

S.73-125

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Subject REPORT ON CURRICULAR ISSUES RELATING  
TO UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Date OCTOBER 18, 1973

Issue 1 - PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND APPROVING CURRICULUM CHANGES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That SCUS normally will consider the Faculty Curriculum Committees to be the major investigatory body in matters relating to curriculum and review.
- b) That the recommendations of Faculty Curriculum Committees be received by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies except under four conditions.
  - i) The documentation of the course proposed or program change is inadequate, i.e. the answers on the course proposal form and supporting memoranda where appropriate do not indicate how the course fits into the program, is too vaguely worded, etc.
  - ii) There is a specific reason, such as course overlap with another department which has not been adequately dealt with by the Faculty Curriculum Committee. The difference from the first condition is that SCUS must state specifically the reason for referral, whereas under the first condition, it may simply refer by indicating areas of insufficient documentation.
  - iii) Where a Faculty Curriculum Committee is unable to resolve an issue, it should clearly state the nature of the problem and refer to SCUS for a recommendation which must then be approved by the department(s) and Faculty

Curriculum Committee(s) concerned. If the parties involved agree to disagree, then the issue accompanied by the alternative solutions will be forwarded to Senate for resolution.

- iv) Where Faculty Undergraduate Curriculum Committee proposals do not conform to Senate policy or to the department's previously stated policy."

Issue 2 - OVERLAP OF COURSE CONTENT BETWEEN COURSES OFFERED WITHIN A DEPARTMENT, WITHIN A FACULTY, ACROSS FACULTIES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That, in all cases where overlap in course content exists, Faculty Curriculum Committees be charged with requiring jointly approved and justified course proposals to be submitted by the departments involved. Such charge to apply to both departments within a single Faculty and across Faculties.
- b) That, where a jointly approved course proposal is not forthcoming from the departments involved, the issue be referred by the departments involved, to the Faculty Curriculum Committee(s) for resolution.
- c) That, where an overlap in course content cannot be resolved at either the department or Faculty level, the issue be resolved by Senate upon the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies."

Issue 3 - PROLIFERATION OF COURSE OFFERINGS

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) At the time of internal or external departmental review, departments be required to review all of their course offerings

with a view to eliminating those no longer appropriate to the department's objectives.

- b) That justification for the continuance of any specific course offering may be requested, at any time, by the Faculty Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies or Senate.
- c) That any course not offered within a six semester period be deleted from the Calendar unless adequate justification for retaining the course is presented to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies to be charged each semester with reviewing course offerings under this ruling and making appropriate recommendations to Senate."

Issue 4 - USE OF DIRECTED READINGS, DIRECTED STUDIES AND DIRECTED RESEARCH COURSES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That the offering of all directed reading, directed study and directed research courses offered within a department be approved by the Departmental Chairman.
- b) That the chairman's approval be based upon a submission by the instructor covering each of the following:-
  - 1) a statement of how the course is to be conducted
  - 2) a statement of how the student's performance will be assessed for grading purposes
  - 3) a written statement by the student justifying his need to take this particular course in lieu of one of the regular courses offered by the department.
- c) That the present practice of having Senate approve the establishment of directed research/readings/and study courses for departments but not the content of such courses be continued.

- d) As a general principle, that an instructor in a directed research/readings/or study course should expect to meet with his students singly or together for weekly consultation.
- e) That departmental and Faculty curriculum committees be charged with the task of standardizing the credit hours assigned to their directed research/readings/and study courses.
- f) That only upper level students (those who have completed at least 60 semester credit hours) be eligible to enrol in directed research/readings/and study courses.
- g) That all Faculties be required to recommend to Senate policies regarding the maximum number of such courses (or credit hours) a student must take for credit toward the degrees of that Faculty.
- h) That vector numbers for all directed research/readings/or study courses be deleted from both the University's Calendar and Course Guide.
- i) That directed research/readings/or study courses not be permitted as substitutes for either required courses or special topics courses."

