



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on  
Monday, September 9, 2019 at 7:00 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)

## Open Session

**Present:** Andrew Petter, Chair

Bartram, Lyn  
Brennand, Tracy  
Bubela, Tania  
Chapman, Glenn  
Chenier, Elise  
Chou, Jennifer  
Collard, Mark  
Dastmalchian, Ali  
Denholm, Julia  
Derksen, Jeff  
Driver, Jon  
Elle, Elizabeth  
Favere-Marchesi, Michael  
Fiume, Eugene  
Forde, Nancy  
Fowler, Colin  
Gajdics, Sylvia  
Gunn, Alexandra  
Hall, Peter  
Hendrigan, Holly  
Hoffer, Andy  
Hogg, Robert  
HoSang, Giovanni  
Keliipio, Kau'i  
Kench, Paul  
Krauth, Brian  
Krogman, Naomi  
Laitsch, Dan  
Leacock, Tracey  
Mirhady, David  
Myers, Gord  
O'Neill, Susan  
Parent, Michael  
Parkhouse, Wade  
Parmar, Abhishek  
Percival, Colin  
Plettner, Erika  
Pulkingham, Jane  
Raza, Samad

Reder, Deanna  
Somers, Julian  
Stockie, John  
Tavakoli, Kimia  
Taykandy, Mason  
Tingling, Peter  
Underhill, Owen  
Weldon, Steve  
Zanette, Amanda

**Absent:**

Aistov, Nikita  
Dunsford, Russell  
Giardini, Anne  
Gray, Bonnie  
Hillman, Sterling  
Ho, Shuna  
Johnson, Joy  
Kim, Woo Soo  
Kimathi, Natasha  
Lord Ferguson, Sarah  
Luelfesmann, Christoph  
Luu, Susan  
Nepomnaschy, Pablo  
Planchenault, Gaelle  
Poitras, Geoffrey  
Shaw, Chris  
Walsby, Charles

**In Attendance:**

Blair, Alison  
Blue, Dan  
Naqvi, Zareen  
Pochurko, Martin  
Waddell, Larry  
Wong, Jimmy

The Chair acknowledged that SFU is privileged to be situated on the traditional territories of the Tsleil–Waututh, Squamish, Kwikwetlem, and Musqueam nations.

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as distributed.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session of July 8, 2019**

The minutes of the open session on July 8, 2019 were approved as distributed.

**3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

- i) At the May meeting a question was asked as to the proportion of students currently doing an International Studies major who would, by virtue of completing their program, be eligible to receive a Certificate in International Studies. Senate was informed that there is considerable overlap between the certificate and the major, with the one difference being that IS 265 is required for the certificate but is an elective for the major. IS 265 was introduced in Fall 2016 and approximately 20% of students completing it as part of their major requirements would technically qualify for the certificate as well.
- ii) At the July meeting the following questions were raised in response to the Mid-Cycle Report for the Faculty of Education, which spoke of some of the construction delays that had occurred in respect of the renovation of the Faculty of Education facilities:
  - What has SFU learned from these lengthy construction delays/disturbances and what will be changed to ensure the impacts to the University community are minimized in the future?
  - Where can students go to get accurate information about the construction schedule?
  - Is there an audit process in place to evaluate the work being performed?

Martin Pochurko, Vice-President Finance & Administration, and Larry Waddell, Chief Facilities Officer, were in attendance to respond to these questions.

Senate was informed that with the Education Building, and other buildings over the last number of years, there has been considerable uncertainty around obtaining permits from the City of Burnaby. The process is both long and unpredictable and poses serious scheduling challenges. On top of that, it has been a challenge working in a very hot construction market, leading to a cost escalation of about 25% on typical institutional construction projects. Internally, there is insufficient temporary office and classroom space to re-locate people and classes disrupted by work projects. There have also been challenges posed by unknown conditions, with some older buildings revealing poor workmanship and incomplete records as to what's actually to be found below the surface once work begins.

