senate/Board of Governors retreat is coming up on Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Chair reported that the Office of the Indigenous Executive Lead was launched in late 2023, with Chris Lewis appointed to the role of Indigenous Executive Lead in November. Initial priorities for the office include the development of a strategic roadmap for the office and the implementation of the Indigenous governance framework. Chris is also leading work on the Indigenous Welcoming Procedure, which was advanced in the fall, with significant engagement on the procedure taking place with Indigenous community members in November. Key work currently underway on the Indigenous Welcoming Procedure includes the development of an information technology platform to support the administration of the work and securely hold confidential information, while adhering to Indigenous data sovereignty principles. Work is also moving forward on the Indigenous naming project, where the University continues to work with the Host Nations to find names for spaces on SFU's campuses.

The Chair reported that SFU Sustainability (SFUS) reports that all six vice-president portfolios have written detailed implementation plans to achieve the goals and actions within the SFU Strategic Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. 200 activities across the six portfolios will be undertaken throughout 2024 with the support of SFUS.

The Chair reported that SFU was awarded 500 new tech-relevant seats in Data Science, Computing Science, Statistics, Software Systems, Agritech, Social Data Analytics and Business Analytics, and Decision Making to meet the demand for technology workers. In addition to the increased funding for the seats, SFU also received capital funding which will enhance access to programs in demand to Make a Difference for B.C. as part of the provincial Stronger BC Future Ready Action Plan.

The Chair reported that preliminary estimates for the spring 2024 semester show improvement on the summer and fall 2023 semesters, despite continued downward pressure on international undergraduate student enrollments. Overall, undergraduate enrollment remains mixed. Preliminary spring 2024 estimates combined with summer and fall 2023 actuals suggest that for 2023/24, SFU will be 8% below its goal for international enrollments and 6% above its goal for domestic enrollments. SFU's recruitment team has represented SFU at more than 460 recruitment events and school visits around the world in a span of three months.

The Chair reported that at the December Senate meeting, Senate approved a minimum funding level for PhD students. Thanks was extended to everyone on Senate and across the university who helped achieve this goal, especially the Dean of Graduate Studies, Mary O'Brien.

**i) Report of the Provost**

The Provost reported that the Vancouver and Surrey campuses, whose executive director and personnel previously reported to the Vice-President, External Relations, will now report to the Provost Office. The rationale for the move is to have the campuses guided more directly by an academic vision. With this in mind, Dugan O'Neil, Vice President, Research and International, and Peter Hall, Associate Vice-President, Academic, have been named interim academic leaders in each of the campuses until permanent academic directors can be installed.

**5. Question Period**

i) Senator Sutherland submitted the following questions:

*At the December 4th 2023 Senate Meeting both yourself and the Provost reported on the state of the budget and the current staff hiring freeze. In my role as a convocation Senator, and as a proud SFU employee, I feel I have the responsibility to pose questions on behalf of SFU staff where necessary and appropriate since SFU staff do not have allocated Senator positions. I have three questions related to the budget and academic supports:*

- *Firstly, the budget reports noted several reasons for the budget shortfall including an increase to staff pensions. Presumably the retro pension payments associated with all employee groups' collective agreements had been projected and included in the budget, therefore the budget should not have been significantly impacted by these agreements. I am hoping that you can clarify which pension plan - the college pension plan or the administrative, professional/union staff pension plan, or both - have significantly impacted the budget and at what percentages?*
- *Secondly, I'm sure that implementing a hiring freeze was a difficult decision and is one that will impact all areas of the university. Many APSA and CUPE staff are already overextended in key units, such as student services and IT, and the hiring freeze will exacerbate the impact for frontline staff who are often temporary or low-salary service staff. This will likely have a negative impact on student experience, on service levels to faculty and staff, and on SFU's overall reputation. How is SFU going to address the impact to increased workloads to avoid employee burnout and maintain our reputation as the top comprehensive university?*
- *And lastly, though this question may be better suited for the BoG, for operational planning, especially for units looking to address staffing shortages or extend temporary contracts, quarterly financials would be very beneficial. Is this something that can be provided and shared publicly?*

Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President, Academic, and Karamjeet Heer, Associate Vice-President, Finance, responded to this question.

