

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.75-106

MEMORANDUM

To..... SENATE

From..... SENATE UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS BOARD

Subject..... SPECIAL SEMESTER

Date..... JUNE 19, 1975

MOTION:

"That Senate approve the institution of a special semester for the Fall semester 75-3, as set forth in S.75-106, for selected students in academic difficulty."

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.75-106

MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS BOARD

Subject

Date 19th June, 1975

At its meeting of 4th June, the Senate Undergraduate Admissions Board discussed the attached proposal for the institution of a special semester for students in academic difficulty.

During discussion of this proposal, those making it indicated that their examination of student records indicated that the number of students on academic probation, required to withdraw, and permanent withdrawal from the University is very large and that, while it is clear that many students found University level courses beyond their academic talents, it was equally clear that, in a large number of cases, factors other than academic ability were contributing significantly to the number of students in these categories. The proposal is designed to assist such students in overcoming these deficiencies. Since a sufficient number of students who are in academic difficulties and who had been approached with regard to their interest in enrolling in such a program had indicated that they wished to enrol in it during the Fall semester, it is proposed to institute the program on an experimental basis for that semester, to suspend required to withdraw and permanent withdrawal status for the students enrolled pending evaluation of the results of the program, and to report these results to Senate following completion of the program with a recommendation for further action.

I. Mugridge *dsj*
I. Mugridge

:ams

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To Members of Senate Undergraduate
Admissions Board
(see distribution)

Subject Proposed semester for students
in academic difficulty

From I. Mugridge
Chairman,
Senate Undergraduate Admissions Board

Date 9th June, 1975

I am attaching Professor Wilson's additional comments on the proposal for a special semester. You will recall that, at last Wednesday's meeting, it was agreed to distribute it to members of the board for comment. If you wish to meet again to discuss the proposal, please inform Mr. McMillan so that a meeting may be called for this Wednesday, 11th June. If not, please inform him whether you approve or disapprove this proposal so that, should it be accepted, it may be forwarded to Senate in time for the July meeting.


I. Mugridge

:ams

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Proposed Semester for Students in Academic Difficulty

Purpose:

1. To identify by an experimental semester those students in academic difficulty;
 - a. who can be encouraged to go on with their formal studies with a reasonable chance of success; or
 - b. who should be encouraged to apply their energies in some alternate form of activity - with suggestions as to the direction that activity might take; and
2. To plan the experimental semester in such a way that in future;
 - a. assistance can be given to students before they are required to withdraw from the University; and
 - b. such 'high risk' students can be identified early in their academic programs.

Academic Difficulty

Students whose performance does not meet the standards set by Simon Fraser University are first warned, then placed on academic probation, and eventually required to withdraw from the University for a period of one calendar year. If at the end of that time there is still no considerable improvement, they are placed on permanent withdrawal and may not re-apply for admission for a period of five years.

It should be noted that in each case the student had met the entrance requirements of Simon Fraser University and was considered to be a candidate for an undergraduate degree.

Many students whose high school performance is marginal have improved considerably at University and a summary of the performance of students with High School GPA's of 2.5 or less is attached as Appendix I.

The quality of the performance of these students provides a firm basis for suggesting that many students in academic difficulty can be assisted to perform satisfactorily without in anyway lowering the standards set by the Departments and Faculty of Simon Fraser University.

Extent of the Problem

Of all the students who have registered at Simon Fraser University since September, 1965, there are approximately 3,400 who have as the last entry on their academic records a statement that they are in academic difficulty, in one of the categories mentioned above. This number does not include those students who have been in one of these categories at some point but have managed to improve their performance sufficiently to have their records cleared.

If only those students who have been recently enrolled are selected - in this instance in the semesters 73/3, 74/1, 74/2 and 74/3 - the numbers are:

On academic warning	-	80
On academic probation	-	464
Required to withdraw	-	121
Permanent Withdrawal	-	64

These semesters are typical of the numbers involved and the amount of wastage.

Method of handling the problem

A special semester is proposed as a way of diagnosing the particular areas of difficulty which the students have and helping them to recognize and cope with these difficulties.

Organization

- The proposal is for a diagnostic-remedial semester.
- Any extension of the project beyond the one semester would depend upon the effectiveness of the results, and upon the recommendation of Senate that such an extension occur.

Participating Services

The possibility of such a semester has been discussed fully with the appropriate services at Simon Fraser University. They have expressed their enthusiasm for such a project and are willing to contribute to it by providing assistance in the following ways.