Based on these experiences, SFU has already been in discussion with the City of Burnaby on how to improve both the timing and predictability of securing permits from the City. The hot construction market continues to be a challenge, with contractors facing great difficulty in attracting and retaining trades workers. In particular, the Education Building

had significant turnover in their supervisory management and staff because other companies were offering better opportunities and more money. In order to help overcome these challenges, more will be done to strengthen the group qualification process for contractors to make sure that opportunities are only offered to contractors with good track records. Schedules and budgets are based on assumptions about what will be found when a project starts and the lesson learned is to try to do more physical investigation and construction testing of spaces that are to be renovated to uncover potential problems and draft contingency plans.

On the question of providing students accurate information about projects and construction schedules, a website is maintained to provide updates and general information about timelines. Signage is also posted at each significant project, with contact information to project managers for more specific questions. For more detailed aspects of projects, especially ones causing disruption to a specific group of stakeholders, an email distribution list is established, to provide information and updates.

In terms of an audit process for work being performed, this occurs during the course of the contract. Most major projects feature weekly site meetings with the contractor, subtrades, consultants, project management and staff to discuss the project schedule. Also, the architectural firm, the Facilities Project Manager and the City of Burnaby all inspect work as it is performed to ensure it's completed to the quality expected. Upon completion there is typically a post-occupancy review to determine what lessons have been learned.

#### 4. **Report of the Chair**

The reported that SFU recently welcomed over 5000 undergraduate students and 1600 graduate students, along with 60 new faculty members.

The Chair welcomed Owen Underhill, Dean of Communications, Art and Technology pro tem, Deanna Reder, Dean of Libraries pro tem, and Susan O'Neill, Dean of Education, to Senate. The Chair also welcomed back Jon Driver to Senate, in his capacity as Vice-President, Academic and Provost pro tem. The Chair thanked Dr. Peter Keller for his hard work and many accomplishments in his time as Vice-President, Academic and Provost. It was noted that the search for a new Vice-President, Academic and Provost will commence later this academic year, and be timed so as to allow SFU's President-Elect to be actively involved in the process.

The Chair reported on recent research awards and honours:

- Five faculty-lead research projects have been awarded a total of \$3.9 million from the *Canadian Institutes of Health Research*. That represents a success rate of 28%, significantly above the national success rate of 17%.
- Five research projects lead by SFU faculty have been awarded \$840,000 from the *Canadian Foundation for Innovation's John R. Evans Fund*.
- Professor Zuo-Ghang Ye of Chemistry has received an *IEEE Robert E. Newnham Ferro-electrics Award* for his contributions to understanding and applying crystal chemical fundamentals in Pb-based piezo crystals.

The Chair reported that the federal government recently announced that SFU is one of seventeen post-secondary institutions to have been awarded the opportunity to participate in its *Dimensions* pilot program. The program is intended to publicly recognize post-secondary institutions seeking to increase their commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in their environments. The program objective is to foster transformational change at Canadian post-secondary institutions. Participation in the program is being coordinated on behalf of the Executive by Vice-President, Research and International, Dr. Joy Johnson, and more information will be shared with the university community soon.

The Chair reported on innovation updates:

- *Western Economic Diversification* has provided over \$1 million dollars to help the School of Sustainable Energy Engineering create a new research facility to prototype clean technology solutions for the aerospace industry.
- Coast Capital Savings Venture Connection, SFU's university-wide student business incubator, received over \$1.9 million from *Western Economic Diversification* to expand its entrepreneurship program in relation to under-represented disciplines. The funding will enable student innovators to address challenges in areas such as health, sustainability and creative technologies.
- SFU VentureLabs, BC's most successful science technology accelerator, has received \$3 million from *Western Economic Diversification* to establish a scale-up and soft-landing center that will provide science and technology entrepreneurs and companies with support they need to thrive.
- SFU's Next Big Question Fund has awarded \$25,000 to each of seven projects bringing researchers together from diverse faculties. These projects will use big data to research areas ranging from improving clinical decision-making and health care delivery to access for immigrant and refugee women to predicting violence escalation using social media.

