



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on
Tuesday, June 7, 2021 at 5:30 pm via Zoom Video Conferencing

Open Session

Present: Joy Johnson, Chair

Bains, Serena
Bhalloo, Shafik
Bird, Gwen
Brennand, Tracy
Bubela, Tania
Chapman, Glenn
Chessel, Patrick
Chowdury, Saima
Coleman, Gordon
Collard, Mark
Daniel, Bryan
Dauvergne, Catherine
Denholm, Julia
Derksen, Jeff
Dhesa, Priyanka
Egri, Carolyn
Elle, Elizabeth
Everton, Mike
Fiume, Eugene
Gardinetti, R. Georges
Gray, Bonnie
Hall, Peter
Hendrigan, Holly
Kandikova, Alisa
Kench, Paul
Krauth, Brian
Krogman, Naomi
Kumpulainen, Kristiina
Laitsch, Dan
Leznoff, Daniel
Liosis, Gabe
Liu, Connie
Lord Ferguson, Sarah
Lu, Joseph
Malott, Brianna
Martell, Matt
Masri, Kamal

McTavish, Rob
Mirhady, David
Myers, Gord
Nagy, Judit
Nepomnaschy, Pablo
Neustaedter, Carman
O'Neil, Dugan
O'Neill, Susan
Pahou, Helen
Parent, Micheal
Parkhouse, Wade
Parmar, Abhishek
Percival, Colin
Phangura, Almas
Shapiro, Lisa
Shinkar, Igor
Spector, Stephen
Stockie, John
Vrooman, Tamara
Walsby, Charles

Absent:

Andreoiu, Corina
Chenier, Ele
Hoffer, Andy
Hogg, Robert
Murphy, David
Pantophlet, Ralph
Pulkingham, Jane

In Attendance:

Broshko, Li-Jeen

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. The Minutes of the Open Session of May 25, 2021 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on July 5, 2021**3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that SFU lowered its flags to honor the lives and memories of the children found at the burial site at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. SFU's flags will remain lowered for 9 days, which began on May 31st. A minute of silence was also held at all campuses on Monday, May 31st at 2:15 pm.

The Chair, in her role as President, reported that she met with the Aboriginal Steering Committee on Friday, May 28th and heard first hand from members of that steering committee about the impact of this news. An email was sent out on Friday with information on the supports that are available for Indigenous students, staff and faculty. SFU stands in solidarity with Indigenous peoples as we grieve this unfathomable loss of life at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. It is also important for us to acknowledge our collective responsibility and the necessity to develop a better system and to move towards reconciliation and think about the roles that we can take on to ensure that this kind of tragedy never happens again and that we build and move forward together.

The Chair, in her role as President, reported that she met with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council today. This council provides advice to the President and includes faculty, staff and students. Time was spent talking about SFU's response to this recent news about residential schools, but also discussed other matters that will be reported on as they take shape.

The Chair thanked all those who participated in the President 's Faculty Lecture Series. The final lecture of the academic year was held on June 1st by Kelly Lee, a professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences, on the topic of *Pandemics and Borders: How to Manage Travel Restrictions More Effectively*. It was noted that these lectures have been recorded and are available on the Public Square Zoom or Public Square YouTube channel.

The Chair reported that on May 26th SFU communicated to faculty, staff and students that its plan is to return to campus in the Fall 2021 term. It is anticipated that 80% of classes will be in-person, though there will be some classes that will continue to be offered virtually. Plans are in place to welcome new and returning students to a new academic year in September. A second town hall meeting will be held on June 10th to provide updates on return-to-campus planning and to provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions.

The Chancellor addressed Senate on honorary degrees. Noting SFU's strong connection to the greater community through research, education, advocacy and alumni, the Chancellor highlighted that SFU's honorary degree recipients exemplify this connection. One area that has

been particularly impactful is the level of meaningful scholarship and contribution that SFU faculty members make to the University and to the wider community. A point of concern, however, is that when the Senate Committee on University Honours (SCUH) meets to review potential honorary degree recipients, there are often many from the community but very few from the research and faculty ranks. To help counteract this circumstance, the Chancellor, as Chair of SCUH, offered her support in providing additional resources to better represent faculty contributions to research, to academia and to scholarship in SFU's honorary degree nominees.

5. Question Period

i) Senator Lord Ferguson submitted the following question:

I bring this question forward as a member of the SFU community for more than 12 years as a student, alumni, TA, sessional instructor, board of governor's member and student senator. The issue I am bringing up has hurt students, including myself for many, many years. In my original submitted question, I had specific examples and more background information, but since question period is intended to be brief, I was required to shorten my question.

