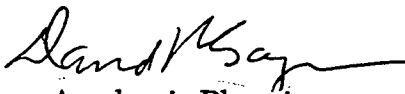


SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: D. Gagan, Chair 
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: External Review / Academic Plan – School of Communication
(SCAP Reference: SCAP 99 - 16)

Date: April 19, 1999

For Information

Attached are:

- Three-Year Plan for the School of Communication and the summary of the External Review

MEMORANDUM
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

SCAP 99-16

DATE: March 26, 1999
TO: Alison Watt, Secretary, SCAP
FROM: Ron Marteniuk, Dean, Faculty of Applied Sciences
RE: School of Communication External Review – SCAP Approval

Enclosed please find the relevant documents in regard to the School of Communication external review. I now wish to put forward the motion which follows:

Amended motion approved by SCAP April 14, 1999:

That SCAP approve the Academic Plan for the School of Communication and forward it to Senate for information.



Ron Marteniuk, Dean
Faculty of Applied Sciences

RM/lc

Enclosures



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

PLANNING & PRIORITIES: A 3-Year Perspective

Simon Fraser University

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November 1997

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION PLANNING AND PRIORITIES: A 3-YEAR PERSPECTIVE

November 1997

1. THE MISSION

The mission of the School of Communication is to explore, understand, and critically evaluate the interplay of communication, information, and social, economic, and cultural environments through advanced research, the highest quality teaching, and engagement with local, national, and international communities.

Communication is interdisciplinary, building on a wide range of intellectual traditions and disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities. It focuses on the analysis of the context and means by which information and knowledge are created, packaged, circulated, interpreted, controlled, and contested. The study of communication has become important in the creation and critical evaluation of legal and public policies in broadcasting, telecommunications, human interactions with technology, education, and community and international development. As well, the study of communication has become prominent in the professions, notably law, education, health promotion, and counseling, as well as in the fields of business administration, advertising, media criticism and broadcasting.

The School openly embraces a diversity of theoretical traditions and methodologies, but it is most readily distinguished by the fact that it treats communication as a social science with both theoretical and applied dimensions. Students are given wide opportunities to explore communication theory and practice, and are encouraged to apply research and theory to issues and problems in societies and cultures.

2. THE CONTEXT: TOWARDS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

This three-year plan is driven by principles of academic excellence and social commitment. These principles necessarily involve an analysis of the work of the School itself, on its own terms, and in terms of the broader contexts of the university and society.

Every academic discipline must address changes and innovations not only within its research and teaching purview, but also must recognize that its theories, methods, and teaching approaches should understand, adapt to, critique, and elucidate changes in broader social environments. For the study of communication, this context of change is particularly accelerated and complex. Whatever the field of research in the discipline—media and popular culture, international and intercultural communication, policy and political economy, technology and society, and others—the ground upon which the discipline is defined is dynamic, shifting with frequency and swiftness.

Communication as a discipline is not founded on a unified, coherent intellectual or research tradition—indeed its sources are multiple and diverse, and are reflected in its ever-changing parameters of study. It is a field of inquiry that is defined by its interdisciplinary nature, and its particular fields of research are informed by, and in turn have influenced numerous and varied studies in the social sciences and humanities. Unencumbered by rigid disciplinary categories, and with its wide-ranging and diversified research and teaching concerns, communication has been especially effective in adapting to new themes and

developments in its field, as well as to emerging demands—critical and applied—from society as a whole.

This broader societal context also involves the changing political, social and economic conditions within which the university operates, and by which it understands its role, its responsibilities, its commitments, and ultimately, its importance. In this country for at least the past decade, there have been numerous reports, policy initiatives, public debates, critical commentary, and projects of research on the nature of the university in Canadian society. The issues raised have been considerable, and at times, controversial: budgetary constraints, the purpose of university education and training, faculty renewals, academic freedom, private and public sector relationships, the “corporatization” of the university, the relationship of the university to the community, teaching (loads, commitments, performance, and performance indicators), the potentials and applications of new educational technologies, debates over “virtual education” and “modularized curricula”, expanding definitions of, and approaches to “telelearning” and distance education, core curricula, the integrity of academic programs and traditional disciplines, new approaches to both research and teaching, the university in the age of globalism, the university and citizenship, and many others.

In all of the fields of research and teaching that constitute the foundation of the curriculum of the graduate and undergraduate programs in the School of Communication, these issues are part of daily examination, analysis, and discussion. From the particular pedagogical work in the lecture hall or seminar room, to the reflection, analysis, and articulation of the vision, goals, strategies, and practical actions and plans of the School, these issues are key and compelling. There are ongoing challenges for the School to maintain the excellence of its programs while working towards critical goals: to innovate, hone, and elaborate the curriculum; to introduce and carry out new research that both responds to, and anticipates, the changing needs and demands of society with regard to the dynamic fields of theoretical and applied communication; to maintain its teaching excellence, and to define and implement new and creative approaches to pedagogy in the university; to explore the key and productive relationships with the Faculty of Applied Sciences and with other academic units and faculties within the university; to make substantial and significant contributions to the community through its work; to enhance its leadership role in the field of communication studies in Canada, and its prominence worldwide.

The concrete actions described in this plan are designed with these goals in mind, and these actions have been developed through broad consultation within the School. The actions map an ambitious project for the medium future. With few exceptions, these actions are achievable given continued support from the faculty and the university, and a stable funding base at current levels.

3. THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

The three-year plan for the undergraduate program of the School of Communication can be organized around two major objectives, each of which involves a substantial set of consequences and actions:

1. Re-Structuring

Objectives:

To define approximately 5 core “fields of study” out of the current 14 areas of concentration listed in the calendar, and to develop a coherent and coordinated structure to the undergraduate program.

Actions:

- Establish a formal process—directed by the undergraduate program committee—to review, define, and implement a plan for a curriculum organized by core fields of study.
- Carry out a review of all undergraduate course offerings for placement under appropriate fields.
- Update and revise the system of prerequisites.
- Review and revise if appropriate, 100-level introductory courses to reflect the new fields of study.
- Review the utilization of senior faculty in lower level courses.

2. Course Descriptions, Planning, Scheduling

Objectives:

To review and update calendar course descriptions (where needed), and assess and revise undergraduate course scheduling to incorporate teaching plans of individual faculty and the needs of the restructured curriculum.

Actions:

- Establish a formal process for review and revision of course descriptions, to be directed by the undergraduate program committee.
- Under the direction of the Administrative Assistant and the Chair of the undergraduate program committee, introduce a 3-year teaching and course scheduling plan for the School, and implement that plan.

Enrollment Plan

The School of Communication is a teaching-intensive unit with the highest average teaching load and the highest ratio of FTE to faculty in the Faculty of Applied Sciences. The School ranks in the same high ratio category when compared to most departments in the Faculty of Arts.

In 1994, the School raised its GPA entrance requirements to manage its undergraduate enrollments. The School has frozen its MaxE model at 1900 for the fall semester, 1900 for the spring semester, and 800 for the summer semester. Measures towards enrollment management, along with high teaching loads, and an effective use of the tutorial system have all contributed to our capacity to maintain an outstanding teaching performance across the School.

TA budgets have declined, yet our enrollments over the last three years have remained relatively stable, with a slight increase this year. At present, there are 600 majors approved or intended, and the School plans to move towards a direct admissions policy. The School's philosophy toward, and record of excellence in teaching, drives its planning around course scheduling, faculty renewal, and Sessional and TA budgeting. The School recognizes that it can only just handle its enrollments with the currently allocated resources. To expand capacity, the School would require additional Sessional and TA budget, and substantial increases would require additional faculty. Without additional resources, the School would work to maintain the status quo—the School feels that it is imperative to meet demand as effectively as possible without sacrificing the quality of instruction and the indispensable pedagogical contribution of the tutorial system.

4. THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The three-year plan for the graduate program of the School of Communication can be organized around objectives for achievement in four areas of activity and responsibility:

1. Curriculum Planning and Development

Objectives:

To regularize course offerings over a 3 year cycle, and review the core course offerings.

Actions:

- Move to a 3-Year Plan for curriculum by 98-3.
- Initiate approvals for a new course—CMNS 846, Knowledge Systems and Development—to begin in the 1999-2000 calendar year.
- Develop core theory and method course outlines and a plan/schedule of teaching rotation for faculty for these courses every year.
- Identify recommended graduate courses from other departments to supplement the School's program offerings.

2. Streamlining Program Requirements

Objectives:

To reduce the elapsed time in the program for Masters students.

To facilitate the transition between courses and comprehensive examinations for Ph.D students.

To improve exit evaluations concerning the quantity and quality of supervision.

Actions:

- Articulate norms for the scope of the M.A. thesis (4 chapters, 100 pages, completed in one semester) by 98-1.
- Develop and promote the Project/Essay Option by 98-2.
- Re-assess current Ph.D comprehensive examinations format
- Develop bi-annual Supervisor's Colloquium by 98-3.
- Reinforce and enhance supervisory relationships through the following possible strategies: a) introduce an informal expectation of a meeting in January for each graduate student to present a study plan, and to prepare the student for the completion of the "aqua report" at the end of May b) develop and articulate norms with regard to "satisfactory"/"unsatisfactory" evaluation designations c) seek a means to formalize student-supervisor expectations.

3. Funding/RAships

Objectives:

To stabilize and increase financial support for graduate students.

To set reasonable limits for the length of funding support for graduate students.

To reinforce procedural equity in the allocation of financial support.

To improve the success rates in the competitions for external awards.

To explore additional scholarship opportunities, and to work to secure such scholarships.

To monitor the size of the graduate program in terms of funding (current and projected).

Actions:

- Redirect as much as possible of the sessional budget from external to internal applicants.
- Develop a database that profiles the financial support history for every student in the program.
- Review levels and practices of providing financial support to incoming students.
- Seek to raise 10% of the TA budget over the next three years through special scholarships donated by external sources.
- Introduce written committee evaluations of applications for awards by 98-3 (and 97-3 for SSHRC).
- Work toward the following capital grants objectives, and appropriate budget development: common room, computers, voice mail support for active TAs (will require additional resources).
- Introduce a discretionary budget line item attached to the Graduate Studies Committee.

4. Partnerships/Transition Programs

Objectives:

To develop community outreach programs through co-op placements.

To promote more interdisciplinary exchange, particularly among graduate students moving from M.A. to Ph.D programs.

Actions:

- Introduce a Graduate Co-op Program on a two-year trial in 98-3.
- Develop cross-listed core courses with the Masters of Publishing Program and with the Sing Tao School of Journalism at UBC.
- Support the MPPM initiative to build policy fields.
- Develop graduate exchanges (ECCIS and others).

Enrollment Plan

The School of Communication is one of just three Canadian doctoral programs in the discipline, and the only program in western Canada. Demand for graduate admission is to the program substantial—typically, the School receives 120-140 applications for 15 to 20 places (combined M.A. and Ph.D) each year.

Graduate student support—packaged on a case-by-case basis from a variety of sources (TAs, fellowships, scholarships, and whatever research assistant budget is available from individual faculty)—remains an ongoing challenge. In 1995-96, the School attempted to support incoming students through five of their first six semesters in the program. By 1997-98, the School is attempting to assure some type of funding for students through three of the first six semesters; two students were offered no support, but accepted admission.

The School has a provision for part-time graduate studies. This option is utilized by some students who have employment and family commitments. Those who chose this option tend to remain in the program longer, and obviously extend the completion time of their degrees.

The graduate enrollment has been stable at an average of approximately 80 active full-time and part-time students. The School would like to maintain this number over the next three years, but with declining budgets, the School recognizes that it must review the amount of funding it can offer, as well as the number of new graduate students admitted each year. As noted above, the School is undertaking an initiative to raise outside funds for the support of graduate students which would amount to 10% of the current TA budget.

4.a GRADUATE CAUCUS

The Graduate Caucus Report for the School of Communication 3-Year Plan offers a number of proposals and actions for the improvement and development of the graduate program in four key categories:

1. Curriculum: Courses and Scheduling

Objectives:

To establish a foundation in the program that would serve the diverse backgrounds of graduate students coming into the program.