The Chair reported that SFU is partnering with *Mitacs* on a student research mobility program to advance international engagement. The program consists of 60 inbound and 40 outbound internships valued at \$6,000 each for senior undergraduate and graduate students. This program builds on the success of an SFU-Mitacs pilot which supports student research mobility between SFU and the network of *Indian Institutes of Technology*.

The Chair reported that Lifelong Learning's Plain Language Certificate program and its instructor Katherine McManus have been awarded the *Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award*. Also, the BC government recently announced \$300,000 to support a pilot program pathway for mid-career learners. Learners who complete a non-credit certificate through Lifelong Learning can gain admission to the Beedie School Graduate Diploma in Business Administration.

The Chair reported that as part of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SFU's Vancouver campus, President Emeritus Jack Blaney was honoured for his visionary leadership in helping to bring SFU into downtown Vancouver with the renaming of the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue's Asia Pacific Hall to the Jack P. Blaney Asia Pacific Hall.

The Chair reported on upcoming events:

- On September 19th, this semester's President's Dream Colloquium on Creative Ecologies gets underway with guest speaker Professor Elizabeth Povinelli of Columbia University. This interdisciplinary colloquium will bring leading thinkers to SFU during the fall semester, with the focus on the intersection of art, culture and environment.
- Outstanding Alumni Awards will be taking place on September 20<sup>th</sup>.
- On September 27<sup>th</sup>, the annual Terry Fox Run takes place at all three campuses. Everyone at SFU is welcome to participate by running, walking, volunteering and/or donating to support cancer research.

The Chair reported that Chancellor Anne Giardini's term comes to an end in June 2020, and having served for six consecutive years, is not eligible to serve another term. As set out in section 11 of the University Act, the Chancellor is appointed by the Board of Governors on nomination by the Alumni Association after consultation with the Senate. In accordance with Board Policy B 10.12, the Chair, in his role as President, is initiating the process to appoint the next Chancellor. As a first step, the Board of Governors, in consultation with Alumni Association Board of Directors and the Senate Committee on University Honours, will be asked to review and revise, if necessary, the terms of reference and criteria for selection of the Chancellor. After consultation on the terms of reference and criteria is complete, a joint committee of the Board of Governors, the Alumni Association and the Senate will be struck to decide the final terms of reference and selection criteria, seek nominations, and recommend the appointment. It is expected that the committee will be struck early next year so as to allow the new President-Elect to participate in the process.

**i) Annual Financial Report (S.19-88)**

Senate received the Annual Financial Report for information.

Alison Blair, Associate Vice-President - Finance, Dan Blue, Director - Financial Services and Jimmy Wong, Associate Director - Financial Services, were in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was asked about the total amount of deferred maintenance for the University, and the reasoning behind the more than 50% reduction in cash assets. Senate was informed that for all three campuses for the 2019 Report conducted in April, deferred maintenance totaled \$233 million, defined as work that should have or needed to be done in the current year. If looking at current maintenance and capital renewal, defined as work needs to be done and could be done over the next five years, the total is estimated at \$1.039 billion. When looking at only Burnaby, the deferred maintenance number of \$207 million and the deferred maintenance plus capital renewal is \$769 million. The reasoning for the cash reduction to \$30.7 million from \$67.7 million in 2018 was that a conscious effort was made to invest the funds at the end of the year. In 2018, SFU was given \$43 million in capital money in the last ten days of March by the ministry for various large capital projects and there was not enough time to invest that money to show a lower cash balance on the financial report.

