

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Senate Committee on University Priorities
Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: Jonathan Driver
Chair, SCUP
Vice President, Academic

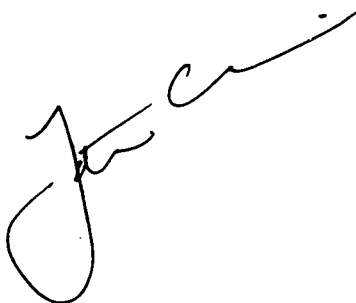
RE: Report on Academic Operations at
Fraser International College
September 2007 to August 2008 (SCUP 08-41)

DATE: January 12, 2009

At its December 17, 2008 meeting SCUP reviewed the attached Report on Academic Operations at Fraser International College September 2007 to August 2008, and requested it be forwarded to Senate for information.

encl.

c. S. Dench





OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

MEMO

ATTENTION: Senate Committee on University Priorities

FROM: Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic & Provost

RE: Academic Operations at Fraser International College 2007/08

DATE: December 8, 2008

The agreement between Simon Fraser University and Navitas Ltd. (the parent company of Fraser International College) is from 2006 to 2011. Senate mandated that prior to beginning negotiations for renewal of the contract there will be monitoring and review of the academic operations, and of the costs and benefits of the relationship with FIC. As part of the academic oversight and review process, Senate receives an annual report on the academic operations of the college. Attached is the annual report providing information for Senate on academic operations at Fraser International College for the 2007-2008 academic year.

The number of students enrolled at FIC has grown on track with the enrollment projections agreed to between SFU and FIC. The college is on track to reach full enrollment of approximately 1000 students by Fall 2010. SFU is now seeing a steady flow of students transferring from FIC to SFU in every admissions intake; 80 students transferred to SFU for Fall 2008, and a further 100 are anticipated to transfer in January 2009.

It is also worth noting that in the cohort of students who transferred from FIC to SFU for Fall 2008, six students received scholarships based on strong academic performance.

2.

Academic Operations at Fraser International College September 2007 to August 2008

In September 2007, Fraser International College (FIC) entered its second year of operation. In the first semester of operations, FIC offered 4 University Transfer Program courses (UTP II) from Simon Fraser University, and 3 University Transfer Program preparatory courses (UTP I). FIC is now offering 24 UTP II courses and 8 UTP I courses.

Enrollment Issues

FIC is continuing to meet the enrollment projections agreed to with SFU. As of May 2008, FIC had a total of 576 students enrolled. Including the September 2008 intake, the total number of FIC students is now at 798. Of the FIC students who completed 10 courses as required for transfer, 19 students transferred to SFU for the Fall 2007 semester, 28 students transferred for the Spring 2008 semester, 17 students transferred for the Summer 2008 semester, and another 80 students transferred for the Fall 2008 semester (Table 1 in Appendix A provides the distribution of FIC transfer students across SFU Faculties).

The table below indicates the preferred area of interest for FIC students as declared at point of admission to FIC. As with SFU students, areas of interest change as FIC students proceed through their programs, and preferences indicated at admission to FIC do not reflect subsequent admission to SFU programs. Admission to SFU programs is based on achievement of specific grade point averages published in FIC recruitment materials. Guarantees of admission to students transferring to SFU from FIC are set at 2.5 CGPA for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the School of Computing Science, and 3.0 CGPA for the Faculty of Business Administration. The CGPA for FIC students is calculated on performance in ten courses, as determined by the admitting Faculties.

Total FIC students (as of May 2008, includes new and continuing)

Program	Number
UTP I	70
UTP II Arts	75
UTP II Business	372
UTP II Computing	59
Total	576

Students at FIC now draw from more than 30 countries, as indicated below.