To regularize course offerings.

Actions:

- Review current core course offerings and modify some of the content of these courses to address the need to have an introductory, foundational component in the graduate program.
- Regularize core offerings.
- Regularize all course offerings.
- Survey incoming students to determine new student program intentions, directions, and needs.

2. Graduate Research Group

Objective:

To elaborate the template for the proposed graduate research group, IMPACT—defined specifically to provide graduate students with research and funding opportunities—and develop this model over the next year.

Actions:

- Seek to create a paid position for a graduate student to work with faculty to develop and implement the Graduate Research Group, with a mission to facilitate unsolicited research contracts, and to explore other projects and funding possibilities (will require additional funding).

3. Supervision

Objective:

To ameliorate the problem of vastly over-subscribed faculty members in the capacity of Senior Supervisor, and to help to create a more equitable distribution of supervisory responsibilities.

Actions:

- Introduce faculty to graduate students more effectively through bi-monthly informal presentations by faculty members on their current areas of research.

4. Graduate Co-Operative Education

Objective:

To develop and implement a co-op program for graduate students.

Actions:

- Work closely with the Co-op Coordinator and appropriate and interested faculty to formulate and implement a Graduate Co-op program on a trial basis.

5. FACULTY RENEWAL

As noted above (Enrollment Plan, The Undergraduate Program), the School of Communication has the highest ratio of FTE to faculty in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and one of the highest in the university. The need for faculty renewal is ongoing and urgent.

There has been some preliminary discussion in the School concerning the designation of an area of the program most in need of faculty renewal, and the area of political economy has been strongly identified for renewal and expansion. While many faculty members have noted that issues in political economy constitute components of their courses, there is a clear sense that in the interests of renewing one of the School's great traditional strengths, this area requires a full-time faculty member. This discussion will be formalized in the coming year, and the precise area(s) for urgently needed faculty will be determined.

6. CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

The School's Co-operative Education program (Co-op) is a vital educational component of the undergraduate program, and offers students a paid work experience related to their studies. Indeed, numerous co-op students have established important foundations for building careers in communication through this program, and have pursued work in their co-op fields after graduation.

There are three broad objectives for planning over the next three years:

1. Personnel

The Co-op program will seek to increase the number of Co-op Coordinators to 1.5 FTE by 98-1.

2. Graduate Co-op

A top priority of the School's co-op program is to begin an initiative towards the introduction of a graduate co-op by 98-3. The Co-op Coordinator will work with the Graduate Chair and the Graduate Studies Committee towards the following actions:

- Identify and address research ethics concerns (December 1997)
- Undertake a feasibility study with existing undergraduate employers (January 1998)
- Design workshops on "workplace readiness" for the graduate students (June 1998)
- Coordinate the first group postings (September-December 1998)

- Evaluate the process and the program (throughout planning and implementation)

3. Expansion of Work Opportunities

While the Co-op Coordinator works on an ongoing basis to expand the available work opportunities, there will be specific areas targeted for development as co-op work placements including placements in film, television, radio, newspapers, and policy research.

7. STAFF

The performance of the administrative support staff of School of Communication has been outstanding over many years, and often in difficult circumstances. In many ways the staff has a unique and "insider" view of the operations of the School, and their perspectives on possible changes in administrative operations over the next three years are important for consideration and action. These actions include:

- Increase the technical support from 1.6 to 2.0 (will require additional funding)—the increasing demands on staff demonstrate an urgent need for expanding technical support.
- Continue to develop the more effective use of information technologies to facilitate communication within the School, and between the School and the faculty, the university, and the community.
- Provide training workshops for faculty, sessionals, TAs, and students for use of technical facilities (where necessary).
- Encourage the university to "tailor" the available professional development courses for staff to the specific needs of administrative support staff within the university context—as well, new courses need to be developed with a focus on the realities of university operations (database management, advanced word-processing, time-management/organization, for examples).
- Enforce strict deadlines for faculty in the submission of course descriptions/outlines and coursebook/software orders in line with a 3-year advance teaching plan .

8. RELATIONS WITH THE FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

In a 1988 mission statement, the School of Communication (then the Department of Communication) described itself as "unanimously and wholeheartedly committed to its placement in the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Membership in the faculty has been concurrent with unprecedented growth and strengthening of the Department. The Department feels that this situation is by no means coincidental."

Over the ten years since this statement, the relationship with the Faculty of Applied Sciences has been somewhat uneven in terms of the "fit". Given the interdisciplinary approaches of the School, it is not surprising that there are voices within the unit that express the view that the School is somewhat out of place in the faculty.

Three factors in recent years have helped to elaborate and strengthen the relationship between the School and the Faculty of Applied Sciences: an increased emphasis on laboratory-based instruction; four recent appointments (Anderson, Balka, Lewis, Smith) who rely heavily on, and have extended laboratory-based and applied instruction; an

increasing understanding and appreciation within the faculty of the unique work and special contributions of the School.

1. Technically-Based Research and Instruction

As early as 1988, there was an increasing focus within the School on developing and extending technically-based research and instruction capacities. These developments included the upgrading of the Sonic Studio to permit digital signal processing and radio structure analysis, the installation and ongoing expansion of the Media Analysis Lab for computerized image analysis and some production, and the creation of several industry databases. A computer instructional facility has been developed in increments over the years to handle the increasing demand for classroom laboratory instruction in electronic communication. A video news-gathering and video information processing lab was added with extraordinary funding from external and internal sources.

Building on these developments to the present, the School supplements many of its undergraduate courses with laboratory work in an applied setting. The School intends to continue to extend and expand its technically-based research activities and teaching strategies, and at present, the School is upgrading a technician to address emerging needs and demands in the area. Further technical support however, is urgently needed.

2. New Faculty Complement

The School's four recent appointments (Anderson, Balka, Lewis, Smith) all rely on, and are deeply committed to laboratory-based instruction. As well, each is active in applied communication research. This new faculty complement, added to the already substantial base of critical applied research interests in the School, make it certain that this orientation of the School's activities will continue to grow over the next three years.

3. Potential Contribution of the Critical Communication Perspective

There is an increasing appreciation within the Faculty of Applied Sciences of the potential contribution that a critical communication perspective can bring to the faculty as a whole. Research concerns in the School are understood to be relevant to the research concerns of other schools in the faculty: telecommunications policy, interface design, ethical and cultural dimensions of new technologies, technological innovation and management, new media, regulatory analysis, and the analysis and critique of communication industry structures, for examples. As has been noted at the faculty level, the School's approach in communication studies can contribute substantially to developing and deepening further critical awareness of many of the key research issues in the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

In particular, the Dean has asked the School to explore this role through increased instructional links, expanded research links, and greater dialogue with other schools in the faculty. Ellen Balka for example, has developed a new course designed to bring critical technology/social values issues to students across the faculty, and is developing a research lab—Assessment of Technology in Context Design Lab (ATIC-dl)—to analyze these issues from cross-disciplinary perspectives.

9. RELATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

The School of Communication is one Simon Fraser University's most active, ambitious, and visible programs in terms of its university and community activities and profiles. The School is committed to its numerous and varied initiatives at the university and community levels, and over the next three years, the School intends to reinforce and in some areas, expand the already solid and mutually beneficial links in these contexts. An overview of these linkages is described here:

Harbour Centre Campus

Five years ago, the School defined a strategy and rationale for its prominent role at the Harbour Centre campus. This plan requires updating over the next year, and the School is committed to elaborating its contributions to programs at Harbour Centre.

Since its beginning, Harbour Centre has been a focus for the expansion of teaching programs by the School, and the School has contributed significantly to the success of Harbour Centre. At present, the School is one of the most active participants in teaching programs at Harbour Centre with approximately 36 classes, and still growing. Further, the School is one of the few Burnaby-based programs offering graduate-level courses at the Harbour Centre campus. Harbour Centre is also the site of the School's associate Centres—Centre for Policy Research on Science and Technology, David See-Chai Lam Centre for International Communication, and the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing (see "Research Centres" below).

For some courses offered by the School at Harbour Centre, Extension Credit provides support for TAs and stipends for instruction, and is committed to continuing with this support. The School will continue to offer courses downtown, and will work to further organize and rationalize its offerings over the next year, particularly with regard to the new streams or fields of study to be developed for the undergraduate program..

Research Centres

There are a number of research centres and research projects linked to the School—David See-Chai Lam Centre for International Communication, Centre for Policy Research on Science and Technology (CPROST), Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, Newswatch Canada (formerly Project Censored). All of the Centres have contributed to the teaching and research initiatives of the School, and are a large and growing part of the School's training of graduate students, faculty research programs, and interactions with the community. As well, the Centres are the sites of externally-funded research projects including, the NSERC/SSHRC/Vancity ASI Chair, the TeleLearning Network of Centres of Excellence initiative, the AT&T grant, and others. The School is committed to enhance these key relationships.

International Links

Based on recent work of a number of faculty to establish links, particularly in the form of student and faculty exchanges, with the international academic institutions, the School plans to continue to forge new international relationships for academic exchange. The School plans to explore institutional links in strategic partnership initiatives (both private and public sector linkages in a range of projects, from telelearning to emergency communication to the assessment of technology in the workplace).

Community Outreach

The School of Communication is a major contributor among university units and programs to the broader community. The program "On The Hill" is supervised and produced out of the School for community television, and is exemplary of what outreach can accomplish. It should be noted as well that numerous faculty members of the School serve on community boards and foundations, and as advisors to numerous citizens and advocacy groups. Their work in these capacities constitutes significant community outreach, as well as enhancing the citizenship role that the university must continue to play in the broader community.

It is important to note that the faculty of the School are the university's most frequent and active contributors to local, provincial, and national media. Gruneau, Hackett, Klein, Laba, and Murray are particularly prominent critics, commentators, and opinion leaders in

the media, and the their work brings substantial and positive profile to the university. These faculty are committed to elaborating their efforts in the media over the next three years, and have begun consideration of a formal "media relations" group for the School.

Consulting

Numerous faculty members of the School are active in areas of consulting, and there are considerable and enduring benefits that accrue to the School and its programs through this work. Telecommunications and broadcasting policy and regulation, population health/health promotion, multiculturalism policy and promotion, media education, human rights, international development, youth programs, risk communication, emergency preparedness, and many other issues are the subjects of such consultancies which have contributed in concrete and practical ways to the School's curriculum, research agenda, and in some cases, support of graduate students.

Joint Programs

The School of Communication has developed joint programs with the Faculty of Business Administration and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. The School will work to enhance these joint programs, and these important links to other units and faculties in the university, and will explore wherever appropriate, joint programs with other disciplines.

Service Courses

As part of the School's role in the university community, and its commitment to this community, the service courses it offers (or is currently planning to offer) are an important contribution to university-wide teaching. At present, M.A. students in a wide range of programs benefit from the School's offering in International Communication, and an Introduction to Information Technology (Smith) will soon be offered as a new and significant service course.

Adjunct Professors

The School has a number of Adjunct Professors connected to its research, teaching, and centres, and these adjunct appointments, particularly those connected with CPROST and the Harbour Centre programs, have been extremely valuable resources for the School. Contributions have been made by these Adjunct Professors to undergraduate and graduate teaching, and to important planning debates within the School, especially in the areas of curriculum development and the exploration of outside funding sources for programs and support.

CONCLUSION

The actions defined in this 3-Year Plan of the School of Communication represent considered, strategic, and practical measures towards the mission, and both short-term and long-terms goals of the School. While ambitious, this plan is designed to be, above all, achievable. The plan is the result of a comprehensive process of consultation, and has established within the School, an ongoing discussion of the School's development: its vision and mission; its teaching and research agendas and goals; its role and contributions—past, current, and potential—in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and in the university; its leadership in the discipline; and its relationship and influence in the community.