Issue 5 - USE OF SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That departments include in the University's Calendar and Course Guide a general statement to the effect that special topics courses are offered and that students should obtain further information from the department prior to registration.  
(Note: This initial contact would give departments an opportunity to learn what special topics students want to see initiated and thus facilitate the introduction of special topics courses.)
- b) That, as general University guidelines, special topics courses should be utilized to:

- 1) fill a particular gap in a department's curriculum
  - 2) respond to student/faculty interests which are worthwhile at the moment but not necessarily of continuing relevance to a department's program
  - 3) experiment with a particular subject matter area before considering it for introduction into the regular curriculum.
- c) That all Faculties recommend policies to Senate regarding the maximum number of such courses (or credit hours) a student may include for credit toward the degrees of that Faculty.
  - d) That the present practice of having Senate approve the establishment of special topics courses for departments but not the contents of such courses be continued.
  - e) That the Chairman, on the advice of the Departmental Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, be charged with approving the content of all special topics courses offered.
  - f) That once each semester, Deans of Faculties report to Senate on topics covered under special topics, such report to include:
    - 1) the calendar description of each course offered, including the course number, credit hours, vector description, course description.
    - 2) a detailed description of the specific courses offered including the name of the responsible faculty member, a course outline and/or syllabus, a reading list, and method of instruction.
    - 3) the number of students enrolled in each course.
  - g) That special topics courses be regarded as regularly scheduled courses, i.e. that class meetings are held on a regular basis.
  - h) That vector patterns for special topics courses be deleted from the University Calendar and incorporated into the Course Guide.
  - i) As a guiding principle for special topics courses, that one contact hour be set equal to one credit hour.

- j) That where a department wishes to deviate from principle i) above, a justification for the variance must be provided to the Faculty and Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committees and to Senate."

Issue 6 - COURSE/CONTACT HOUR RELATIONSHIP (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES\* ONLY)

- \* A regularly scheduled course is defined as a semester length course expected to be meeting for a predetermined total number of contact hours per week in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory as approved by Senate.

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,  
That the determination of the appropriate relationship between credit and contact hours rest with departmental undergraduate curriculum committees subject to the approval of Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate."

Issue 7 - USE OF VECTOR PATTERNS (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES)

- MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,
- a) That all vector patterns be eliminated from University Calendars.
  - b) That each course description contained in University calendars be accompanied by an indication of the nature of the course, e.g. lecture/tutorial, lecture/tutorial/laboratory, seminar, etc.
  - c) That within the total number of contact hours assigned to a course, and subject to the approval of the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee, the Chairman be permitted to vary the vector pattern. Such vector patterns to reflect only the in-class requirements and the calendar description of the course.
  - d) That vector patterns for all regularly scheduled courses be included in Course Guides.

- e) That only departmental approval be required for all course vector patterns to be included in the Course Guide; departmental approval to be in writing and submitted to the Registrar."

Issue 8 - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTACT HOURS AND OUT-OF-CLASS PREPARATION TIME

MOTION: None.

Issue 9 - RETROACTIVITY OF CALENDAR CHANGES AS THEY AFFECT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,  
Before or upon entering the final 60 credit hours (72 credit hours for the Honors program) students must make a formal Declaration of Major (or Honors) with this formal declaration to establish the requirements for graduation as indicated in the published Calendar in effect at the time of the declaration. A change of major or honors field will be deemed a new declaration."

Issue 10 - MORATORIUM ON CALENDAR CHANGES

MOTION: None.

Issue 11 - CRITERIA FOR NUMBERING COURSES

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,  
That the following criteria be established as guidelines for

departments in determining the number levels to be assigned individual courses:

- 1) 000 level courses
- 2) 100 level courses - are designed to introduce students to a discipline at the University level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their first and second levels of University; such courses will not demand prerequisites at the University level although previous learning experiences in the discipline or related disciplines at the secondary school level may be recommended or required.
- 3) 200 level courses - assume either previous learning experiences in the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than courses offered at the 100 level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their third and fourth levels of University; pre- and co-requisites may be identified.
- 4) 300 level courses - assume a substantive amount of previous learning experiences in either the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than courses offered at the 200 level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their fifth and sixth levels of University; only in exceptional circumstances will courses offered at this level not have pre- and/or co-requisites associated with them.
- 5) 400 level courses - assume a substantive amount of previous learning experiences in either the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than courses offered at the 300 level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their seventh and eighth levels of University; pre-requisites will always be demanded for courses offered at this level."