In March of this year, I brought forward a concern to Registrar, Kathryn Verkerk about grading transparency at SFU. Specifically, the lack of percentages on student transcripts and the severe impact that this has on students seeking further training and education outside of SFU (for example, in my particular experience, admissions to UBC's physiotherapy school where SFU was poorly represented (in my class only 4 of 80 were SFU grads despite SFU's exceptional science programs).

I am bringing this issue forward now and directly to Senate for two reasons. First, I have become aware of a Petition circulating with undergraduate students about grading practices at SFU. This petition has over 1,000 signatures and directly relates to my concerns. Second, I am optimistic that with this external pressure and by bringing this concern to the floor of Senate, we can expedite the process towards addressing the lack of grading transparency at SFU.

So, my questions are: 1) In the short-term, what is SFU doing to address the student petition? 2) In the longer term, what is SFU's plan to increase grading transparency and better align our grading practices with other Canadian institutions?

Wade Parkhouse, Associate Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that the University is aware of a petition circulating requesting a change to undergraduate grading practices and transcripts and proponents of the petition have been instructed to work with the Registrar. A student's academic record is very important and adjustments or changes to this record are not made lightly due to this importance. A transcript is intended to reflect a student's academic performance at an institution and its specific content is determined by institutional history, evolution, policies, regulations and is subject to legal constraint. SFU updated the format of its official transcript to best reflect a student's academic path and achievements in 2016. This was done to increase grading transparency and better align SFU practices with other Canadian institutions by showing a grade achieved relative to the class

average. A key reason for doing this was to ensure SFU students fair well against students from other postsecondary institutions for further studies and external competitions.

Given that this question is mainly about grading systems, it was noted that SFU's institutional policies clearly indicate it is the responsibility of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS) to make recommendations related to grading to Senate. As such, the suggestion to change grading practices, and any resulting changes to the transcript, will be referred to SCUS. SCUS will then direct the Registrar's Office to perform the research needed to inform SCUS. This research would include a landscape analysis of other Canadian institutional grading practices, including the Research Universities' Council of British Columbia (RUCBC) institutions, as well as what is included on their transcripts. A further analysis will be done to determine the impact of potential changes on current and former students, as well as the impact on student records from a systems perspective. This, along with wide consultations with students and faculty, will take time, but once this information has been assembled a discussion will take place at SCUS, followed by any recommendations to Senate should a change be recommended. If no changes are recommended Senate would be informed as to why.

ii) Senator Bains submitted the following question:

SFU released/announced through email that the Fall semester will be a period of transition, however, also announced a return to campus of 70-80% of classes being delivered in-person. Will international, disabled, BIPOC, and other marginalized communities be able to participate in classes remotely if their accessibility needs require such in the Fall?

Secondly, when will the "Go Forward Guidelines" be released and will there be meaningful consultation with students regarding how these guidelines should be implemented?

Catherine Dauvergne, Vice President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that as planning progresses for the Fall term, the University is eager to ensure that students who cannot return to campus can be accommodated. Two principle areas being worked on is setting up a registration system for students unable to come to campus to have priority access to classes offered remotely and strengthening the Center for Accessible Learning, which handles student accommodation requests, so they are prepared to address a higher number of requests for accommodation. The University is also working on sharing a number of ideas on how to encourage people to stay away from campus when feeling unwell, and this includes encouraging instructors to record lectures and to more broadly think about a complement of measures that ensure students are not penalized by missing classes.

On the question of Go-Forward Guidelines, Senate was informed that it is anticipated that updated guidelines will be available at the end of June. It is expected that these guidelines, about which there is currently public consultation, will feature a lighter touch than the current guidelines and that by the middle of the summer the Province will no longer be under a state of emergency and consequently Provincial powers that go with emergency status will be greatly reduced and the Go-Forward Guidelines will therefore have a different legal status. It was added

that the updated guidelines will be posted on SFU's Return to Campus webpage and that the University will continue to work with students through the regular working group.

iii) Senator Dhesa submitted the following question:

As a return to in-person instruction is expected by fall, what steps are being taken to ensure safe and accessible instruction to all students, including those who may not be comfortable returning to campus, such as the recording of live lectures?

Catherine Dauvergne, Vice-President, Academic, responded to this question.