The goals and actions outlined are meant to reflect and articulate the numerous components and constituencies that comprise the School, and to synthesize the many concerns, perspectives, and objectives into a strategic plan of particular and collective action for

development and achievement. The School's approach here has involved a rigorous examination and detailed analysis of both micro- and macro-level concerns in the strategic planning process. As noted in the above section, "The Context: Towards Academic Excellence and Social Commitment," the School understands its work towards this plan to be informed by factors that are specific to the programs, research, and operations of the School, and by factors that situate the work and the goals of the School in a broader set of relationships and determinations related to the discipline, the faculty, the university, and society.

Accordingly, the School has emphasized an innovative approach to planning—one that connects the work of the School to the broader social environment. The objectives and actions described in this plan are strategic and practical steps in the School's ongoing development and record of achievement; and as noted at the beginning of this report, this plan is driven by the School's abiding focus on both academic excellence and social commitment.

**EXTERNAL REVIEW:
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY'S
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
1998**

Submitted by:

Dr. Roger delaGarde
Laval University

Dr. Gertrude Robinson
McGill University

Dr. David Taras, Committee Chair
University of Calgary

G) Conclusions and Review of Recommendations

The Review Committee found that Simon Fraser's School of Communication has maintained its position as one of the leaders in Communications research and teaching in Canada. The School is enormously productive by an conceivable standard of achievement; publications, research grants and contracts, the high numbers of students that it attracts, the excellence of its graduate students, its commitment to the success of the Harbour Centre Campus and to the university's high profile research centres and the extent to which key faculty members play prominent roles as "gatekeepers" in the Communications field. We have argued that the School is one of Simon Fraser's most important franchises, one of its major distinguishing characteristics.

Yet we have also concluded that unless some changes are made the School may lose its cutting edge. Its strength is being sapped by the loss of important faculty members to research centres without the School being adequately compensated for those losses. The committee would like to see this situation rectified so that the School is fully compensated for the subsidy that it grants to the university's research centres. We are also concerned that the TA system - the backbone that supports much of the teaching and research effort as well as the graduate program - is being gradually eroded by cuts. We strongly endorse a continued commitment to the TA system and warn of potentially significant consequences if the TA system is allowed to collapse. In addition, we argue that a far greater degree of organization and efficiency has to be brought to both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The number of streams has to be reduced at the undergraduate level, students have to be assured that the courses that they need will be offered on a permanent and regular basis, schedules have to be set far in advance so that students can plan their programs and the number of courses offered at both levels needs to be reduced. At the graduate level, guidelines need to be written which will specify the obligations that supervisors have to their graduate students such as setting a minimum number of meetings per trimester. Some thought has to be given to ways in which the transition from interim to permanent supervisors can be accomplished without placing students in an embarrassing and untenable situation. Unless action is taken on these fronts, student disappointment and resentment are bound to increase and fester.

We were asked to evaluate the "fit" between the School and the Faculty of Applied Sciences. While the fit remains an issue for some faculty members and indeed within the university community, the principle sore points are whether the School suffers

disproportionately when budget cuts are applied equally, and whether the School is being forced to vacate important areas in the Communication field in order to comply with the priorities of Applied Sciences. We have cause for concern on both of these counts. Moreover, the Review Committee was perplexed, even astonished, by the fact that the School was barely mentioned in the Faculty's Three Year Plan even though the School is one of Simon Fraser's most distinctive assets. In our view, the plan should be rewritten so that the interests and priorities of the School can be properly reflected.

The Review Committee also looked at library resources and thought that the Communications collection needed upgrading. We evaluated the School's attitudes towards the TL-NCE and found that there was no deep seeded resistance or hostility to the project. In fact, faculty members are well positioned on an individual basis to contribute important critical perspectives on the development of these technologies.

The last question that we addressed was faculty renewal in the face of so many possible retirements in the next 6 to 8 years. In our view, the university should anticipate the approaching "retirement shock" by creating bridging positions so that the School's faculty compliment can be gradually and systematically replenished.

Our report also includes a number of charts in an appendix. These documents will help readers understand some of the developments that have taken place in the undergraduate and graduate teaching programs.



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Response to the
Report of the
External Reviewers

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January 1999

RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEWERS: *EXTERNAL REVIEW: SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION, 1998*

A. An Overview

The report of the external reviewers identifies and emphasizes the important role played by the School of Communication in the success of Simon Fraser University in a national context.

The review characterizes the School as "one of the University's important flagships, one of its key signatures," and as a critical and dominant factor in the broader "public image" of Simon Fraser University. According to the reviewers, the School of Communication has contributed to the outstanding record of achievement and the national reputation earned by the University in its teaching, its research and public service.

The reviewers describe the School as a leader in a discipline for which Canada has been the international originator and innovator, and for which the country is internationally renowned. The reviewers note that the School of Communication is one of the most important positive distinguishing features between Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia.

The reviewers cite the leadership of the School in a number of crucial communications areas: new media and applied communications, critical media studies, policy studies, and others; they note that the School houses the only doctoral communications program in Western Canada; that the School is the home of the *Canadian Journal of Communication*; that the School is a "magnet" for graduate students in Canada and around the globe; that the graduates and faculty of the School are especially prominent critics, policy-makers, and "gatekeepers" in the communications field (private and public sectors).

The reviewers argue that in the diverse and varied critical perspectives that comprise the research and teaching of the School, an effective synthesis of interests has been accomplished: this range of interests has coalesced into a "common 'academic culture'" which is "recognized as distinct" in the field, and has earned a "high standing" in the community of Communication scholars in Canada. The reviewers articulate this culture in terms of its emphasis on applied, public communication perspectives; that is, "how citizens and consumers interact with media and communications technologies in both private and public realms."

According to the reviewers, while the School has established a solid foundation for maintaining, extending and elaborating its innovative and highly regarded academic

projects in research and teaching, a number of serious threats could compromise or erode its strengths and its standing. Specifically, the reviewers point to a broadly deteriorating budget situation ("aching and chronic issues of under-funding"); threats to the TA system (which they characterize as the "backbone for much of the teaching, graduate support and research") brought on by this budgetary situation; and difficulties related to the School's capacity to renew its faculty, with an aging faculty and many faculty secondments.

At the same time, the reviewers identify a number of additional critical and urgent programmatic problems for the School to address: there are too many streams and too many courses offered in the undergraduate program; there is too much flexibility in the administration of the graduate programs; there are too many graduate students; and there are too many outside commitments on the part of full-time faculty. Overall, the reviewers suggest that the School is "stretched too thin," particularly in the context of budgetary limitations and diminishing resources.

None of these conclusions are surprising. Nor do we contest them. All have been previously identified by the School in its planning and priorities process, and addressed in a meticulous and comprehensive manner in our 3-Year Plan. In fact, the external review document serves to re-emphasize the urgency of the actions proposed in the 3-Year Plan.

B. The School of Communication and the Faculty of Applied Sciences

An area of particular concern to the reviewers was the "fit" of the School in the Faculty of Applied Sciences. The School is working hard to develop and elaborate a solid and productive partnership within the Faculty of Applied Sciences, a fit which takes advantage of our particular strengths. Faculty members within the School have been dedicated to the development of new applied areas of research and teaching; at the same time, the Dean of the Faculty has recognized the need for, and the benefits of, the School's critical social, cultural, and policy perspectives on issues around technology and the information society.

The 3-Year Plan outlined three areas of development and enhancement with regard to the School's role and contributions to the Faculty of Applied Sciences. These three areas express a commitment to work within, and help to extend the work of the Faculty, and offer positive and practical strategies toward the achievement of a solid fit. The areas included were defined in terms of the following actions: (1) to expand the components of technically-based research and instruction which have already become core in the School's undergraduate programs; (2) to continue our commitment to laboratory-based instruction, and the direction established by recent faculty appointments; (3) to develop synergies and extend certain research areas of the School in the direction of some of the research concerns of the Faculty (areas such as telecommunications policy, interface design, ethical and cultural and social dimensions of new technologies, technological innovation and management, new media, regulatory analysis, and the analysis and critique of

communication industry structures). The reviewers identify the current, planned, and potential contributions of numerous faculty in each of these areas.

The reviewers contend that the School is unique in the Faculty in terms of many factors, and the School and Faculty continue to explore the mutual benefits of this "uniqueness." Overall, the School is pleased with its relationship with the Dean, and with the other schools of the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Creative work on all sides is always needed (as noted by the reviewers), and it is interesting to point out that major expressions of concern about "fit" seem to have come from senior administrators outside the Faculty. Our 3-Year Plan is evidence of the School's commitment to the Faculty, and its capacity to respond, adapt, and innovate in its research and teaching-- to address needs of the Faculty, broader societal changes and demands, and disciplinary demands at the same time.

C. Secondments, the TA System and Budgets

The reviewers recognize the historically serious problem of secondments, in terms of the loss of senior faculty members. They note as well that the School, in essence, subsidizes some of the activities carried out under secondments. They argue full compensation for secondments.

The reviewers offer a very detailed profile of the TA system in relation to both the School and the University as a whole. The reviewers note that support for the TA system—"passionate and unwavering"—runs throughout the entire School. The significance of this system is strongly defended by the reviewers: "The TA system is seen as a kind of 'bottom line'—an institution that is integral to the School's essential mission, the linchpin for many of its most important activities." They assert that the TA system is a defining principle, a "building block" of the Simon Fraser University model of teaching and program delivery. They argue that research productivity of faculty members is enhanced by the TA system, and that it is an important mentoring/training experience for graduate students.

The reviewers strongly recommend the preservation of the TA system without substantial reductions to other budget lines. The School, of course, agrees with the recommendation, but understands that preservation without reduction is possible only within a context of stable resources or new resources from the University. On a practical level, when budget cuts are announced, only two areas are truly available and thus vulnerable: the budgets lines for faculty and for TAs.

D. The Graduate Program and Library Resources

All of the major recommendations of the external reviewers with regard to the graduate program were addressed in specific terms in the School's 3-Year Plan. The reviewers

suggest that the quality of the graduate program “be assessed in terms of its structure, breadth and depth of course offerings, student quality, graduate student progress and completion rates and post-graduate employment.” The 3-Year Plan’s articulation of future developments for the graduate program is the result of exactly the assessment recommended. The plan outlines rationale, strategies, and actions planned in five categories: curriculum planning and development; streamlining program requirements; funding/RAships; partnerships/transition programs; and enrollment.

The reviewers highlight eight issues (including four recommendations) that merit a brief response through reference to on-going actions outlined in the 3-Year Plan.

The reviewers call for an evaluation of the structure, breadth, and depth of course offerings.

The Graduate Studies Committee has struck area-related working groups (faculty and graduate students) to carry out an assessment of theory and methods courses, and offer recommendations in terms of current course content, new and emerging issues in Communication studies, and new courses needed. The 3-Year Plan defines as a priority action the development of core theory and method course outlines, and a teaching rotation plan for faculty for these courses.

The reviewers raise questions about the optimal size of the program with reference to the number of admissions each year.

The School responds that it is one of just three Canadian doctoral programs in the discipline, and the only program in western Canada. The demand for graduate admission is substantial—typically the School receives 120-140 applications for 15 to 20 places (combined MA and Ph.D.) each year. The 3-Year Plan identified a stable graduate enrollment of approximately 80 active full-time and part-time students. In fact, new admissions were reduced to 11, and the current graduate enrollment is 75. The School maintains that this number is the smallest sustainable size, given the demand for and uniqueness of the program.

The reviewers recommend that a 3-year rotating curriculum plan be designed and implemented.

In fact the School’s 3-Year Plan defines the first action for the graduate program as a move to a 3-year curriculum plan, and this action is underway.

The reviewers call for a tighter set of supervisor-student relations.

The 3-Year Plan called for a number of actions, which are now in the implementation stage: supervisor workshops; mandatory meetings and a rigorous schedule of meetings; “interim supervisor” becomes “interim advisor” to facilitate the student’s task of finding a permanent supervisor quickly; new administrative measures to ensure that students meet their targets and deadlines. We have developed new guidelines for supervision, new guidelines for theses and projects, and workshops for preparation.

The reviewers call for a review of "low enrollment" courses.

The Graduate Studies Committee suggests that the reviewers' figures were skewed by CMNS 855. Many graduate students enroll in this course which most often involves one or two graduate students attending an undergraduate 4th-year course, with additional meeting/seminar times and additional and expanded written requirements. Still, the Committee is carrying out a review of courses and enrollments at this time.