Issue 12 - OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR WAIVING COURSE, DEPARTMENT AND FACULTY REQUIREMENTS

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-125,

- a) That departmental chairmen be empowered in special cases to waive departmental regulations on the recommendation of the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee; that Deans of Faculties be empowered in special cases to waive Faculty regulations on the recommendation of Faculty undergraduate curriculum committees.
- b) That the primary criteria under which waivers may be granted be established as follows:
  - 1) where a student has been misadvised and can provide substantive evidence
  - 2) where a student can demonstrate to a department that he has formal training or background for which he did not receive direct course academic transfer credit. (The waiver does not include the granting of additional formal semester hours credit, but may remove the necessity of undertaking certain prescribed courses.)
  - 3) where departmental programs have changed and eliminated courses or otherwise substantially changed the graduation requirements affecting the student
  - 4) where a student has satisfied the spirit but not the letter of University, Faculty or departmental regulations.
- c) That departmental offices, in the case of departmental waivers, and dean's offices, in the case of Faculty waivers, maintain documentation on all waivers granted and advise in writing the department concerned, the student and the Registrar where affirmative action has been taken on a waiver request."

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.73-125

## MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: Senate Committee on Undergraduate

Studies

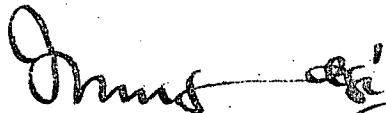
Subject: REPORT ON CURRICULAR ISSUES RELATING  
TO UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Date: October 18, 1973

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies has approved the attached recommendations on a series of issues referred to it by the Vice-President, Academic. The process by which these recommendations was produced is described on pages 1 and 2 of the report.

It should be noted that all of the questions referred to the Committee have been dealt with in this report with one exception. That is item 9, the period and mechanism for dropping courses, which was discussed at length but deferred until full consideration has been given to a report on grading which is also before the Committee at this time.

The procedure adopted by S.C.U.S. in discussing this report was to consider and approve each item separately, following which the report as a whole was approved for transmission to Senate. In order to facilitate discussion, however, each recommendation has been made the subject of a separate Senate motion.



I. Mugridge

/mt

Encl.

REPORT TO

SENATE

FROM

SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

REGARDING

CURRICULAR ISSUES RELATING TO UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

AT

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Dr. I. Mugridge  
Chairman

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### CHARGE TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Pursuant to discussion with the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the Senate Undergraduate Appeals Board, Dr. B.G. Wilson, Academic Vice President, requested in March 1972, that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies examine the following questions:

1. The relationship between credit and contact hours and the continued use of vector numbers.
2. The overlap of material between courses and between departments.
3. The proliferation of course offerings.
4. The use of directed studies courses, especially special topics courses and reading courses.
5. The procedures for reviewing curriculum changes and policies affecting retroactivity of curriculum changes especially the applicability of such changes to students who enrolled before they were made.
6. The criteria for numbering of courses.
7. The use of introductory courses at the 300 level for non-major students.
8. The mechanics for waiving course requirements.
9. The period and mechanism for dropping courses.

In response to Dr. Wilson's request, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies appointed a Sub-Committee consisting of Professor I. Allen, Faculty of Education (Chairman); Professor H. Sharma, Faculty of Science; Professor J. Tietz, Faculty of Arts; and Dr. J. Chase, Academic Planner, to examine the issues raised by Dr. Wilson and report back to it at the earliest possible date.