Students by Country (as of May 2008)

Country	Number
Bangladesh	1

Belgium	1
Brazil	2
Canada (non resident)	17
China	375
Colombia	2
Hong Kong	50
India	22
Indonesia	2
Iran	1
Japan	6
Kazakhstan	1
Kenya	4
Korea	27
Macau	1
Malaysia	2
Mauritius	4
Mexico	7
Mongolia	2
Pakistan	4
Peru	1
Philippines	1
Russia	3
Saudi Arabia	3
Sri Lanka	1
Taiwan	21
Thailand	6
Turkey	2
United Kingdom	3
USA	2
Yemen	1
Zambia	1
Total	576

Students from China continue to form the largest cohort of FIC students, primarily due to two reasons; the relative size of the population in China provides the largest pool of prospective students to Canada, and SFU's continuing excellent reputation in China. However, the geographic distribution of students is broadening over time, and is now better reflecting the geographic diversity SFU is seeking from this flow of international students. It is expected that the geographic distribution of students admitted to FIC will continue to diversify and, in particular, the number of students from African and Middle Eastern countries and India attending FIC will grow. Prospective students from some countries listed continue to experience delays receiving student visas for study in Canada.

Academic Performance at SFU

Students transferring from FIC to SFU are being tracked by SFU's Office of Institutional Research and Planning in order to provide semesterly data on academic performance.

FIC transfers are being tracked against other international students, and against all other undergraduate students.

As indicated in Appendix A, attached, academic performance of students transferring from FIC is equivalent to, or slightly better than, other international undergraduate students, and FIC transfers are carrying an average credit load equivalent to other undergraduate students.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning is including FIC as a college in the range of reports they produce regarding the academic performance at SFU of students transferring from BC colleges. Based on aggregated data collected over academic years, the SFU Profile Reports available through IRP provide a general overview of transfer students, analysis of academic performance at SFU, inter-college comparisons, and comparisons with students admitted directly from B.C. secondary schools. From these reports, comparisons across and between cohorts will be possible.

FIC Student Life

Students at FIC are provided with a high level of personal support, both in adjustment to living in Canada and to make the transition to academic studies at SFU.

In addition to receiving pre-arrival information, FIC students are provided with arrival reception services and support finding accommodation. Orientations are held immediately prior to the beginning of every semester. These sessions are both informational and networking, and provide FIC students with the necessary logistical support as they transition to the college. Representatives from SFU Recruitment also participate in FIC orientation processes.

Due to the small college environment, students are known to FIC staff and instructors, which allows for early problem identification and intervention. FIC provides ongoing academic advising to students, and advisors work closely with instructors to address student needs and support retention. Students may also access a range of co-curricular workshops throughout the semester in areas such as time management and study skills. Students may self-select academic supports, or may be referred to these by their instructors or advisors when a need is identified or suspected.

As part of the supports and academic programming offered to FIC students, a program similar to SFU's English Bridge Program has been established. Preparation in Academic Skills in English (PAS) provides English language training for students who are admitted to FIC but require additional language training to upgrade their facility with English. Upon successful completion of PAS, students then move into the university transfer program at FIC. The PAS program has been developed and supervised by the Director of SFU's English Bridge Program and operates at the same academic level as EBP, in order to ensure the students are adequately prepared for study in English at SFU.

As students move toward completion of their studies at FIC and prepare applications for admission to SFU, customized information sessions with SFU representatives are

conducted for students. In these sessions, students are provided with information about major and course selection, and other academic advising as required.

Students at FIC indicated an interest in forming a group to provide leadership and social organization for their peers. To this end, the FIC Student Committee was formed, with support from the FIC administration. The Student Committee meets at least once per semester, with additional meetings as required for event planning. All committee members serve as Students Leaders and volunteers at events such as orientation and graduation. There are currently 5 students on the committee.

The Student Committee provides feedback to the FIC administration on student issues heard from their peers, and the group brainstorms ideas for possible implementation at FIC in the future. With support from the FIC administration, the committee has undertaken planning some social activities for FIC students but do find this challenging as they balance these activities with their academic obligations.