The reviewers call for changes to the scheduling of doctoral comprehensives, and suggest that the exams be made more "user friendly".

As per the 3-Year Plan, schedules have been established, and new guidelines have been developed, approved, and introduced.

The reviewers suggest that the "on leave" arrangements are quite liberal, and that the School seek to "tighten up" these arrangements.

"On leave" arrangements are a matter of University policy, and not the jurisdiction of the School. We do support tighter University regulations in this matter. We also stress that there is a substantial competitive market pull for our graduate students; as noted below, many of our students are full-time or part-time professionals. As well, internal support is limited: a soft guarantee for two TAships or \$10,000 annually for two years. Given these factors, and the extremely high living costs in Vancouver, it is difficult to reduce leaves without increasing support from other sources. The School is involved in an ongoing effort to raise additional funds for graduate student support, which would help in some measure to ameliorate this issue.

The reviewers express concern over the completion times of graduates, while they acknowledge that Communication graduate students at Simon Fraser have a different profile than graduates in most other programs: we accept part-time students, many of our graduates are older, and many of our students are professionals who continue to work (journalists, broadcasters, government agency workers, communication policy professionals, college instructors, and others).

The School recognizes the need to work toward more timely program completion. Certainly as a first step, the School feels that the measures now developed and being implemented to reform supervisor-student relations can make a substantial difference in accelerating the rates of completion.

E. Undergraduate Program

The key issues identified by the reviewers with regard to the undergraduate program involve a need to restructure the streams of courses currently available, and to establish a regular, repeating cycle of courses. We agree that the School must offer a "coherent menu

of courses" and adhere rigorously to a cycle of courses through a system of course planning.

As the reviewers note, these issues have been addressed in the School's 3-Year Plan; specifically, "Re-Structuring" and "Course Descriptions and Planning" under *H.1, The Undergraduate Program*. They recommend that "due haste and support be given to this priority," and indeed, a formal process of course re-structuring (from 14 "fields" to 5 "streams") and cycle planning is a top priority and well underway.

F. Conclusion

The School of Communication is identified in the external review as a "flagship" for the University, a leader in its field, an innovator in Communication research and teaching, and productive in all categories. The reviewers define the School as one of Simon Fraser University's most valuable and important assets.

The reviewers emphasize that the School remains "strong and productive". At the same time the reviewers identify certain obvious threats relating to budgetary concerns, and urgent programmatic issues (over which we have more control).

These latter items have been almost entirely anticipated by the School's 3-Year Plan: insisting on fair compensation for secondments; doing our best to continue to support the TA system (exemplary of the "Simon Fraser model"); "defining a restructured undergraduate curriculum and appropriate scheduling system; a more rigorous definition of supervisory relations at the graduate level, and structuring the program into a 3-year cycle; and continued development of a productive relationship between the School and the Faculty, based on our particular expertise.

We welcome the recommendations of the reviewers in these areas. We have attempted to take up the task of change with imagination, commitment, and energy.

ATTACHED MATERIAL WAS AVAILABLE TO SENATORS ON REQUEST

FILED FOR INFORMATION

**EXTERNAL REVIEW:
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY'S
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
1998**

Submitted by:

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External Review: Simon Fraser University's School of Communication, 1998

The School of Communication is a symbol and litmus test of the progress that has been made by Simon Fraser University on a national level. The School is one of the university's important flagships, one of its key signatures, and represents a large part of the university's public image. The emphasis on Communications is one of the ways in which the university distinguishes itself from the University of British Columbia. The School is one of the oldest and most respected schools of Communication in Canada and is a leader in a number of crucial areas; new media and applied communications, critical theory and perspectives on mass media and in policy studies. The school houses the only doctoral program west of Ottawa, the **Canadian Journal of Communication**, the crucial Media Watch initiative, is one of the main engines for SFU's Continuing Studies program at Harbour Centre which is its link to the downtown Vancouver community (accounting for close to one-third of enrollments), and is a magnet for graduate students from across Canada and internationally. Its faculty members are especially productive as judged by publications, research grants, contract work, and the holding of important "gatekeeping" positions within the Communications field.

The School's main thrust is the "user" oriented outlook which is evident in its teaching and research. Scholars apply critical perspectives to a whole range of communication related issues. But the emphasis seems to be on how citizens and consumers interact with media in both private and public realms. This academic culture takes many forms, has many expressions - research on children's use of video games, the News Watch project, women and technological change, risk communication, ideology

and popular culture, communication and human rights issues at home and in Asia in particular and networking as a tool for learning represent major areas of specialization. Although diverse, the different profiles and academic histories of the faculty members do coalesce in a common 'academic culture' which is recognizable as distinct and which enjoys high standing in the Canadian community of Communication scholars.

Yet many of the School's accomplishment may be in jeopardy because of a deteriorating budgetary situation, threats to the TA system - the backbone for much of the teaching, graduate support and research - and an aging faculty many of whose members can be expected to retire in the next decade. An increase in the numbers of unfunded students, and a special situation that has seen key faculty members seconded to research centres without the School being adequately compensated for their loss has compounded the situation. A process of erosion seems to have taken hold. Unless remedies are found the School will see it's cutting edge as one of Canada's top Schools of Communication sharply dulled.

The external review will focus on a number of crucial challenges that the School of Communication will face in the years ahead. Many of the problems revolve around aching and chronic issues of under-funding and how further cuts are to be administered. But our report will also address critical questions surrounding the operation and management of programs, the quality of the research culture and the integrity and viability of a number of current practices. Special attention will be paid to ways in which the graduate and undergraduate programs can be streamlined and rationalized and to an examination of the role played by the TA system. The Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Dr. Ronald Marteniuk, also asked that the Review Committee to examine the

School's "fit" within the Faculty believing that this remains an area of contention. We have also been asked to assess the nature of the School's relationship to the Telelearning Network of Centres of Excellence (TL-NCE) and its efforts to develop the Virtual-U.

Our general conclusion is that while the School is still strong and productive, it is plagued by too many commitments that it cannot effectively meet - there is too much flexibility in the administration of programs, too many streams in the curriculum, too many courses being offered, too many graduate students and too many outside commitments. The School is stretched too thin given the squeeze on its resources. In particular the School will have to rethink its graduate and undergraduate programs in some detail in order to preserve its high standards and meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The Review Committee wishes at the outset to commend the School's Director, Dr. Brian Lewis, for his impressive leadership in guiding the School through a turbulent time, in easing tensions and fractional differences within the School and in preparing a first-rate self-study report. We recognize the significant responsibilities that have fallen on Dr. Lewis's shoulders - overseeing a School that attracts over 800 undergraduate students as majors or minors, offers close to 80 undergraduate course sections, has approximately 75 MA and Ph.D. students, a large and thriving co-op program that involves coordination with governments and private sector employers, operates a number of laboratories, has faculty members spread across two campuses, and has a creative and hectic work environment. He carries this heavy administrative load while maintaining a high profile research program and attending to his teaching responsibilities.

The Review Committee would also like to report that we have heard nothing but praise from students and faculty for the School's diligent support, co-op and technical

staffs. They seem to maintain an amiable atmosphere and relationships and work efficiently despite the pressures of having to serve a large and demanding constituency. The stress level seems to be high and there is considerable consternation over the fact that job descriptions have not been updated in the last 6 or 7 years. There is always the need to keep channels of communication open, and we strongly recommend that the Director arrange regular "coffee-break" get-togethers so that views can be aired and potential problems identified before they occur. The Director should also consider instituting a BI-weekly newsletter so that everyone in the School can be kept abreast of the latest developments; faculty and graduate student activities, lectures and presentations, schedules for meetings, deadlines for applications, and the exchange of pleasantries.

A) The School's "Fit" within the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

The School's relationship to the Faculty does remain a cause for concern within the university. While some disgruntlement still exists within the School, and pockets of genuine antagonism remain, the majority of faculty members seem to have accepted the Faculty as their home, to have made their peace with the situation. They see their relationship as that of an on-going negotiation in which their own work becomes increasingly "applied" and the Faculty comes to accept the need for theoretical and critical perspectives on the uses of technology. Indeed, the contributions of scholars such as Ellen Balka, Rick Gruneau, Bob Hackett, Paul Heyer, Brian Lewis, Catherine Murray, and Richard Smith among others are likely to prove to be immensely important in terms of understanding the place of technology in society. As one faculty member expressed

the sense of mission: "technology is the site of politics." But many faculty members still believe that their work lacks credibility, and is not fully accepted or understood, within the Faculty. In their worst moments of despair they see the Faculty as almost impermeable to the critical perspectives that guide their work.

Significantly, the issue of "fit" was raised by senior administrators not directly associated with the School. One administrator argued that "They're in the wrong faculty and are under-appreciated by those who are in their faculty." Another volunteered that "the faculty ignores Communication" and that this was a very serious omission because "Communication is a big player in the community, and the university will suffer if Communications is hurt."

The most convincing evidence to support these claims is that the Faculty of Applied Science's three year plan barely mentions the School of Communication and when it does, it does so only in passing. The Review Committee finds this to be an inexplicable oversight. Our perception again is that the School is an important flagship for the university as a whole, one of its major distinguishing characteristics, and that its need for basic resources as well as renewal and revitalization are considerable. For his part, the Dean believes that he has been generous to the School. He has given the School three positions that could well have gone to other units, has encouraged instructional and research links and is a strong supporter of TL-NCE, CPROST and other initiatives which he believes represent vital opportunities for the School.

There are important issues at stake. On its first day at SFU, the Review Committee received a plea from Professor Thomas Mallinson, a recently retired faculty member, that interpersonal communication not be dropped from the curriculum as a result

of his leaving. Interpersonal communication had been Professor Mallinson's area of specialization and his great love. His argument was that in the rush to become "applied," major stretches of the communications waterfront could be vacated. The view of other faculty members, especially those in the applied area, was that their work included interpersonal aspects and that the field was being covered but in a different way than it had been before. While the Review Committee recognizes the need for excellence in the applied area, the School should not, as a result of its placement in Applied Sciences, be allowed to become well muscled in one area but gravely deficient in others. There is no reason why a full range of subjects cannot be offered including those that have a clear Humanities orientation.

Another great concern is that the School suffers disproportionately when budget cuts are applied evenly across the Faculty. The perception is that the School doesn't have the same the fiscal "cushions" that are available to the other "rich" schools with whom it must share its Faculty home. The argument is that the Schools of Computing Science, Engineering Science, Kinesiology and Resources and Environmental Management all come under the ENSRC research umbrella where research grants are administered more generously than is the case with SSHRC, have many more opportunities for partnerships and joint ventures with corporations and can fund-raise more easily. The School of Communication with its vigorous critical tradition is unlikely to be a candidate for corporate largesse. With one possible exception, the other schools also enjoy greater flexibility because they have the advantage of more "carry-over" from previous budgets. Moreover, the School already has relatively heavy teaching loads and among the highest student-to-faculty ratios in the Faculty. The question is whether justice and wise

management are served by treating all of the units equally in the budgetary process. We believe that different needs and circumstances should be recognized.

There is also the issue of the School's physical separation from the rest of the Faculty. The School is cloistered away in a classroom complex across the Quadrangle from where the rest of the Faculty is located. It also enjoys a sizable presence at the Harbour Centre. There are no common meeting areas, and there are few occasions in which scholars from the School are likely to meet their Faculty colleagues.

Our sense is that while there is little enthusiasm, little appetite, for re-opening the placement issue, several nagging issues remain. The senior administration should be alert to these problems. In the best of all worlds we would at least like to see the interests of the School reflected in the Faculty Three Year Plan in a detailed way even if this means a reassessment of faculty priorities. The industrial model articulated in the Faculty Plan might not be applicable to the School of Communication in the same way that it applies to Computing Science.