Evidential Basis for the Report

To provide a basis for its recommendations, the Sub-Committee sought information on both present practice and alternatives to those practices. In this regard, it has:

1. met with members of the Registrar's Office staff and administrative representatives of the Dean's Office of each Faculty.
2. met with members of the Joint Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies/ Senate Undergraduate Appeals Board Sub-committee charged with examining and recommending on:
  - a) the academic probation system
  - b) evaluation mechanism(s) for students
  - c) specification of University standards relating to the significance of specific grades in terms of performance
  - d) graduation grade point average.
3. formulated a questionnaire based on the issues under review: within the Faculty of Science it was circulated to all departmental chairmen for written response; within the Faculty of Arts, Professor Tietz conducted personal interviews with each of the departmental chairmen; within the Faculty of Education and the Division of General Studies, personal interviews were conducted with each of the chairmen and directors by Professor Allen.
4. met with each of the student senators to seek their opinions on the issues identified in the questionnaire.
5. solicited opinions from the University community.

On the basis of its discussions with Deans, Departmental Chairmen, faculty members, students and administrative staff, the sub-committee of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies offered a series of recommendations to the full Committee. Following discussion of this report with departments and within the Committee, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies now makes the following recommendations to Senate.

1. Issue

PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND APPROVING CURRICULUM CHANGES

Recommendations

- a) That SCUS normally will consider the Faculty Curriculum Committees to be the major investigatory body in matters relating to curriculum and review.
- b) That the recommendations of Faculty Curriculum Committees be received by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies except under four conditions.
  - i) The documentation of the course proposed or program change is inadequate, i.e. the answers on the course proposal form and supporting memoranda where appropriate do not indicate how the course fits into the program, is too vaguely worded, etc.
  - ii) There is a specific reason, such as course overlap with another department which has not been adequately dealt with by the Faculty Curriculum Committee. The difference from the first condition is that SCUS must state specifically the reason for referral, whereas under the first condition, it may simply refer by indicating areas of insufficient documentation.
  - iii) Where a Faculty Curriculum Committee is unable to resolve an issue, it should clearly state the nature of the problem and refer to SCUS for a recommendation which must then be approved by the department(s) and Faculty Curriculum Committee(s) concerned. If the parties involved agree to disagree, then the issue accompanied by the alternative solutions will be forwarded to Senate for resolution.
  - iv) Where Faculty Undergraduate Curriculum Committee proposals do not conform to Senate policy or to the department's previously stated policy.

## Rationale

Curriculum changes encompass:

- a) changes in departmental graduation requirements for major and honors students
- b) additions and deletions of course offerings
- c) changes in course content
- d) changes in course numbering
- e) changes in course credit assignments
- f) changes in course vector patterns
- g) changes in pre- and co- requisites for individual courses
- h) changes in Faculty graduation requirements
- i) editorial changes

With the exception of the latter, which are approved by the Registrar, the remaining curriculum changes wind a laborious route through departmental undergraduate curriculum committees, Faculty undergraduate curriculum committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. Since the role to be performed in the curriculum revision and review process of each committee and Senate have not been clearly delineated, unnecessary duplication and much time consuming effort occurs because each feels obligated to undertake a comprehensive review of all that has gone on before. These problems have been further compounded by the lack of a standardized format for submitting proposed curriculum changes for review.

We do not believe it is desirable to eliminate any of the review bodies from the review process. Rather, we believe that most difficulties can be minimized by clearly designating one body as being the major investigatory body in matters pertaining to curriculum and review. This body, we believe, should be the Faculty Curriculum Committees.

## 2. Issue

OVERLAP OF COURSE CONTENT BETWEEN COURSES OFFERED WITHIN A DEPARTMENT,  
WITHIN A FACULTY, ACROSS FACULTIES

Recommendations

- a) That, in all cases where overlap in course content exists, Faculty Curriculum Committees be charged with requiring jointly approved and justified course proposals to be submitted by the departments involved. Such charge to apply to both departments within a single Faculty and across Faculties.
- b) That, where a jointly approved course proposal is not forthcoming from the departments involved, the issue be referred by the departments involved, to the Faculty Curriculum Committee(s) for resolution
- c) That, where an overlap in course content cannot be resolved at either the department or Faculty level, the issue be resolved by Senate upon the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies.

