

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

S.03-84

As amended by
Senate 6 Oct 03

TO: Senate
FROM: Chris Giacomantonio
Student Senator

RE: Government Funding Policy
DATE: September 19, 2003

I wish to bring forward the following motions and rationale concerning the impact that the government's cuts have had on accessibility and on the quality of education at Simon Fraser University before the attention of Senate.

Motion:

Whereas Senate recognizes that provincial and federal government underfunding to post-secondary education in ~~Canada~~ ^{BC} is contributing to decreasing quality of and accessibility to post-secondary education in ~~Canada~~ ^{BC}; and

Whereas it is desirable that provincial and federal government increase funding to post-secondary education immediately; therefore, be it resolved

THAT Senate ~~denounces the chronic provincial and federal government underfunding of post-secondary education in Canada~~ and calls on all ^{appropriate} levels of government to make funding of post-secondary education a priority immediately.

Rationale:

Public funding of post-secondary education in British Columbia and Canada has been steadily decreasing for several years, and it appears that it will continue to decrease for the near future. SFU's *Tuition Briefing* (Spring 2002) notes that "the Provincial Government's base operating grant per full-time equivalent student (FTE), measured in constant dollars, has decreased by 3.5 percent while the number of FTE at Simon Fraser University has increased by 12 percent." The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA/BC) warns that "The changes in funding, increased enrollment, and inflation have the combined effect of cutting funding per university student by 3.7% in 2003/04 and another 7.2% in 2004/05" (*Operating Grants Up Next Year, But . . . Per Student Funding to Hit 30-Year Low in 2005/06*, March 21, 2003).

Nearly all stakeholders agree that decreasing public funding of post-secondary education has had a negative impact on the quality and accessibility of post-secondary education, both at Simon Fraser University and also in the larger context. CUFA/BC states that "deteriorating government funding will inevitably result in longer wait lists, more crowded classrooms, and other cuts in program quality and student services."

Similarly, The University President's Council (TUPC) has among its goals the "restoration of university core budgets to close the funding gap between BC universities and comparable institutions located elsewhere in Canada" and "the need for capital funding to meet student demand and to facilitate world class research excellence." (*Creating Opportunity Together*, June 2001).

Nevertheless, the government has ignored the concerns of the various stakeholder groups. Simon Fraser University's budget letter promises severe decreases in operating budget funding over the next three years. It appears as though the government is not listening to the concerns of the universities. For this reason, it is recommended that Senate declare publicly that government policies are *not* improving accessibility for students and are *not* improving the quality of post-secondary education.

And for Chris Giacomantonio