B) Secondments, the TA System and Budgets

The Review Committee is concerned that the School is not being fairly compensated for the losses that it has suffered when key faculty members are seconded to research centres. Rowland Lorimer, Jan Walls and Linda Harasim play key leadership roles in the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, the David See-Chai Centre for International Communication and the Telelearning NCE respectively. We recognize the invaluable service that each of these prominent individuals is making to the university, and indeed to the Canadian scholarly community, and suggest that these arrangements be

allowed to continue as they are. The reality is that the School is subsidizing these centres at considerable cost to itself. The Review Committee would like to see the secondment issue reexamined with a view to fully reimbursing the School for the use of these distinguished faculty members.

One of the key ingredients in the School's success in teaching and research has been the TA System. Indeed, the TA system carries out a number of vital functions simultaneously; it allows professors to have fewer contact hours with students and less grading than might otherwise be the case and thus frees up their time for research, provides graduate students with much needed financial support and worthwhile teaching experience and gives undergraduate students more attention. In our meetings with faculty members and with graduate and undergraduate students, support for the TA system was passionate and unwavering. There is within the School what one senior university official has described as: "an ideological commitment to the TA system and the labour force that drives it." The TA system is seen as a kind of "bottom line" - an institution that is integral to the School's essential mission, the linchpin for many of its most important activities. As outsiders we saw the TA system as the building block of the SFU model.

There is at least one crucial downside to the TA system. Graduate completion times are not impressive to say the least and graduate students can get easily sidetracked by TA work and then by the magnet of sessional teaching. The high cost of living in Vancouver, however, makes service in the "trenches" an unavoidable necessity for many graduate students.

What is clear, however, is that the School is now waging a losing battle to save the TA system. While there have been no budget cuts per se in the last 5 years, the

overall effect of the budget freeze has been considerable. The effects of inflation, salary increases and the admission of unfunded students have been substantial, adding up to as much as 10 to 12 per cent. In making cuts the TA budget represents one of the few soft targets.

The School may be able to forestall making major cuts to the TA budgets by increasing faculty workloads. But our impression is that a limit has already been reached, and that any additional steps in this direction would be extremely unfortunate and counterproductive. Another tack would be to reduce the employment of sessional instructors. This might have the effect of decimating much of the curriculum and jeopardizing the career progress of graduate students. There is the possibility of at least one early retirement in the next few years but savings from this source will not go a terribly long way. The School has already forfeited one new position on the altar of budgetary reductions, a considerable sacrifice given that the shadow of an aging faculty will soon loom large.

We do recommend, however, strong action on a number of other fronts. We suggest reductions in the number of specialty courses offered at the graduate and undergraduate levels and believe that rationalizations can be achieved by revising the curriculum so that students can be provided with the access to courses that they require on a regular basis. Some savings may be garnered through this kind of streamlining. We would like to emphasize again that fair compensation for the loss of key faculty members who have been seconded to research centres could alleviate some of the budgetary stress.

Our strong recommendation is that the TA system be preserved without substantial reductions to other budget lines. This may mean that Faculty or university

wide budgets will have to be tapped. The costs to research productivity, the ability to attract top graduate student, the classroom experience of undergraduates and indeed to the morale and general satisfaction of faculty members would be substantial if the TA system were sacrificed. The academic culture at SFU seems to rest on the connections that it provides.

C) The Graduate Program and Library Resources

The Review Committee mandate suggests that the quality of the graduate program in Communications be assessed in terms of its structure, breath and depth of course offerings, student quality, graduate student progress and completion rates and post-graduate employment. All of these issues were discussed in our meetings with both the faculty and the graduate students and their representatives (the Graduate Student Association) as well as the School's Graduate Committee.

The Master's Program requires the completion of six courses (with a selection from the theory and methodology courses required) plus a thesis or a project. Such a course profile is similar to those found in Canada's ten other MA programs in Communications, though it is two courses less than at McGill University where eight courses are the norm. The requirement of a thesis of about 100 pages or a project (rarely used) are also typical at other institutions. The Ph.D. Program requires five courses and specialization in three fields of study. A comprehensive examination must be completed by the end of the third year of study.

To fulfill these requirements the School offers about 10-12 graduate courses per year. In 1996 and 1997, 11 and 13 courses were offered respectively. Enrollment statistics

indicate, however, that in 1996, seven out of the eleven courses had less than six students enrolled. Two had no enrollments. In 1997, another seven of the thirteen courses had less than six students enrolled. The fact that **half** of the courses offered in the last two years had such small enrollments raises questions about the **structure** and **breath** of graduate offerings and their relevance to student interests. In most graduate programs minimum enrollments are about five to six students. This may be an indication that there are simply too many specialty courses.

The above data also indicate that the move to a three year rotating curriculum plan in 1998 is highly advisable. Students have voiced concerns about the availability of required courses on a timely basis (e.g. more than once a trimester) but also about their ability to plan based on knowing which courses will be offered. Students have also expressed concern about the lack of courses in the summer trimester.

One way of demonstrating student quality is through the grade point averages of entering students and their ability to compete for awards. Since the School selects its annual crop of approximately 15 new students from an application pool of about 110 applicants, the average grades of incoming students are in the top 10 per cent ranging around 3.7. These are high averages which compare with those at McGill and Calgary (3.77 in 1998) and guarantee an exceptionally well qualified and highly motivated student body. What is different from the Quebec programs, however, is that the SFU students are on average an older group.

When it comes to financial awards the picture is mixed. Simon Fraser's graduate students are below the national average in winning SSHRC grants, gaining only nine in the last five years, for a success rate of about 11 per cent. No doubt this is off set by the

large number of SFU graduate fellowships (70) which the School received and the availability of various scholarships from private industry - Cogeco, CanWest, Rogers etc. The availability of these in-house awards makes student involvement in external competitions less pressing. Furthermore, up until last year, students who were accepted into the graduate program were guaranteed two years of financial support on both the MA and Ph.D levels irrespective of progress through the program. University cutbacks have reduced guaranteed support to one year, placing greater financial burdens on incoming students. These cuts forced the School to institute formal evaluations of those students who apply for additional financial support.

In the domain of graduate student progress and completion rates the School of Communication has some cause for concern. Median completion times for MA students is approximately four years and for the Ph.D's about seven years. These completion rates are longer than the rates encountered in programs at Laval, Calgary and McGill. Laval has a median MA completion rate of 2.5 years, Calgary 3.0 and McGill 2.5 years. At the Ph.D. level the McGill completion rate is five years. Two potential negative effects flow from these findings. To begin with they may hinder graduates in award competitions and low completion rates are often associated with, often propel, higher drop out rates. The School's drop rates were 16 per cent for MAs (10 out of a cohort of 34) and 20 per cent (10 out of 40) for Ph.Ds over the last five years.

Faculty and students offered a variety of explanations for the long time it takes to complete degrees. They included the observation that it was both easy and necessary given the high costs of living in Vancouver to take TA or sessional teaching positions. We were also informed that union contracts give priority to those who have taught

previously so that students find themselves continually drawn to teaching. We suspect that this has slowed progress in more than a few cases. While we recognize the importance of TA and sessional teaching experience in enhancing career development, the School might consider limiting the number of teaching opportunities available to each student as a means of pushing students towards more rapid completion of their programs. In addition, the School allows very liberal leave arrangements; fully 28 per cent of graduate students were either part-time, on leave or not registered in early 1998. These arrangements may be in need of tightening.

The Review Committee suspects that administrative impediments also contribute to slow completion times. Our suggestions for improvements include:

1. Uniform guidelines for supervisor-student relationships are lacking. Students often don't see their supervisors for extended periods of time. A minimum number of meetings per trimester should be specified and there should be year-end evaluations of student's progress.
2. The School at present schedules comprehensive exams for doctoral students in the third year of study. This is late in the game. We also believe that the examinations could be more "user friendly." Mandatory (no credit) thesis preparation seminars could be instituted at both the MA and Ph.D. levels. MA students would take the course in their first year. The course for doctoral students, which could include sessions on how to prepare for the comprehensive exam, would take place in their second year.
3. The School should adhere to a three year course schedule and ensure that at least some of required courses are offered during the summer trimester.
4. The fact that nearly one-third of students (24 out of 75) have as yet found no permanent supervisor is troubling. Guidelines need to be developed which would allow students by the end of their first year to switch from their interim supervisors to permanent supervisors without this causing offense or ruffling feathers. We suggest that the Graduate Committee change designations from

“interim supervisor” into merely an “advisor.” The expectation would then be that advisors could help students in their selection of a permanent supervisor, in effect, help them move on.

In conclusion it is worth noting that precisely because students at the School are more mature and take longer to complete their degrees, they seem to have developed occupational contacts along the way. This is clearly evident in the employment profile of the student's 60 MAs and Ph.Ds graduated since 1992. These profiles show that MAs tend to remain in BC, while Ph.D.'s have taken up positions across the country.

A comparison of the annual investment in library resources by departments reveals that the budget for Communications related journals and monographs is among the lowest both in the Faculty of Applied Sciences and in the Faculty of Arts. Roughly \$ 35,000 is expended annually on acquisitions in this growing field, in comparison with budgets that are about four times as large (\$ 120,000 upwards) for Sociology, Political Science, Psychology etc. Though Communication Studies is heavily dependent on these other areas, the lack of an equivalent budget for the field indicates that it is a latecomer in the collections policy at Simon Fraser and that the School needs to pay greater attention to redressing these acquisitions inequalities. The Self Study document indicates that it would be desirable to hire a student assistant to aid the faculty representative in his/her duties. This is certainly to be recommended, however, with the School's emphasis on the domain of new information technologies, those involved should be well versed not only in the traditional domains but in that of new technologies. At present the collections policy

is heavily skewed towards publishing and journalism, quite unreflective of the wide variety of areas in which the faculty and graduate students actually work.

A cursory comparison of collections policies at the Simon Fraser and McGill libraries shows that Simon Fraser is less well equipped in some areas of communication theory including cybernetics, systems theory and symbolic interaction and there are fewer communication/culture/advertising related journals available. Since much of the most current work appears in these journals, among them the new telecommunications publications, it may be useful to encourage some new serials subscriptions. In addition, the Self-Study document indicated that the library should be encouraged to acquire more copies of key titles used in undergraduate teaching and that those responsible for acquisitions should consult with the library coordinator before edited collections are acquired. Many book collections are qualitatively uneven and should be vetted by a knowledgeable faculty member. Finally, it is suggested that the library institute a more reasonable notification policy with respect to overdue books, to users fair warning. All of these issues can be solved through close cooperation between the School's designated library coordinator and acquisitions personnel, even though it is evident that the Simon Fraser library is understaffed in relation to its size. The bottom line is that the library budget for Communication Studies needs to be increased.

D) The Undergraduate Program

The Review Committee has examined the courses that were offered from Summer 1996 to Spring 1998. We excluded the following courses: Directed Study, Honours

Research Proposal, Honours Research project, Practicum I and II. Our List drawn from Book Two of the School's Self Study contains 78 individual courses. One interesting fact is that a large percentage of courses are taught by non-faculty members - 40 % of the 195 sections were taught by non-faculty members, another 17 % were taught through distance education. All upper level courses in the publishing minor program were taught by non faculty professors. We were able to identify 60 per cent of non faculty teachers as graduate students. We suspect the percentage may be higher.

While teaching is undoubtedly a valuable experience for graduate students, the increasing dependency of graduate student labour raises questions about the "quality control" of the teaching experience.

Another area of concern is the regularity of course offerings: 62 per cent of the courses that were listed were for the six trimesters reviewed either never offered (13 per cent), offered only once (22 per cent) or offered twice (27 per cent). Interestingly, among the courses that were offered most regularly (more than five times) over the six trimesters most were offered through distance education:

- two compulsory courses 110 and 130 (both distance education)
- three research courses 362, 260 and 261 (all distance education)
- History of Communication (distance education), Introduction to Communication Media (distance education).
- Introduction to Information Technology and Special Topics 386, Special Topics 486 and the Issues Seminar (offered 13 times) were not through distance ed.

If we consider the courses offered on a "permanent" basis, that is once per trimester, many were either compulsory or of the special issues variety. Only 23 per cent of the courses were offered on a regular basis - two trimesters out of three).