Rationale

We agree that course content overlap may be justified in those instances where, depending on the focus and integrative framework of the lecturer, similar materials are approached in quite different fashion. In our review, we have found a number of existing areas where appreciable and, from our point of view, unjustified course content overlap exists. We have no panacea for such problem areas. At a minimum, however, we believe it is essential that Faculty Curriculum Committees be charged with requiring jointly approved and justified course proposals from those departments where overlap in course content exists. Where the problem is not resolvable at the departmental or Faculty level, it will have to be resolved by Senate upon the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies.

3. Issue

PROLIFERATION OF COURSE OFFERINGS

Recommendations

- a) At the time of internal or external departmental review, departments



- be required to review all of their course offerings with a view to eliminating those no longer appropriate to the department's objectives.
- b) That justification for the continuance of any specific course offering may be requested, at any time, by the Faculty Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies or Senate.
- c) That any course not offered within a six semester period be deleted from the Calendar unless adequate justification for retaining the course is presented to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies to be charged each semester with reviewing course offerings under this ruling and making appropriate recommendations to Senate.

#### Rationale

Most departments do review their programs yearly. While no department has a defined procedure for undertaking the review, such factors as changes in graduate school emphases, changes in the academic complexion of the department due to new hiring and replacement, student inputs, and interdisciplinary factors are considered by all departments. Even so, the number of individual undergraduate courses offered and taken between the fall semester 1965 and the fall semester 1972 was 1161. Considering only the period from Spring semester 1971 through the fall semester 1972, 266 of the 1161 courses have not been offered at all. It is on the basis of these statistics that we offer our recommendations for consideration.

#### 4. Issue

USE OF DIRECTED READINGS, DIRECTED STUDIES AND DIRECTED RESEARCH COURSES

#### Recommendations

- a) That the offering of all directed reading, directed study and directed research courses offered within a department be approved by the Departmental Chairman.

- b) That the chairman's approval be based upon a submission by the instructor covering each of the following:-
- 1) a statement of how the course is to be conducted
  - 2) a statement of how the student's performance will be assessed for grading purposes
  - 3) a written statement by the student justifying his need to take this particular course in lieu of one of the regular courses offered by the department.
- c) That the present practice of having Senate approve the establishment of directed research/readings/and study courses for departments but not the content of such courses be continued.
- d) As a general principle, that an instructor in a directed research/readings/or study course should expect to meet with his students singly or together for weekly consultation.
- e) That departmental and Faculty curriculum committees be charged with the task of standardizing the credit hours assigned to their directed research/readings/and study courses.
- f) That only upper level students (those who have completed at least 60 semester credit hours) be eligible to enrol in directed research/readings/and study courses.
- g) That all Faculties be required to recommend to Senate policies regarding the maximum number of such courses (or credit hours) a student may take for credit toward the degrees of that Faculty.
- h) That vector numbers for all directed research/readings/or study courses be deleted from both the University's Calendar and Course Guide.
- i) That directed research/readings/or study courses not be permitted as substitutes for either required courses or special topics courses.

#### Rationale

Most departments offer such courses. While their purpose has never been formally defined, patterns of use have become established. These courses

are seen as (i) providing opportunities for students wanting either in-depth treatment of particular areas summarily covered in lecture or seminar courses, or new topics of mutual interest to students and faculty, (ii) being appropriate only for students enrolled in the upper levels, and (iii) being appropriate for groups of students as well as students working independently. The directed readings/studies/research labels have been utilized where the mode of operation is essentially one of reading or research or tutorial. Where lectures and more formal instruction are given, a special topics label is generally considered more appropriate.

Student contact hours vary considerably. Some departments require a one hour meeting per week for a three credit course, some two hours per week for a five credit course, and some simply leave it to the instructor and student to arrange an appropriate number of meetings.

There is no uniform relationship between credit and contact hours. However, general agreement exists that credit should be based on the amount of work required rather than on the amount of time spent with the instructor.