1. Academic Advice Centre
 - Information on academic offerings
 - Individual Program Planning
 - Information on University regulations.
2. Counselling Service
 - Self-knowledge related to a commitment to educational and/or alternative life goals.
3. Financial Aid
 - Personal budgeting for individual students and their families
 - Information about various financial programs.
4. Library
 - How to manipulate the bibliographic system and extract information which is required in their own research.
5. Manpower
 - The availability of general and itemized employment services - and job search techniques.

6. Reading and Study Centre - The learning of reading and study skills.
7. English 010 - Writing - Effective written expression - writing skills.
8. Deans and Administrators - Information about the various Faculties and the relationship of students to faculty. A Coordinator will be responsible for the general administration and integration of the program.

Student Commitment.

Students accepted for this special semester would be required to assume a commitment of twelve (12) semester hours. This commitment would allow the University to give them the status of full-time students. The twelve hours would be allocated in the following way:

- 1) Six hours of regularly scheduled classes, appropriate to the individual's program. Credit would be given for regularly assigned grades; faculty would have no indication that the student was a member of an experimental group.
- 2) Six regularly scheduled hours of diagnostic-remedial classes for the group as a whole, with special sessions related to the students' individual needs arranged in the same way as regular tutorial sessions.

Scheduling

A suggested schedule is attached for information (Appendix II) Because these students would pre-register, any preliminary assessments required by the services - for example Reading and Study; or for enrolment in English 010 - could be arranged before classes begin. The office of the Registrar is prepared to schedule the regular group and tutorial type sections.

.....5

Size of Group

As this is an experimental project, the first group would be limited to approximately 40 students.

Selection of Students

It was decided to select students from the 'Required to Withdraw' and 'Permanent Withdrawal' categories for the semesters 73/3 to 74/3 inclusive. This selection was made for two reasons:

- 1) These students are in the greatest academic difficulty and may be the most motivated to cooperate in a special project; and
- 2) The numbers make for a group of manageable size.

There were a total of 185 students in the selected categories and it was decided to send letters to each of these students, deleting the names of those who were in special categories - taking only one course etc. - and those for whom the only address was one outside of Canada. This left a total of 156 to whom letters were sent. Sixteen letters were returned for lack of a current address and of the remaining 140, sixty-two have replied saying that they are interested, forty-eight for September, 1975 and the remainder for a later date.

Financial Aid

The Senate Committee responsible for financial aid has already made provision for granting aid to students whose present academic status would normally bar them from being given such help. It is possible that some of the students for the special semester could be considered under these experimental provisions.

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Assessment of Student progress

The services listed above, working together, will prepare an assessment of each student at the end of the semester. This assessment will be based in part on the grades obtained in the regular courses, and in part on the performance of the student in the individual tutorial sessions.

Based on this assessment, there will be a recommendation to the University and to the student, indicating whether the student be placed in the "continue academic studies" category or in the "go elsewhere" category.

The recommendation would not be binding on either the University or the student nor would it prejudice the status of the student in any future attempt to register at Simon Fraser University. The final decision as to the student's status would be made in accordance with the regulations of Senate through the Admissions Office.

General

It should be emphasized that the project is an experimental one and would need to be reviewed by Senate and its appropriate committee. There is no suggestion of a repetition of the project without the express approval of Senate.

The project would not be able to identify all the factors which are pertinent to student success - but it might isolate some of them as they relate to this University. We already know that most of the students who are in the categories mentioned at the beginning of the report are in that position by the end of the third or fourth semester, although all semesters after the second are represented.

This information would supplement the work which has already been done through exit interviews of students who are withdrawing voluntarily from the University; from a review and follow-up of students who have appealed decisions through the Senate Appeals Board between 1970 and mid-1974; the experimental group of mature students who registered in 1969/3, 70/1 and 70/2

.....7

and the attrition study of 1,200 students who were either administrative or voluntary drop-outs at Simon Fraser University from September, 1965 to September, 1970.

Similar Studies

Similar studies are reported in the College Student Personnel abstracts, but none of the studies duplicates the conditions here. They do, however, indicate the usefulness of the approach. Simon Fraser University is in the enviable position of being young enough to have a readily identifiable and manageable group of students to select for the remedial program; the students come from a relatively homogeneous school background and perhaps most important of all, the services available to the students have proven their interest in co-operative efforts.