Although our observations are based on only six trimesters, the review committee found the selection of core offerings to be weak thus lending credence to student complaints that they are never assured access to a wide variety of courses over the duration of their programs and that planning their schedules is difficult. Please see the letter from Vivienne Wong of the Communications Undergraduate Student Union which is included in the appendix.

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee freely admits that there is "a problem," and assures us that a plan for remedial action is being considered. There is general agreement on the necessity for better and more efficient schedule planning and, perhaps that an overabundance of "vanity" courses exist. The Review Committee believes that due consideration should be given to the question of increasing the core of permanent and regular courses i.e. courses offered every two out of three trimesters.

It is recommended that the analysis that we have provided of course offerings over six trimesters be extended to permit a more complete assessment of problem areas.

Related to the principle of students being able to plan and organize their curriculum activities, thus having clearer objectives and a fair chance to have access to the courses that they need in a predictable time frame, is the question of "streams." Everyone that we spoke to is in agreement that the 14 "fields" under which the courses are presently clustered only add confusion. While not mutually exclusive, reducing the number of labels or streams under which courses are grouped would bring greater clarity and would be helpful in identifying courses which constitute a network of mutually related interests. Five or six streams, or even seven or eight, would allow students and planners to navigate the curriculum with greater ease.

Everyone seems to agree that the administrative staff is most helpful, if not indispensable, in guiding students through the current maze of streams and courses. But their task would be made much easier if schedules over the next 12 months could be set and made available in the first month of each year. Changes to the schedule should be minimal and announced at least two months before the beginning of each trimester. Under present conditions, the strategy of students is to follow teachers rather than a stream or courses. If the School wants to offer students a coherent menu of courses that balance theory and "hands on" training, then better planning needs to take place. As it is the lack of predictability and availability is producing a fragmented view of Communications Studies and frustrated students.

The Review Committee is aware of plans to implement a new three year plan that will address some of these concerns. We recommend that due haste and support be given to this priority.

We would also like to suggest that the Undergraduate Curriculum consider increasing the credit load in applied methodology (both quantitative and qualitative) and include a second language requirement at least at some stage in their training. We are concerned by the fact that a student can work her or his way through a BA, MA and Ph.D. with a minimum of six credits in applied methodology and have a restricted reach, linguistically, in a field that is international in scope. The committee was particularly impressed by the "hands-on" training given to students by Robert Hackett and Donald Gutstein.

While the overall evaluation of Communication courses and of the instructors is high, two particular points raised by the students need to be addressed; the absence of

regular faculty members in an enlarged basic core of permanent and regular course offerings and the lack of promotion of the Honours program. The first point was touched earlier. The second concurs with other testimony that we have received. Although understandable in a situation of full workload on the part of the faculty, the Honours program cannot become a side issue or a "secret" if the School wants to encourage undergraduate students to undertake graduate studies.

The cooperative and field placement programs are certainly impressive and its success rate and efficient functioning are worth underlining. It appears that both students and employers are appreciative. Quality controls seem to be operative: preparations, debriefing etc. The benefits seem to be truly educational (greater maturity, self confidence, discipline). It is interesting that a majority of honours students are involved in the coop program and to be eligible the student must maintain a relatively high grade point average.

E) Telelearning: The Virtual University

Telelearning is seen as supporting, if not an alternative, to regular classroom learning. One stumbling block is the resistance of faculty members; it is estimated that only 10 % are truly techno-literate. In a university which houses the TL-NCE this is rather awkward. What is the School of Communication's position on telelearning?

The School's involvement, or resistance, is no greater than that of the general body of university scholars; a small core of courses use telelearning and most faculty members are minimally aware of or involved with this new course ware. True to the SFU

“culture,” university training is basically, and fundamentally, a direct teacher-student relationship. The widely held view in the School is that telelearning can support but never replace that relationship. And telelearning can never be a substitute for direct teaching for whatever reason, particularly financial reasons. There is also the view that as with the introduction of any new technology, telelearning needs to be researched in greater depth. Some members of the School are interested in and are, on a case by case basis, involved in such an enterprise.

For the School, telelearning is neither a priority nor a problem. As an issue it is a non-starter. The problem is the lack of sufficient teaching resources. Where telelearning does become an issue is when one raises the question of fair compensation for the loss of a valuable faculty member to the TL-NCE.

Telelearning will no doubt be integrated into the School’s curriculum as with other units at Simon Fraser, and probably at the same rate. Where the School is likely to contribute most is in the application of critical perspectives and thinking to the problems of telelearning. The potential exists for some crossover research between faculty members in the School and researchers in other Schools in the Faculty.

F) Preparing for the Future: Bridging Positions

After reviewing the School profiles, the External Review Committee would like to make note of a problem that looms on the horizon - the age of the faculty. Out of a complement of 21 faculty members, 16 are between the ages of 46 and 60. The average age is almost 49. While we would like to think of these faculty members as young, there is an increasing propensity towards early retirement in the university system as arduous

levels of work and stress take their toll, and as universities offer scholars enticing retirement packages in an effort to reduce costs. Given these realities, the School should try to avoid the sudden shock of a large number of retirements occurring within a relatively brief period. The School can anticipate the retirement shock hitting in the next 6 to 8 years.

One strategy is to bridge generations by hiring new faculty as part of a concerted plan. The university can anticipate problems if it doesn't act soon. A slow easing of individual scholars into place is preferable to a sudden and large invasion, and it is important that the School's traditions, curriculum and institutional memory be kept intact. Moreover, the Ontario universities will undergo a similar turn of the generational wheel in the next 6 or 8 years and are likely to be recruiting at the same time. If it waits too long, SFU may face unexpectedly strong competition for the best people.

G) Conclusions and Review of Recommendations

The Review Committee found that Simon Fraser's School of Communication has maintained its position as one of the leaders in Communications research and teaching in Canada. The School is enormously productive by an conceivable standard of achievement; publications, research grants and contracts, the high numbers of students that it attracts, the excellence of its graduate students, its commitment to the success of the Harbour Centre Campus and to the university's high profile research centres and the extent to which key faculty members play prominent roles as "gatekeepers" in the Communications field. We have argued that the School is one of Simon Fraser's most important franchises, one of its major distinguishing characteristics.

Yet we have also concluded that unless some changes are made the School may lose its cutting edge. Its strength is being sapped by the loss of important faculty members to research centres without the School being adequately compensated for those losses. The committee would like to see this situation rectified so that the School is fully compensated for the subsidy that it grants to the university's research centres. We are also concerned that the TA system - the backbone that supports much of the teaching and research effort as well as the graduate program - is being gradually eroded by cuts. We strongly endorse a continued commitment to the TA system and warn of potentially significant consequences if the TA system is allowed to collapse. In addition, we argue that a far greater degree of organization and efficiency has to be brought to both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The number of streams has to be reduced at the undergraduate level, students have to be assured that the courses that they need will be offered on a permanent and regular basis, schedules have to be set far in advance so that students can plan their programs and the number of courses offered at both levels needs to be reduced. At the graduate level, guidelines need to be written which will specify the obligations that supervisors have to their graduate students such as setting a minimum number of meetings per trimester. Some thought has to be given to ways in which the transition from interim to permanent supervisors can be accomplished without placing students in an embarrassing and untenable situation. Unless action is taken on these fronts, student disappointment and resentment are bound to increase and fester.

We were asked to evaluate the "fit" between the School and the Faculty of Applied Sciences. While the fit remains an issue for some faculty members and indeed within the university community, the principle sore points are whether the School suffers

disproportionately when budget cuts are applied equally, and whether the School is being forced to vacate important areas in the Communication field in order to comply with the priorities of Applied Sciences. We have cause for concern on both of these counts. Moreover, the Review Committee was perplexed, even astonished, by the fact that the School was barely mentioned in the Faculty's Three Year Plan even though the School is one of Simon Fraser's most distinctive assets. In our view, the plan should be rewritten so that the interests and priorities of the School can be properly reflected.

The Review Committee also looked at library resources and thought that the Communications collection needed upgrading. We evaluated the School's attitudes towards the TL-NCE and found that there was no deep seeded resistance or hostility to the project. In fact, faculty members are well positioned on an individual basis to contribute important critical perspectives on the development of these technologies.

The last question that we addressed was faculty renewal in the face of so many possible retirements in the next 6 to 8 years. In our view, the university should anticipate the approaching "retirement shock" by creating bridging positions so that the School's faculty compliment can be gradually and systematically replenished.

Our report also includes a number of charts in an appendix. These documents will help readers understand some of the developments that have taken place in the undergraduate and graduate teaching programs.

APPENDIX

ANNEX 1. Faculty teaching, 1996-98

School of Communication -- Faculty Members' Teaching Activity -- 1997-98. Requested by the External Reviewers

Name	Undergraduate courses Su97/Fa97/Sp98	Graduate courses Su97/Fa97/Sp98
P. Anderson	CMNS456-4 (X2); CMNS436-4; CMNS438-4	
R. Anderson	CMNS423-4	CMNS855-5
E. Balka	CMNS362-4(X2); CMNS386-4; CMNS486-4	CMNS801-5(Hackett)
A. Beale		
G. Faurischou	CMNS224-3; CMNS286-3	CMNS800-5
R. Gruneau	CMNS422-4; CMNS421-4	CMNS840-5
D. Gutstein	DECMNS261-3 (X3); DECMNS110-3(X2); CMNS110-3(CO); CMNS110-3; CMNS235-3; CMNS421-4(Hackett); CMNS435-4	
R. Hackett	CMNS331-4	CMNS801-5(Balka); CMNS830-5
L. Harasim*		CMNS855-5
P. Heyer	CMNS210-3; CMNS421-4	
P. Howard	CMNS454-4; CMNS345-4; CMNS446-4	CMNS855-5
R. Howard	CMNS322-4; CMNS486-4	
S. Kline	CMNS386-4; CMNS363-6(Murray); CMNS426-4; CMNS323-4	
M. Laba	CMNS221-3; CMNS321-4; CMNS421-4	
W. Leiss		
B. Lewis	DECMNS230-3(X2); CMNS428-4(X2)	
R. Lorimer*	DECMNS130-3(X3); CMNS130-3	
C. Murray	CMNS363-6(Kline); CMNS230-3; CMNS333-4	CMNS860-2
W. Richards	CMNS260-3(X3)	CMNS805-5
R. Smith	CMNS253-3(Bakardjleva); CMNS453-4	
B. Thux*	CMNS358-4; CMNS359-4	CMNS859-5
J. Walls*		
A. Willden	CMNS304-4; CMNS386-4; CMNS421-4(X2)	CMNS856-5(X2)

ANNEX 1 School of Communication -- Faculty Members' Teaching Activity -- 1996-97. Requested by the External Reviewers

Name	Undergraduate courses Su96/Fa96/Sp97	Graduate courses Spring97
P. Anderson	CMNS456-4 (X2); CMNS458-4; CMNS436-4	
R. Anderson	CMNS362-4; CMNS423-4 (Walls); CMNS446-4; CMNS423-4	
E. Balke	CMNS353-4;	CMNS815-5
A. Beale	CMNS334-4;	CMNS860-2
G. Fauschou	CMNS421-4; CMNS224-3	
R. Gruneau	CMNS422-4; CMNS220-3	CMNS800-5(Laba)
D. Gutstein	DECMNS261-3 (X3); CMNS110-3; CMNS235-3; CMNS421-4 (Hackett); CMNS428-4 (Hackett); CMNS435-4	
R. Hackett	CMNS235-3; CMNS331-4; CMNS421-4(Gutstein); CMNS428-4(Gutstein)	
L. Harasim	DECMNS210-3(X2)	CMNS855-5(Calvert)
P. Heyer	CMNS454-4; CMNS345-4	
P. Howard	CMNS322-4; CMNS346-4	
R. Howard	CMNS426-4; CMNS323-4; CMNS223-3; CMNS286-3	
S. Kline	CMNS221-3 (X2); CMNS321-4; CMNS421-4	CMNS800-5(Gruneau)
M. Laba		
W. Leiss	DECMNS230-3(X3); CMNS428-4	
B. Lewis	DECMNS130-3(X3); CMNS130-3	
R. Lortmer	CMNS363-4(X3); CMNS230-3(X2)	
C. Murray	CMNS260-3(X3)	CMNS805-5
W. Richards	CMNS453-4; CMNS253-3	
R. Smith		
B. Truax	CMNS423-4(Anderson)	
J. Walls	CMNS304-4; CMNS386-4; CMNS421-4	CMNS856-5
A. Wilden		