Instructional Issues

Courses and student headcounts per course (as of June 2008)

BUS 251 (5 sections)	110
CMNS 110	32
CMPT 120 (2 sections)	59
CMPT 125	15
CMPT 150	22
CRIM 101 (2 sections)	71
ECON 103 (6 sections)	229
ECON 105 (3 sections)	75
ENGL 101 (2 sections)	37
ENGL 105 (3 sections)	80
HIST 102 (2 sections)	50
HSCI 160	41
KIN 140 (2 sections)	47
MACM 101 (2 sections)	49
MATH 100 (3 sections)	120
MATH 151	21
MATH 152	33
MATH 157 (3 sections)	105
PHIL 001 (4 sections)	162
POL 100 (2 sections)	54
POL 241	17
PSYC 099	26
STAT 203 (2 sections)	80
WL 102 (2 sections)	68

Feedback Mechanisms

FIC instructors are employed by FIC, and have qualifications comparable to SFU sessional instructors. Many of the instructional staff hired by FIC are also teaching at SFU or local public colleges, most have previous experience teaching international students, and instructors have been recommended to FIC by the SFU department.

FIC collects ongoing informal feedback and formal course evaluations from course coordinators (who are SFU faculty members), instructors, and students at the end of every semester in which courses are offered. Instructor feedback focuses on the overall quality of student performance, the degree to which course material was suited and challenging to the students, and any other issues instructors find relevant to course management. Instructors have provided semesterly feedback to FIC and to SFU course coordinators indicating that student performance at FIC is within reasonable expectations for university level work (normal distribution), and at a level comparable with international students attending other BC colleges.

SFU departmental course coordinators provide advice and regular liaison with FIC instructors and administrators in order to ensure academic equivalency of FIC courses. SFU academic units whose courses are taught by FIC appoint a course coordinator at least 4 weeks prior to the beginning of the semester.

Course coordinators are asked to provide comment on any issues relevant to ensure ongoing course equivalency and maintain academic standards, and are specifically asked to comment on instructor-student dynamics and academic comparability of FIC students to SFU students. Overall, course coordinators have stated that FIC students are performing on a level equivalent to other international students admitted directly or transferring to SFU from other colleges, and that the academic standards in the FIC courses are equivalent to those at SFU.

Student feedback on evaluations has indicated that the majority of students find the courses interesting and challenging. Students have also noted their appreciation of the academic supports provided, related to the pedagogy, instructor availability, and the co-curricular offerings at FIC.

Academic Advisory Committee

Chaired by SFU's Vice President Academic, the AAC has met once a semester since the opening of FIC. The membership and terms of reference of this committee (revised in November 2007 based on feedback from Senate, as indicated in italics) are included as Appendix B of this report. Issues addressed at meetings have included regular semesterly reports from FIC on enrollment and academic performance, and discussion of the quality assurance mechanisms in place to maintain academic standards equivalent to SFU's.

Appendix A

Academic Performance of Transferring Students from FIC

Academic Status of Students who Enter SFU from the Fraser International College (FIC):
Status at the End of the Summer 2008 Term (Term 1084) of Students who Registered in 1084.

Table 1: Students from FIC

	#	Average	% of Students
Total Number of Students	50		
Average Credit Load	9.4		
Average CGPA	2.56		
Academic Status (see notes 1,2):			
GAS	42		86%
OAP/CAP	7		14%
RTW/PW	0		0%
N/A	1		
Faculty (see note 3):			
APSC	4		8%
ARTS	25		50%
BUS	19		38%
EDUC	0		0%
HSCI	0		0%
SCI	2		4%
Intake Semester:			
	# Registered This Semester	# in Original Cohort	% Still Registered
1077	13	19	68%
1081	20	27	74%
1084	17	17	100%

Notes:

1. At present there is a pilot program (the Student Success Program, SSP) that offers some RTW students the chance to remain at SFU if they agree to participate in the program. Due to this program, some students who qualify as RTW students have their academic standing changed to OAP/CAP while they are in the SSP. As such, this table may underestimate the number of RTW students, and overestimate the number of OAP/CAP students.
2. Students with fewer than 9 credits at SFU may not be assigned an academic standing. Also, students who are only taking practicum and certain other types of specialty courses in a given semester will not be assigned an academic standing in that semester. Finally, the total number of enrolled students is taken as of the end of the third week of classes. However, students who subsequently drop all of their classes will not be assigned an academic standing for the semester.
3. Students registered in more than one Faculty are included in all applicable Faculties.
4. Note that FIC students have only been admitted to SFU since Fall 2007, whereas international students may have been admitted much further in the past. As such, the average student in this table has had less time to experience certain outcomes (such as OAP and RTW) than the average international student in Table 2.
5. Source: Jessica Tilley, Institutional Research and Planning, S:\Jessica\Fraser Intl College Report\fic_data.prg
6. Date: November 7, 2008

Academic Status of All International Students (excluding FIC)
 Status at the End of the Summer 2008 Term (Term 1084) of Students who Registered in 1084.

Table 2: All International Undergraduate Students (excluding FIC)

	Average	% of Students
Total Number of Students	1461	
Average Credit Load	8.9	
Average CGPA	2.60	
Academic Status (see notes 1,2):		
GAS	1191	89%
OAP/CAP	114	9%
RTW/PW	28	2%
N/A	128	
Faculty (see note 3):		
APSC	292	20%
ARTS	610	42%
BUS	394	27%
EDUC	7	0%
HSCI	8	1%
SCI	164	11%

Notes:

1. At present there is a pilot program (the Student Success Program, SSP) that offers some RTW students the chance to remain at SFU if they agree to participate in the program. Due to this program, some students who qualify as RTW students have their academic standing changed to OAP/CAP while they are in the SSP. As such, this table may underestimate the number of RTW students, and overestimate the number of OAP/CAP students.
2. Students with fewer than 9 credits at SFU may not be assigned an academic standing. Also, students who are only taking practicum and certain other types of specialty courses in a given semester will not be assigned an academic standing in that semester. Finally, the total number of enrolled students is taken as of the end of the third week of classes. However, students who subsequently drop all of their classes will not be assigned an academic standing for the semester.
3. Students registered in more than one Faculty are included in all applicable Faculties.
4. Note that FIC students have only been admitted to SFU since Fall 2007, whereas international students may have been admitted much further in the past. As such, the average student in this table has had more time to experience certain outcomes (such as OAP and RTW) than the average FIC student in Table 1.
5. Source: Jessica Tilley, Institutional Research and Planning, S:\Jessica\Fraser Intl College Report\fic_data.prg
6. Date: November 7, 2008

Appendix B
SFU-FIC
Academic Advisory Committee

Membership

Chair

Jonathan Driver (previously John Waterhouse)

Three (3) members nominated by the University

Doug Allan (replaced in September 2008 by Tom Grieve)

Maureen Fizzell (replaced in September 2008 by Colleen Collins)

Nancy Johnston

Three (3) members nominated by the College

Bev Hudson

Barbara Davis-Leigh

Victoria Heron

Committee manager

Sarah Dench or designate

Terms of Reference

The Academic Advisory Committee shall be responsible for providing advice to the College and the University regarding the University Transfer Program. It will also decide on:

- the manner in which reports are referred back to each of the University and the College;
- the frequency with which it meets, and
- establishing its terms of reference which shall include provision for regular consultation with students.

This Committee will be responsible for tracking and reporting on the following:

- 1) The academic performance of students who transfer from FIC to SFU;
- 2) The number of students who transfer to SFU, their country of origin, the programs into which they transfer, and the number who transfer to other institutions;
- 3) SFU will report annually on activities taken to increase international student recruitment and retention.
- 4) An analysis of increases to departmental workloads resulting from academic oversight of FIC;
- 5) Any concerns that FIC instructors have regarding working conditions;

- 6) FIC will provide statistical information to SFU regarding diversity, including issues such as disability accommodation.

In the case of unresolved disputes related to academic matters such as academic dishonesty, academic appeals, disability accommodation, and academic freedom, the AAC will review, and facilitate resolution. In seeking resolution, the AAC will be guided by SFU's policies and regulations.

The AAC will meet semesterly.