Senate was informed that SFU expects campuses to be safe in the fall because of a dramatic decrease in circulation of the COVID in our communities due to vaccinations being administered. More than 72% of adults in the Province have already received their first vaccination dose, while 40% of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 have received their first dose. On top of this, campus safety plans will still be in place and all community members feeling ill will be encouraged to stay away from campus. Further, unwell students who cannot come to campus will be accommodated and instructors are being encouraged to think of ways, such as by recording lectures, to help students when they are unable to attend due to illness.

Noting that classes will be up to 80% in-person in the fall, a concern was raised about the need to record lectures, citing a lack of infrastructure available to do these recordings. Senate was informed that instructors are being encouraged to record their lectures. A recent tech audit of all centrally controlled classrooms has indicated a more robust recording capability than previously thought available. Also, a number of classroom tech facilities are being upgraded over the summer months in anticipation of having tech equipment available by the end of August. It was added that technology such as Zoom has proven reliable for recording.

A question was asked about what steps are being put in place to accommodate international students who cannot physically attend classes in the fall. Senate was informed that the first area of priority when thinking about whether to offer a course or a section remotely in the fall term is to consider whether it's a course that typically has a high international student enrollment. The second consideration is to preserve priority registration in those courses for students who are out of the country and do not anticipate being able to return to Canada in the fall. The third priority is to offer vaccinations to arriving international students if they have been unable to receive vaccinations in their home country.

6. **Invited Presenter**

Julia Denholm, Dean of Lifelong Learning, presented on Micro-Credentials, following which she took questions.

A question was asked if the main purpose of micro-credentials is skills training or the acquisition knowledge. Senate was informed that what is being done in the micro-credential framework right now is more skill based than knowledge based, which is why micro-credentials are complementary to rather than a replacement for the kind of education offered at the undergraduate or graduate level at a university. As such, there may be opportunities whereby a

learner, who has an existing body of knowledge, wants to add additional skills in order to respond to a particular employment demand. This addition of a micro-credential would not, however, purport to replace the knowledge acquired through degree completion.

A concern was raised about the balance between course access and revenue generation, and also about the potential for students to stack micro-credentials within their degree program in a fashion similar to what students can do now by attaining certificates within a degree program. Senate was informed that the biggest barrier to course access is the cost, and while one of the goals of Lifelong Learning is to generate revenue, it also tries to offset the cost whenever possible. An example of this would be programming for learners who are either unemployed or underemployed or otherwise affected by COVID which is fully sponsored by the Ministry of Education. As to stackability, one of the key elements in the realm of micro-credentials is stackability, thereby allowing students to potentially stack up credentials to achieve a certificate and then add additional credentials to achieve a diploma.

A question was asked about how micro-credentials differ from associate degree programs offered by colleges in the British Columbia context. Senate was informed that many colleges in British Columbia do offer undergraduate degrees and undergraduate for credit offerings are well defined and highly governed entities. Micro-credentials offered through Lifelong Learning on the non-credit side would not be transferable from non-credit to credit directly because Lifelong Learning is not offering courses that look like those offered in an undergraduate program. Rather, micro-credentials are discrete pieces of learning that can be combined together. An associate degree is designed to ladder into an undergraduate degree, which micro-credentials are not currently designed to do.

7. Reports of Committees

A) Electoral Standing Committee (ESC)

i) Report of the Electoral Standing Committee 2020/2021 (S.21-72)

Senate received the Report of the Electoral Standing Committee 2020/2021 for information.

Li-Jeen Broshko, ESC Chair, was in attendance to respond to questions.

Noting that this report references incidents that occurred in 2020, a question was asked as to why this report is coming to Senate now, as opposed to a year ago. Senate was informed that the ESC is required to report annually and this report that captures the period in question. The violations mentioned in the report were noted at the time and the students involved were notified of the violations at that time.

B) Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS)

i) Program Changes (S.21-73)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Environment (Geography, School of Resource and Environmental Management), and the Faculty of Science (Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology, Earth Sciences).

ii) Course Changes (S.21-74)

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 Computing Science, School of Engineering Science), the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (School of Criminology, Economics, French, Gerontology, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, History, Humanities, School of International Studies, Linguistics, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology, World Languages and Literatures), the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Environment (Archaeology, Geography, School of Resource and Environmental Management), and the Faculty of Science (Biological Sciences, Earth Sciences).

C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**i) Program Changes (S.21-75)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Beedie School of Business, and the Faculty of Environment (Geography).

ii) New Course Proposals (S.21-76)

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Environment (Geography).

D) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)**i) Senate Committee Elections (S.20-77 Revised)**

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

8. Other Business**9. Information****i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, July 5, 2021**

Open session adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Kathryn Verkerk
Senate Secretary pro tem