ANNEX 2. Non faculty teaching, 1996-98

School of Communication -- Non Faculty Teaching Activity -- 1997-98. Requested by the External Reviewers

Name	Undergraduate courses Su96/Fa96/Sp97	Graduate courses Spring97
Ablenas R	CMNS347-4	
Bakardjeva M	CMNS253-3 (Smith R)	
Belanger A	DECMNS210-3(X2); CMNS220-3(Lowes)	
Bryant S		
Cappelletto I		
Chunn I	CMNS372-4	
Cowan J	DECMNS371-4(X3)	
de Waal B		
DeNel S	CMNS200-3(Tenenbein) (X2)	
Everton B	CMNS353-4; CMNS130-3	
Frith V	CMNS472-4	CMNS801-5
Frykberg S	DECMNS259-3(X2); CMNS258-3; CMNS259-3	
Graydon S	CMNS421-4(Straatsma)	
Hissey L		
Kemble J		
Lewis S	CMNS321-4(X2)	
Lipsett M	CMNS442-4	CMNS856-5
Lowes M	CMNS220-3(Belanger)	
McCarroll G	CMNS323-4; CMNS253-3; CMNS305-4	
McQueen K	CMNS205-3	
Mercer B	CMNS375-4(X2)	
Mookerjee S	CMNS421-4	
Pentecost D	CMNS320-4	
Phet R	CMNS223-3	
Russell J	CMNS473-4(We)	
Sachs S	CMNS247-3	
Samuelson H	CMNS258-3	
Siegler K		
Sidner D	DECMNS110-3; CMNS453-4	
Smith D	CMNS362-4	
Straatsma R	CMNS421-4(Graydon)	
Tenenbein S	CMNS200-3(DeNel) (X2)	
Tiessen E		
Walker L		
Ward D		
We G	CMNS473-4(Russell)	
Withford N		
Zhao Y		

ANNEX 2. School of Communication -- Non Faculty Teaching Activity -- 1996-97. Requested by the External Reviewers

Name	Undergraduate courses Su96/Fa96/Sp97	Graduate courses Spring97
Ableas R		
Bakardjeva M		
Belanger A	DecCMNS210-3	
Bryant S	CMNS253-3(Smith R)	
Cappelletto I	CMNS473-4	
Chunn I	CMNS372-4	
Cowan J	DecCMNS371-4(X2); CMNSDE371-4	
de Waal B	CMNS286-3	
Denel S	CMNS200-3(Tenenbein)	
Everton B	CMNS130-3; CMNS240-3	
Frih V		
Frykberg S	CMNS259-3; CMNS358-4; CMNS258-3	
Graydon S	CMNS486-4(Stratama)	
Hissey L	DecCMNS110-3(X2)	
Kemble J	CMNS205-3(McCartton)	
Lewis S	CMNS201-3	
Lipsett M		
Lowes M		
McCartton G	CMNS305-4; CMNS305-4; CMNS205-3(Kemble)	
McQueen K		
Mercer B	CMNS375-4	
Mookerjee S		
Perfecost D	CMNS320-4	
Pinet R	CMNS223-3; CMNS223-3	
Russell J		
Sachs S		
Samuelson H		
Siegler K	CMNS370-4	
Skinner D	CMNS230-3; CMNS110-3(CO); DecCMNS110-3	
Smith D		
Stratama R	CMNS486-4(Graydon)	
Tenenbein S	CMNS200-3(Denel)	
Teesen E	CMNS386-4; CMNS453-4; CMNS362-4; CMNS486-4	
Walker L	CMNS342-4	
Ward D	CMNS253-3; CMNS253-3; CMNS486-4; CMNS253-3;	
We G	CMNS386-4	
Witherford N	CMNS421-4; CMNS444-4	
Zhao Y	CMNS335-4	

ANNEX 3. Faculty members' committee activity, 1996-98

School of Communication -- Faculty Members' Committee Activity -- 1996-97. Requested by the External Reviewers

Name	School	Faculty and University
P. Anderson	96 Spring & Fall semesters -- on admin leave	96/97 FAS Computing Cmte
R. Anderson	96/97 UGSC--Honours Program Coordinator	96 Spring & Fall semesters -- on leave 96 Geography Hiring Cmte 96 Community Economic Dvlpmnt Centre Steering Cmte & Hiring Cmte 96/97 President's Advisory--China Environmental Dvlpmnt Cmte [Chair]
E. Balke	96 Hiring Cmte -- TL-IT	96-97 Senate Graduate Studies Cmte. & Senate Grad Studies Cmte on New Programs
A. Beale	96 GSC Chair 96 DTC	96 Departmental Review Cmte--Contemporary Arts 96 SFU SSHRC Small Grants Cmte
G. Faurtschou	96 DTC	96 University Committee for Excellence in Teaching
R. Gruneau	96 GSC [Chair 95-96]	
D. Gutstein	96 Hiring Cmte -- TL-IT	96 SFU Faculty Association's Ad Hoc Cmte on Responsibilities & Evaluation of Administrators
R. Hackett		96 Telelearning NCE Program Cmte
L. Harasin		96-Fall to 97-Fall semester -- on study leave
P. Heyer	96-Fall to 97-Fall semester -- on study leave 96 GSC	96 China Steering Committee
P. Howard	96 Hiring Cmte -- CTCL 96 Hiring Cmte -- TL-IT 96 GSC [Chair 94, 95]	
R. Howard		
S. Kline	96 [Director] Media Lab Cmte	96 European Community-Canadian Consortium for Student Exchange [ECCIS] Committee
M. Laba	96 UGSC	96 FAS Dean Search Cmte
W. Leiss	on leave	on leave
B. Lewis	96 DTC 96 DAG	96 Ad Hoc Cmte--University Planning Priorities 96 SFU Senate Cmte
	96 Hiring Cmte -- CTCL 96 Hiring Cmte -- TL-IT	96 Senate Cmte on International Activities 96 Senate Cmte on Continuing Studies
R. Lorimer		
C. Murray	96 Hiring Cmte -- TL-IT 96 GSC [Chair 98]	96 President's Cmte on University Planning 96 University Tenure Cmte
W. Richards		96 FAS Academic Computing Cmte
R. Smith	96 Hiring Cmte -- CTCL 96 DTC 96 UGSC	
B. Truax	96-Fall to 97-Fall -- on leave 96 Hiring Cmte -- CTCL	
J. Walls		
A. Wilden		96/7 Library Representative

DAG - Director's Advisory Group FAS - Faculty of Applied Sciences
 DTC - School/Department Tenure Committee GSC - Graduate Studies Committee
 CTCL - Communication in Technological Change and Innovation [new position] UGSC - Undergraduate Studies Committee
 TL-IT - Telelearning--Information Technologies [new position]

ANNEX 3. School of Communication -- Faculty Members' Committee Activity -- 1997-98. Requested by the External Reviewers

Name	School	Faculty and University
P. Anderson	97 DTC 97 GSC	
R. Anderson	97 DTC 97-Fall to 98-Summer semester -- study leave	
E. Balka	98 DTC 97, 98 UGSC	97, 98 FAS Equity Committee 98 Computer Science Hiring Cmte 98 Labour Studies Advisory Board
A. Beale	97 GSC Chair 97 DTC 97 DAG	97 SFU SSHRC Small Grants Cmte
G. Fauruschou	97, 98 GSC 98 DTC	97, 98 Library Representative
R. Gruneau	97, 98 DTC	97, 98 University Committee for Excellence in Teaching 97 Departmental Review Cmte-SFU English 97 Oct.-Acting Assoc. Dean, Graduate Studies
D. Gutstein	97 DAG 98 1/2 GSC	97/98 Director, SFU Faculty Association
R. Hackett	97 Ad Hoc Research Funding Cmte 98-1, ad hoc member, GSC (for graduate admissions process)	97-summer, SFU SSHRC Small Grants Cmte
L. Harasim		97, 98 Telelearning NCE Program Cmte
P. Heyer		97 Senate Library Committee, FAS rep
P. Howard		97 Community Economic Development Centre Steering Cmte 97-98 China Steering Committee
R. Howard	97-98 UGSC	97, 98 European Community-Canadian Consortium for Student Exchange [ECCIS] Committee
S. Kline	97-98 GSC 97, 98 [Director] Media Lab Cmte	
M. Laba	97, 98 DTC 98 DAG	
W. Leiss	on leave	on leave
B. Lewis	97, 98 DTC 97, 98 DAG	97, 98 SFU Senate Cmte 97, 98 Senate Cmte on International Activities 97, 98 Senate Cmte on Continuing Studies 98 Search Cmte, Dean of Continuing Studies
R. Lorimer		
C. Murray	97, 98 GSC [Chair 98]	97 University Tenure Cmte
W. Richards	97, 98 DAG 97, 98 UGSC	97, 98 University Harassment Advisor, & Chair-Harassment Investigative Cmte 97, 98 SFU SSHRC General Grants Cmte
R. Smith	97, 98 DTC 97, 98 UGSC	
B. Truax	97, 98 DTC 98 GSC	
J. Walls		
A. Wilden		

DAG - Director's Advisory Group FAS - Faculty of Applied Sciences
DTC - SchoollDepartment Tenure Committee GSC - Graduate Studies Committee
CTCI - Communication In Technological Change and Innovation [new position] UGSC - Undergraduate Studies Committee
TL-IT - Telelearning--Information Technologies [new position]

ANNEX 4. Graduate students, status enrollment

Trimesters according to status, MA students, School of communication

Total trimesters	on leave	part time	dropped
11	3	1	2
13	0	0	0
14	7	1	0
29	0	0	0
9	1	2	2
18	5	0	0
12	1	2	0
5	1	2	0
11	2	2	0
13	5	0	0
13	3	0	0
13	4	1	0
8	2	4	0
13	5	1	0
12	3	0	1
9	1	2	0
15	3	1	0

Trimesters according to status, PhD students, School of communication

Total trimesters	on leave	part time	dropped
35	9	0	0
27	1	0	0
34	5	0	0
42	5	0	0
11	4	0	0
7	3	0	0
12	4	4	0
11	5	1	0
11	4	0	0
12	2	3	0
11	6	0	0
11	6	0	0
13	7	1	0

ANNEX 5. Communications Undergraduate Student Union

Dear Prof. Robinson, de la Garde, and Taras,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with the undergraduates on Wednesday. I realize you have very busy schedules, and may already be working on the draft of the report. However, I hope it is not too late to mention a few issues that I forgot at the meeting:

1. **Emphasis on teaching:** it seems that the faculty have too many other demands, and often their teaching suffers either from being too dull, disorganization, or a host of other problems. Students feel frustrated when they see that their teacher is not concerned about whether the student learns anything new. It seems as though sessional instructors have more "drive" or focus on teaching.
2. **Honours / Grad school:** both options are not encouraged or discussed often, if at all. They appear to be "secrets" that students have to find out about on their own.
3. **Lack of cohesion:** perhaps more standardization of courses (ie. in second, third, and fourth year classes of a particular theme/issue) would be helpful. Integrating the practical and theoretical aspects is a serious challenge.

Other concerns that have been brought up by other students:

1. Course assignments are not explained clearly.
2. Course assignments are NOT weighted fairly in relation to work done.
3. Course assignments are not always related to lecture material.
4. Course expectations are not always stated clearly.
5. Course grading structures (fairness) are disputable.
6. Course outlines are not always followed, which creates mass confusion and aggravation among students.
7. Course prerequisites are not always relevant. However, students can bypass them, with approval, which can lead to problems during group projects (some students will not have the necessary background)
8. Course workload in some courses is VERY heavy, and is not reflected in the credits given for the course.