## 5. Question Period

- i) Senator Raza submitted the following question:

*Considering SFU's role as Canada's top comprehensive university based on its interdisciplinary connections, we must recognize that sometimes classes and interests go beyond a student's major and minor. For example, while many software programs, such as those in the Adobe and Microsoft Office suites, are available to every student, more specialized software, such as those for programming, are limited in use to only students in those programs. Senator Chou can attest that as an Arts student, it is impossible to borrow cameras from the Surrey library despite having a personal interest in it. What can SFU do to open up the availability of these programs and resources to students not enrolled in certain subjects, such as Computing Science and fine arts, and would they consider letting clubs book the resources or a portion of the relevant labs for limited parts of the day as a trial run to confirm student interest?*

Deanna Reder, Dean of Libraries pro tem, and Eugene Fiume, Dean of Applied Sciences, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that SFU Library loans equipment to any current student, staff or faculty member with a valid SFU ID card. Types of equipment loaned include laptops, chargers, and presentation and recording devices, amongst other things. Equipment available at each library varies and is based on student demand. In addition to circulating Library video cameras and digital cameras to all current students, staff and faculty, Surrey Library circulates equipment on behalf of the School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT) and the Faculty of Education. These are special collections which are purchased and owned by SIAT and Education and are only available to students, staff, and faculty in these two programs according to the school or faculty policy.

It was noted that however desirable, it is very challenging to provide general access to teaching lab space, hardware, or software. Enrolments in Computer Science and Engineering are very high, thus all labs are heavily utilized and must be made as available as possible for enrolled students to work on and complete their assignments and projects. The Applied Science Building will also be undergoing renovation shortly, which for the next two years will further compress available teaching lab space. Further, the use of specialized equipment in engineering laboratories (as opposed to computer labs) would likely require training, scrupulous attention to health and safety regulations, and the presence of a paid laboratory technician. The story is different regarding software. In some cases, such as commercial computer graphics software, or software-development environments, educational licenses may be available at low cost for any enrolled students. Some lab software is open source, and is thus free for non-commercial use. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some software packages are licensed only for a particular use and for a fixed number of simultaneous users. Since these licenses float across machines for use at any time of day, making this software more freely available would restrict the flexibility of enrolled students.

- ii) Senator Myers submitted the following question:

*I start with the assumption that our university's primary mission is the pursuit of truth (research) and the advancement of learning. Given that research and learning are central,*

*the student to faculty ratio is central. Professors are key to research and students having real contact with professors is key to learning. This explains why the student to faculty ratio has a 20% (40% of non-survey) weight in the QS university rankings. If we had the same student (AFTE) to Faculty (CFL) ratio today as we had approximately a decade ago (2008-09) we would have an additional 101 professors and lecturers. This has been a known problem for several years, and we have been moving in the wrong direction most recently. The most recent 2020 QS university rankings suggest that more than 90% of the 1000 ranked universities have a better student to faculty ratio than SFU. We most certainly have the financial resources to make the additional appointments. Annual university operating revenue from the provincial grant and students alone has increased by \$175 million over those 10 years. An additional 100 appointments would cost about 8% of that. Funding those positions, is simply a matter of priorities. To close the gap of 100 positions over the next three years, assuming we do not decrease student numbers, that attrition (retirements, resignations, etc.) is at the same level as last year, and that about 20% of the positions are not filled each year due to not finding the right candidate in a given year, approximately 100 positions would need to be made available in each of the next three years. How many positions will be made available to Faculties for appointments?*

Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic pro tem, and Wade Parkhouse, Associate Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that the student to faculty ratio is an important indicator of the academic health of the university and affects both research productivity and the student experience. It was noted that the intention is to come back to Senate with a more thorough answer, backed by a proper set of data and the appropriate definitions of what is being discussed.

