

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY S.89-69

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate

FROM: L. Salter
Chair, Senate Committee
on Academic Planning

RE: Fraser Valley Initiative

DATE: November 16, 1989

In responding to the report of the Fraser Valley Planning Committee, and the consultations which followed it, SCAP recommends:

Whereas:

- (i) demographic studies indicate that a high level of population growth will occur within Simon Fraser's catchment area in the Fraser Valley;
- (ii) Simon Fraser has been assigned a role within the Provincial Government Access Program and a spirit of cooperation has been engendered by Simon Fraser's response to it;
- (iii) the Provincial Government has assigned Simon Fraser a role in the planning initiative for a new institute of higher learning within the Fraser Valley;
- (iv) the Fraser Valley Planning Committee found the Fraser Valley campus to be a viable option, having considered the response from the University Community to its report;
- (v) the prevailing sentiment within Simon Fraser about a potential Fraser Valley Campus is positive (estimated mainly on the basis of the written responses to the consultation and, additionally, from the meetings with various Faculties);
- (vi) it is important to address the widespread concern within Simon Fraser that "catch-up" growth and development at existing campuses should be the first priorities in any further initiatives,

it is therefore recommended that Senate approve, and recommend approval to the Board of Governors, the following motion:

MOTION:

"Within the context of a growth and development strategy that places first priority on its existing campuses, Simon Fraser University should lead in the planning of a new institution of higher learning in the Fraser Valley."

Registrar's Note:

Copies of Senate paper S.89-34 "Report of the Fraser Valley Planning Committee" distributed at the Oct. 30/89 meeting of Senate available on request.

COPY OF BACKGROUND PAPER CIRCULATED TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC
PLANNING REGARDING FRASER VALLEY INITIATIVES

November 10, 1989

Dear Colleague:

As you know, the Fraser Valley Planning Committee submitted its report in September. This report was disseminated widely within SFU and comments were invited from members of the university community. The Fraser Valley Planning Committee reconvened on October 16 to assess the comments submitted by that date, and they have now reported their findings. This letter is in response to the original report, the final submission of the committee and the many responses received by the Vice-President's office.

The Committee's task was to consider the potential for a Simon Fraser campus in the Fraser Valley. It was thought that the Fraser Valley campus could not be assessed, among other options, until sufficient information about the scope and nature of such a campus had been explored in some detail. During the time in which the committee conducted its work, and afterward, the administration has been examining all options, including the capacity for growth and development at the Burnaby and Harbour Centre campuses.

With respect to a possible Fraser Valley campus, the Committee was asked to address such issues as (i) the demographic situation; (ii) the experience of other multi-campus universities; (iii) the range of possible programs and model for academic development [the mission]; (iv) the questions pertaining to infrastructure and services, budget, administration; (v) the planning process for further development. It was understood by the committee, and it should be emphasized now, that these specific suggestions are intended to be illustrative of the approach to academic programs that might be taken. It would have been unrealistic to expect the committee to develop a full range of considered programs for a proposed Fraser Valley campus. Equally, it would be wrong now to consider the committee's proposals as anything other than illustrative of the types of programs that might be located at such a campus. The committee's specific suggestions, plus the response of the university community to them, are properly referred to normal processes for academic planning, to the various departments, faculties and the Senate. In the meantime, it is entirely appropriate that the debate about new programs for Simon Fraser continue within the university community.

In response, then, to the Fraser Valley Committee report and the comments received to date, let me begin by expressing the appreciation of the

Vice-President's office and of the community as a whole for the quality of the report. Given the time available and the short notice provided, it is a tribute to the Committee that it was able to provide such a thoughtful document.

The response of the community overall was positive (approximately 2:1 in favour). Among those negatively inclined, a number of people raised questions and concerns which, if addressed adequately, would alter their opinion of the Fraser Valley option and provide even further support for it. In considering these responses, the Fraser Valley Planning Committee concluded that no additional work on the report was necessary at this time and that the development of a Fraser Valley campus is a viable option for the growth of the university.

Questions and concerns were raised by people both favourably and negatively inclined toward the Fraser Valley campus. These questions and concerns are valid ones. It will be useful to review these concerns and to respond to them.