Lolita Wilson

Lolita Wilson
Assistant to the Vice-President, Academic

9th June, 1975

A summary of the progress of all students - including transfers - who have registered at S.F.U. 65/3-74/3 inclusive with High School S.P.A.'s of 2.5 or less. H.S. averages are not available for some special entry students

Undergraduates

25 FEB 1975 SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY - BCCOGAM SCA10
 SEM. :- ALL .751 CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE REPORT
 *GRDF=12.0ATF= *GPA= 0.0- 2.5,AVG= 0.0-65.0

DEPARTMENT	ALL GOALS	HIGHSCH LOCN=	*GRDF=12.0ATF=	*GPA= 0.0- 2.5,AVG= 0.0-65.0	CUM. TOTAL	MEAN GPA	PDF NCT APPL	WITH-DRAWALS	GPA NOT APPL	
ALL GOALS	MALE 29 FEMALE 21 TOTAL 50	553 353 906	2.007 1.318 3.355	894 389 1,283	326 93 419	3.830 2.174 6.013	2.205 2.370 2.264	9 21 30	703 346 1,049	124 48 172

S.F.U. graduates

06 MAR 1975 SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY - PROGRAM SCA10
 SEM. :- ALL .751 CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE REPORT
 *GRDF=12.0ATF= *GPA= 0.0- 2.5,AVG= 0.0-65.0

DEPARTMENT	ALL GOALS	GRADUATE G	HIGHSCH LOCN=	GRF=12.0ATF=	DATE=	GPA= 0.0- 2.5,AVG= 0.0-65.0	CUM. TOTAL	MEAN GPA	PDF NCT APPL	WITH-DRAWALS	GPA NOT APPL
ALL GOALS	MALE 15 FEMALE 2 TOTAL 17	260 62 322	725 151 886	24 3 27	1 1 1	1.035 1.218 1.253	2.712 2.736 2.716	51 7 58			

Appendix II - 1

Proposed Schedule for Special Groups.

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:30					
9:20					
9:30				Individ or Small Group	
10:20					
10:30	"Lecture" whole Group		"Lecture" whole Group	✓	
11:20					
11:30				✓	
12:20					
12:30	"Lecture" whole Group		"Lecture" whole Group.		
13:20					
13:30					
14:20					
14:30	Small Group or Individ.		Small Group or Individ.	Individ. or Small Group	
15:20					
15:30				✓	
16:20					
16:30				✓	
17:20					
17:30					
18:20					
18:30	The arrangement of the timetable has been discussed with Tom Ford - a plan such as this would allow both the students and the services to budget their time.				
19:20					
19:30	Allocation of lecture periods to the services can be Arranged according to their stated preferences.				
20:20					

Time: - 11:30 - 12:20.

Week.	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Sept 8 1 8:30 9:20	General Meeting Co-ordinator & Services		Academic Advice.		
" 15 2 9:30 10:20	Counselling		Reading & Study		
" 22 3 10:30 11:20	Counselling		"		
" 29 4 11:30 12:20	Academic Advice.		"		
Oct. 6 5 12:30 13:20	Counselling		"		
" 13 6 13:30 14:20	"		"		
" 20 7 14:30 15:20	"		"		
" 27 8 15:30 16:20	Academic Advice		Academic Advice		
Nov. 3 9 16:30 17:20	"		Academic V-P.		
" 10 10 17:30 18:20	Dean of Arts		Dean of Science		
" 17 11 18:30 19:20	Dean of Education		Dean of Intending		
Nov 24 12. 19:30 20:20	Continuing Studies.		Grad Studies.		

App. index II - 3.
 Time: -13:30 - 14:20.

Week	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Sept. 8 1 8:30-9:30	Orientatin I session.		Health service.		
" 15 2 9:30-10:30	Co-ordinator		Financial Aid		
" 22 3 10:30-11:30	Library		Special needs		
" 29 4 11:30-12:30	Library		"		
Oct 6 5 12:30-1:30	Library		"		
" 13 6 1:30-2:30	Library		Financial Aid		
" 20 7 2:30-3:30	Library				
" 27 8 3:30-4:30	Camp session		Camp session		
Nov. 3 9 4:30-5:30	Manpower		Financial Aid		
" 10 10 5:30-6:30	manpower		manpower		
" 17 11 6:30-7:30	Report discussions		Report discussions		
" 24 12 7:30-8:30	.		"		