Some of these may have been mentioned in the 3 year plan, but I thought they were worth emphasizing again. I know that much of this seems negative and very critical, but I should also let you know that more students are majoring/minoring in Communication. There seems to be growing interest in this field of study, and it is a very "current" area which bridges the theoretical with the "real world". After trying to find my place in business, psychology, philosophy, and sociology, I have discovered that Communication is a great field of study. I enjoy it very much.

It was a pleasure meeting you both (and Roger)!

Sincerely,

Vivienne Wong.

Secretary, Communications Undergraduate Student Union Simon Fraser University

E-mail: vhwong@sfu.ca

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		FACULTY	NON FACULTY	(N) Fac	(N) non fac	TOTAL
2	CMNS 110	Gutstein X3	Skinner X2	3	2	5
3	CMNS 130	Lorimer X2	Everton X2	2	2	4
4	CMNS 200		deNel/Tenenbein X3		3	3
5	CMNS 201		S. Lewis		1	1
6	CMNS 205		Kemble/McCarron; McQueen		2	2
7	CMNS 210	Heyer		1		1
8	CMNS 220	Gruneau	Belanger/Lowes	1	1	2
9	CMNS 221	Laba X3		3		3
10	CMNS 223	Kline	Pinet X3	1	3	4
11	CMNS 224	Faurschou X2		2		2
12	CMNS 230	Murray X3	Skinner	3	1	4
13	CMNS 235	Gutstein X2; Hacket		3		3
14	CMNS 240		Everton		1	1
15	CMNS 247		Sachs		1	1
16	CMNS 253	Smith/Bryant; Smith/Bakardjieval	Ward X3; McCarron	1	5	6
17	CMNS 258		Frykberg X2; Samuelson		3	3
18	CMNS 259		Frykberg X2		2	2
19	CMNS 260	Richards X6		6		6
20	CMNS 286	Kline; Faurschou	de Waal	2	1	3
21	CMNS 304	Wilden X2		2		2
22	CMNS 305		McCarron X3		3	3
23	CMNS 310					0
24	CMNS 320		Pentecost X2		2	2
25	CMNS 321	Laba X2	S. Lewis X2	2	2	4
26	CMNS 322	R. Howard X2		2		2
27	CMNS 323	Kline X2	McCarron	2	1	3
28	CMNS 326					0
29	CMNS 331	Hackett X2		2		2
30	CMNS 333	Murray		1		1
31	CMNS 334	Beale		2		2
32	CMNS 335		Zhao		1	1
33	CMNS 342		Walker		1	1
34	CMNS 345	P. Howard X2		2		2
35	CMNS 346	R. Howard		1		1
36	CMNS 347		Ablenas		1	1
37	CMNS 353	Balka	Everton	1	1	2
38	CMNS 358	Truax	Frykberg	1	1	2
39	CMNS 359	Truax		1		1
40	CMNS 362	R. Anderson; Balka X2	Tiessen; D. Smith	3	2	5
41	CMNS 363-4	Murray X3		3		3
42	CMNS 363-6	Kline/Murray		1		1
43	CMNS 371		Cowan		1	1
44	CMNS 372		Chunn X2		2	2
45	CMNS 375		Mercer X3		3	3
46	CMNS 386	Blaka; Kline; Wilden X2	Tiessen; Ward	4	2	6
47	CMNS 408					0
48	CMNS 421	Gruneau; Gutstein/Hackett X2; Heyer	Straatsma/Graydon	4	1	5
49	CMNS 421	Laba X2; Wilden X3; Faurschou;	Mookerjea; Witheford	6	2	8
50	CMNS 422	Gruneau X2		2		2
51	CMNS 423	R. Anderson/Walls; R. Anderson X2		3		3
52	CMNS 425					0
53	CMNS 426	Kline X2		2		2

	A	B	C	D	E	F
54	CMNS 428	Gutstein/Hackett; Lewis X3		4		4
55	CMNS 433					0
56	CMNS 435	Gutstein X2		2		2
57	CMNS 436	P. Anderson X2		2		2
58	CMNS 438	P. Anderson		1		1
59	CMNS 442		Lipsett		1	1
60	CMNS 444		Witthoford		1	1
61	CMNS 446	R. Anderson; P. Howard		2		2
62	CMNS 447					0
63	CMNS 448					0
64	CMNS 453	Smith X2	Tiessen; Skinner	2	2	4
65	CMNS 454	P. Howard X2		2		2
66	CMNS 456	P. Anderson X4		4		4
67	CMNS 458	P. Anderson		1		1
68	CMNS 471					0
69	CMNS 472		Frith		1	1
70	CMNS 473		Cappelletto; Russell/We		2	2
71	CMNS 474					0
72	CMNS 478					0
73	CMNS 486		Tiessen; Ward		2	2
74	CMNS 486	Balka; R. Howard	Graydon/Straatsma X2	2	2	4
75	CMNS DE110	Gutstein X2	Hiskey X2; Skinner	2	3	5
76	CMNS DE130	Lorimer X6		6		6
77	CMNS DE210	Heyer X2	Belanger X3	2	3	5
78	CMNS DE230	Lewis X5		5		5
79	CMNS DE259		Frykberg X2		2	2
80	CMNS DE261	Gutstein X6		6		6
81	CMNS DE371		Cowan X4		4	4
82						
83	TOTAL			118	77	195

5 March 1998

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES

Faculty	Supervising # of Graduate Students	Supervising # of Graduate Students on an interim basis *	On Committees	TOTALS
P. Anderson	2 (2 MA)	1 (1 MA)	0	3
R. Anderson	4 (2 MA) (2 PhD)	1 (1 PhD)	5 (2 MA) (3 PhD)	10
E. Balka	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	5 (4 MA) (1 PhD)	9
A. Beale	4 (1 MA) (3 PhD)	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	6 (1 MA) (5 PhD)	12
G. Faurschou	2 (2 MA)	2 (2 PhD)	6 (2 MA) (4 PhD)	10
R. Gruneau	4 (4 PhD)	3 (2 MA) (1 PhD)	12 (6 MA) (6 PhD)	19
D. Gutstein	0	1 (1 MA)	0	1
R. Hackett	2 (2 PhD)	2 (2 PhD)	2 (2 PhD)	6
L. Harasim	1 (1 MA)	1 (1 MA)	0	2
P. Heyer	3 (1 MA) (2 PhD)	0	7 (3 MA) (4 PhD)	10
P. Howard	11 (7 MA) (4 PhD)	1 (1 PhD)	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	14
S. Kline	1 (PhD)	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	3 (1 MA) (2 PhD)	6
M. Laba	3 (1 MA) (2 PhD)	1 (1 MA)	5 (2 MA) (3 PhD)	9
W. Leiss	0	0	1 (1 PhD)	1
B. Lewis	1 (1 MA)	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	1 (1 PhD)	4
R. Lorimer	3 (1 MA) (2 PhD)	0	1 (1 PhD)	4
C. Murray	4 (1 MA) (3 PhD)	2 (2 MA)	9 (5 MA) (4 PhD)	15
W. Richards	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	0	1 (1 PhD)	3
R. Smith	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	1 (1 MA)	5 (3 MA) (2 PhD)	8
B. Truax	2 (2 MA)	0	1 (PhD)	3
J. Walls	2 (1 MA) (Spec)	0	2 (1 MA) (1 PhD)	4
A. Wilden	0	0	0	0
T. Mallinson	0	0	1 (1 PhD)	1
Total	53 (26 MA) (28 PhD) (1 Spec)	24 (13 MA) (11 PhD)	75 (31 MA) (44 PhD)	154

List of Graduate course offerings in Communication for 1996 and 1997

1996-1	Course Title	Faculty	Enrollment
CMNS 801-5	Design and Method in Communication Research	C. Murray	7
CMNS 805-5	Communications Research Methods	W. Richards	3
CMNS 855-5	Telelearning: Principles and Practice	L. Harasim	6
CMNS 859-5	Acoustic Dimensions of Communication	B. Truax	2
CMNS 860-2	Graduate Colloquium (MA)	R. Gruneau	0
*CMNS 850/851	Directed Study	Faculty	
*CMNS 880	Directed Readings and Research	Faculty	
*CMNS 881	Research Internship	Faculty	
*CMNS 882	Research Field Work	Faculty	
*CMNS 898/899	MA/PhD Thesis		

1996-2	Course Title	Faculty	Enrollment
CMNS 855-5	Special Topics: Workshop in Communication Design for Social Video and Interactive Media	S. Kline	2
CMNS 856-5	Graduate Seminar: Media Education	M. Laba	0
*			

1996-3	Course Title	Faculty	Enrollment
CMNS 802	History of Communication Thought	A. Beale	14
CMNS 446/845	Communication and International Development	R. Anderson	5
CMNS 422/855	Selected Topics: Media and Ideology	R. Gruneau	1
CMNS 856	Graduate Seminar: Journalism & Democratic Communication: News Media Analysis as Normatively - Guided Research	R. Hackett	9
*		11 Courses	

* These are listed every semester as course offerings.

1997-1	Course Title	Faculty	Enrollments
CMNS 800	Contemporary Approaches in Communication Studies	R. Gruneau & M. Laba	14
CMNS 805	Empirical Communication Research Methods	W. Richards	4
CMNS 815	Social Implications of Communication Technologies	E. Balka	5
CMNS 855	Telelearning: Principles and Practice	L. Harasim & T. Calvert	4
CMNS 856	Graduate Seminar: Communication and Complexity	T. Wilden	5
CMNS 860	Graduate Colloquium	A. Beale	8
*			

1997-2	Course Title	Faculty	Enrollments
CMNS 855-5	Negotiation as Communication	R. Anderson	2
*			

1997-3	Course Title	Faculty	Enrollments
CMNS 801	Design & Method in Communication Research	E. Balka & R. Hackett	17
CMNS 830	Communications Media: Journalism, The Public Sphere, and Social/Political 'Reality'	R. Hackett	6
CMNS 855	Knowledge Systems and Development	P. Howard	15
CMNS 856	Graduate Seminar: Communication and the Dialectics of Complexity	T. Wilden	2
CMNS 856	Graduate Seminar: "The Communication of Science and the Transfer of Technology"	M. Lipsett	2
CMNS 860	Graduate Colloquium	C. Murray	8
*		12 Courses	

* These are listed every semester as course offerings.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR
THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC RESPONSE

The external review committee's report portrays the School of Communication as a "flagship" discipline – provincially, regionally, nationally – threatened by budget constraints, by problems of faculty renewal, by lack of visibility within the Faculty of Applied Sciences, by tensions between its applied and theoretical underpinnings, by serious structural flaws in both its graduate and undergraduate programs, and by the over commitment of senior faculty to non-departmental initiatives.

Each of these problems is a serious matter in its own right. Taken together, they describe a School that needs to redefine, with the assistance of the Dean, the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and the senior administration, its core functions and mandate in relation to its actual resources, its future claim on the Faculty's resource base, and its place in the Faculty's long-range plan. Central to this re-examination are: a major overhaul of graduate studies; the rationalization of undergraduate programs and curricula (relative to student demand, faculty workloads, and the maintenance of the tutorial system); and a wide-ranging dialogue between the School and the Faculty concerning the School's opportunities and expectations in relation to the Faculty's long-range development with particular reference to the priority assigned to the School's resource requirements, especially CFL position renewal and complement strength.

The report is largely silent on the quality, quantity and diversity of research and scholarship within the School; but it works from the premise that a vigorous research culture is being compromised by the absence of an integrative structure of academic activity within the School.

This report is a strong signal to the Dean of Applied Sciences and the School of Communication to address these issues intensively and co-operatively in the near term.

David Gagan

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice-President, Academic

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Memorandum

To: Alison Watt
Secretary of Senate

From: David Gagan 
Vice-President, Academic

Re: Response to the Report of the Review Committee for the School of
Communication Date: June 3, 1998

I attach my response to the Report of the Review Committee for the School of Communication. I have copied it to the Dean and the Director.

Attachment

c. R. Marteniuk
B. Lewis

/pjs
stud ser/response/2402