On the question of which pension plan significantly impacted the budget, Senate was informed that it is the administrative pension that has impacted the budget. Given the way the pension plan was developed and the existing restrictions when there is a difference between what the University has in the plan and the liabilities it may have, SFU will have to contribute an extra \$9 to 10 million next year.

On the question of how SFU is going to address the impact to increased workloads to avoid employee burnout and maintain our reputation as the top comprehensive university, Senate was informed that the Provost and Finance offices are aware that a hiring freeze can lead to negative impacts on the University, but that such steps are necessary given budgetary situation. Efforts are being made to minimize that impact and every unit is able to request exceptions to the hiring freeze by explaining how the freeze will negatively impact their unit's ability to function.

On the question of making quarterly financials available to the public, Senate was informed that SFU doesn't currently have the necessary tools to forecast or track the budget on a monthly basis, but that such a tool is being developed.

A follow-up question was asked regarding how many hiring freeze exceptions have been submitted and how many exceptions have been approved to date. Senate was informed that approximately 100 exceptions have submitted, with roughly half of those being improved. It was noted that these numbers do not include exceptions submitted in December. It was also noted that the number of job postings for the past two to three months, when compared to last year, is down from about 90 to under 30.

## 6. Reports of Committees

### A) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

#### i) Dissolution of the Latin American Studies Minor (S.24-1)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the dissolution of the Latin American Studies Minor in the School for International Studies within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, effective Summer 2024.”

Melek Ortabasi, Associate Professor, Department of World Languages and Literatures, was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

#### ii) External Review for the Department of Mathematics (S.24-2)

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by J. Stockie

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

Manfred Trummer, Professor and previous Chair - Department of Mathematics, and Cedric Chauve, Professor and current Chair - Department of Mathematics, were in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**iii) Program Name Change for the French Language Minor and French Major (S.24-3)**

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the program name changes from the French Language Minor to Minor in French and Francophone Studies in the Department of French and the French Major, Bachelor of Arts to Major in French and Francophone Studies, Bachelor of Arts in the Department of French within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, effective Fall 2024.”

Melek Ortabasi, Associate Professor, Department of World Languages and Literatures, was in attendance to respond to questions.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**iv) Program Suspension for the Graduate Certificate and Master of Arts, Heritage Resource Management (S.24-4)**

Moved by D. Rassier, seconded by N. Krogman

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the Program Suspensions for the Graduate Certificate and Master of Arts, Heritage Resource Management, effective Summer 2024.”

A question was asked to explain the rationale for the lack of interest in these programs. Senate was informed that currently, archaeology bachelor's graduates are so highly in demand that there is a decreased need in pursuing a master's degree.

The question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**v) Centres and Institutes Renewal Application (S.24-5)**

Senate received Centres and Institutes Renewal Application for information.

**vi) Notice of Intent for the Medical Humanities and Social Sciences Minor (S.24-6)**

Senate received Notice of Intent for the Medical Humanities and Social Sciences Minor for information.

Melek Ortabasi, Associate Professor, Department of World Languages and Literatures, was in attendance to respond to questions.

**B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)****i) Program Changes (S.24-7)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science, School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering), the Faculty of Environment (School of Resource and Environmental Management), and the Faculty of Science (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Statistics and Actuarial Sciences).

**ii) New Course Proposals (S.24-8)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering), and the Faculty of Science (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry).

**iii) Course Changes (S.24-9)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science, School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering), the Beedie School of Business, the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (Publishing Program), and the Faculty of Science (Earth Sciences, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Statistics and Actuarial Sciences).

**C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)****i) Program Changes (S.24-10)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Psychology).

**ii) Course Changes (S.24-11)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Gerontology, Psychology).

**iii) Course Reinstatements (S.24-12)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a course reinstatement in the Faculty of Education.

**D) Senate Library Committee (SLC)****i) Annual Report 2022/2023 (S.24-13)**

Senate received the Senate Library Committee (SLC) Annual Report 2022/2023 for information.

**E) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)****i) Senate Committee Elections (S.24-14 Revised)**

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**

**8. Information**

**i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, February 5, 2024**

Open session adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Tom Nault  
Senate Secretary