To provide some background, Senate was informed that there is a complex multi-year planning process to identify the need for new positions in academic departments and faculties. This involves discussions with the Deans, who in turn have discussions within their own faculties. Approval must then be sought from the Board of Governors to proceed with the hiring plan. When looking at proposals for faculty positions, three things are considered. First, what is the current student to faculty ratio and would the position support the most important teaching needs of the academic unit. Second, does the proposed position contribute to the strategic plan of the academic unit around research by either strengthening existing research or helping build new research strength. Third, does the academic unit have the budget to support the salary of the proposed hire, as well as any physical infrastructure needed.

It was noted that in the last year and a half changes have been made by which faculty renewal plans go forward to the Board of Governors, moving to a three year planning cycle in terms of keeping the Board informed. Also, the deadline for submissions from the Deans has changed, hopefully leading to fewer failed searches and more faculty being in place sooner. The most significant change has been moving away from asking the Board for a specific number of faculty positions per year, and instead asking the Board for a faculty compliment number, thereby allowing the Provost to approve enough searches to achieve that number.

**6. Reports of Committees**

**A) Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)**

**i) Membership Revision to Senate Committee on International Activities (S.19-89)**

Moved by C. Percival, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve the revision to the membership of the Senate Committee on International Activities.”

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

**B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)**

**i) Program Changes (S.19-90)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Beedie School of Business and the Faculty of Science (Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology).

**ii) New Course Proposals (S.19-91)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences).

**iii) Course Changes (S.19-92)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering), the Beedie School of Business, and the Faculty of Environment (School of Environmental Science).

**iv) Proposed addition to List A/B courses and IB (S.19-93)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved the Proposed Addition to List A/B Courses and IB, effective Summer 2020.

**C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**

**i) Program Changes (S.19-94)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a program change in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science).

**D) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**

**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.19-95)**

Senate received a summary of the nominations, positions elected by acclamation, positions requiring an online vote, and outstanding vacancies for Senate committees.



## 7. Other Business

### i) **Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2018/19 Grades Report (S.19-96)**

Senate received the 2018/19 Grades Report for information.

Zareen Naqvi, Director - Institutional Research and Planning, was in attendance to respond to Questions.

A question was asked about the increase in lower division grades in Education from 2.9 to 3.3 over the last five years. Senate was informed that Education takes teaching and evaluation seriously, and most instructors grade on a categorical or criterial reference scale requiring students to learn the necessary content and skills, and by doing so their grades would be reflective of this learning. It was noted that there could be numerous explanations for this grade increase, including environmental factors of how grades have trended in the last number of years.

A suggestion was made to include the percentage of A+ grades awarded at the graduate level in future reports. Senate was informed that efforts would be made to include this data in future reports.

### ii) **Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Report: 2018 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report (S.19-97)**

Senate received the 2018 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report for information.

Zareen Naqvi, Director - Institutional Research and Planning, was in attendance to respond to Questions.

A question was asked about the actions being taken as a result of this survey, especially in student satisfaction categories trending in negative directions. Senate was informed that the current Academic Plan contains priority items, and that many of them will address identified areas of student dissatisfaction.

In relation to credential completion time, a question was asked about the median course load taken by students per academic term, and if this number has changed over time. Senate was informed that the average credit load for students per term is 11 credits. SFU runs on a tri-semester basis which allows students greater opportunity to spread their course load out over the year, but there have been some significant institutional issues that cause students to have difficulties in accessing courses, thereby extending their completion time. Factoring into this has been a tendency to focus more on faculty members needs than on student needs, and the tendency for academic departments to offer ever more complex credential completion pathways to their students. It was noted that significant consultation has been done on classroom scheduling and course policy and that proposals will be coming forward this fall to address some of these issues.

A comment was made to suggest that messaging to students should be clarified to stress that 15 units is considered a 100% course load, even though students enrolled in 9 units per term are considered full-time for the purposes of student loan funding.

A request was made to include in the main summary of the report the overall number of students responding to the survey versus the number of students responding per faculty.

**8. Information**

- i) **Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, October 7, 2019.**

Open session adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Kris Nordgren  
Senate Secretary pro tem