First: The primary concern raised by people both favourably and negatively inclined toward the Fraser Valley campus option was that "catch-up" and growth should occur, to the maximum degree possible, at the Burnaby and Harbour Centre campuses before embarking upon the full development of Simon Fraser at any new campus site.

This concern is well-founded, and indeed it is now the intention to explore fully the opportunities, costs and constraints of development and "catch-up" at the Burnaby and Harbour Centre campuses and to propose proceeding with the Fraser Valley campus option in the context of an overall strategy which places emphasis on the developments at Burnaby Mountain and Harbour Centre as the first priorities.

Second: Some people felt that the planning and development effort connected to a new Fraser Valley campus would "drain" initiative and resources from the Burnaby and Harbour Centre campuses. However, others felt that the Fraser Valley option offered opportunities for new initiatives. This latter group pointed, as one example, to the current strength of the units originally "nursed" within FIDS and to the difficulty of adding innovative new programs to the mix at the Burnaby campus.

There is merit to both sides of this argument. The caution raised by those who fear the diversion of energy is well taken, in any case. In any future planning efforts, care must be taken to ensure that the resources (human and other) necessary to carry them out represent net additions to the complement of resources at Simon Fraser overall. Furthermore, the Fraser Valley Committee has been asked to consider which of its many programming proposals might well be initiated regardless of their eventual location.

Third: A concern was raised about how the relationship of Simon Fraser to the colleges might be affected by any SFU developments in the Fraser Valley. There is no question but that any Simon Fraser initiative must be properly coordinated with the colleges, but also that Simon Fraser must act in such a way as to maintain leadership and the integrity of its planning process and academic programs.

Finally: A number of people stressed the following:

- (i) the need for consistent admission and other standards at any and all campuses of Simon Fraser;
- (ii) the need to limit the use of sessional instructors for delivery of academic programs, both at the Burnaby and Harbour Centre campuses and at any new campus in the Fraser Valley;
- (iii) the need for a unique mission and range of programs at any new campus in the Fraser Valley, combined with the concern that programs offered there represent the core disciplines adequately;
- (iv) the need to avoid proliferation of different types and kinds of degrees;
- (v) the need to address further questions related to the relationships between the various SFU campuses and to the administrative structure that might be put into place. It was widely felt that these questions had not been addressed fully in the Fraser Valley Committee report;
- (vi) the need for further planning is required with respect to academic services at a multi-campus university, in order to ensure both the quality of these services and the proper coordination of services among the campuses;
- (vii) the need for bolstering library resources as an integral part of any plan for growth and development of Simon Fraser University;
- (viii) the need to pay further attention to the potential for and method of achieving a significant research and graduate studies component to the Fraser Valley campus.

These suggestions are all constructive ones, and they will inform future planning.

In responding to the Fraser Valley Committee report, it is important to recognize these issues:

- (i) the high level of population growth that falls within Simon Fraser's catchment area in the Fraser Valley;
- (ii) the role Simon Fraser has been assigned within the provincial government access program and the spirit of cooperation engendered by Simon Fraser's response to it;
- (iii) the role assigned by the provincial government to Simon Fraser University on the initiative of an institute of higher learning within the Fraser Valley;

- (iv) the fact that the Fraser Valley Planning Committee found the Fraser Valley campus to be a viable option, having considered the response from the university community to its report;
- (v) the two-thirds majority of positive sentiment within Simon Fraser about a potential Fraser Valley campus;
- (vi) the importance of addressing the widespread concern within Simon Fraser that "catch-up," growth and development at existing campuses be the first priorities in any further initiatives.

It is the recommendation, then, that the following motion be taken to Senate for approval.

Motion: *Within the context of a strategy that places first priority on growth and development of its existing campuses, Simon Fraser University should lead in the planning of an institution of higher learning in the Fraser Valley.*

In conclusion, the debate about the Fraser Valley Planning Committee Report has been both thoughtful and productive, and the many contributions from faculties, departments and individuals are greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Liora Salter
Acting Vice-President,
Academic

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