In some but not all departments, the topics of such courses must be approved usually by the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee.

Unfortunately, use of these courses has been subject to some abuse, the extent of which has been impossible to ascertain. However, it is clear that such courses have now become an almost integral part of the curriculum which was not the original intent. Furthermore, they have been used to substitute for required courses, contrary to Senate expectations. Together with the special topics courses, they are the only courses given in the University whose content does not require the approval of the department, Faculty, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies or Senate.

We are convinced that such courses can be beneficial to both students and faculty, but we are equally convinced that each department should be obliged to develop protective mechanisms which will guard against the abuse of such

courses. To this end, we have made the above recommendations.

5. Issue

USE OF SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

Recommendations

- a) That departments include in the University's Calendar and Course Guide a general statement to the effect that special topics courses are offered and that students should obtain further information from the department prior to registration. (Note: This initial contact would give departments an opportunity to learn what special topics students want to see initiated and thus facilitate the introduction of special topics courses.)
- b) That, as general University guidelines, special topics courses should be utilized to:
  - 1) fill a particular gap in a department's curriculum
  - 2) respond to student/faculty interests which are worthwhile at the moment but not necessarily of continuing relevance to a department's program
  - 3) experiment with a particular subject matter area before considering it for introduction into the regular curriculum.
- c) That all Faculties recommend policies to Senate regarding the maximum number of such courses (or credit hours) a student may include for credit toward the degrees of that Faculty.
- d) That the present practice of having Senate approve the establishment of special topics courses for departments but not the contents of such courses be continued.
- e) That the Chairman, on the advice of the Departmental Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, be charged with approving the content of all special topics courses offered.
- f) That once each semester, Deans of Faculties report to Senate on topics covered under special topics, such report to include:

- 1) the calendar description of each course offered, including the course number, credit hours, vector description, course description.
  - 2) a detailed description of the specific courses offered including the name of the responsible faculty member, a course outline and/or syllabus, a reading list, and method of instruction.
  - 3) the number of students enrolled in each course.
- g) That special topics courses be regarded as regularly scheduled courses, i.e. that class meetings are held on a regular basis.
- h) That vector patterns for special topics courses be deleted from the University Calendar and incorporated into the Course Guide.
- i) As a guiding principle for special topics courses, that one contact hour be set equal to one credit hour.
- j) That where a department wishes to deviate from principle i) above, a justification for the variance must be provided to the Faculty and Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committees and to Senate.

#### Rationale

Special topics courses are currently offered by departments in all four Faculties.

Some departments determine special topics courses on petition of students to the Departmental Undergraduate Curriculum Committee; others on the basis of faculty preference again with the approval of the Departmental Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. In general, topics are approved which fill a particular gap in the department's curriculum or which suit student/faculty interests which are worthwhile at the moment but not necessarily of continuing relevance to the department's program.

Staffing practices vary. In some cases, it is by the faculty member proposing the course and is considered as part of his regular teaching load. In other cases, staffing is on a surplus basis, while in still other cases, special topics courses are taken as teaching overloads by members of regular faculty.

Special topics courses become part of the regular curriculum only if successfully offered at least once and are judged to be central enough to the department's curriculum to be recommended to Senate as a regular course offering by the department's undergraduate curriculum committee. Notice of special topics courses is provided to students in a variety of ways -- Course Guide, departmental Student Guides, and public advertising both in the Peak and via posters and notices.

Like directed research/studies/and reading courses, the establishment of such courses is approved by Senate but not the actual content.

We have uncovered no evidence that such courses are being abused by any department of the University. At the same time, we note that some of the special topics courses have been subdivided, thus having the effect of greatly increasing the number of such courses which can be offered by a particular department or Faculty. We believe that this practice is contrary to the intent of Senate and should not be permitted.

We have carefully considered whether or not to recommend that approval of the content of special topics courses be handled in the same way as for regularly scheduled courses of the University. Because a given special topic is normally offered only once, we believe that responsibility for approving the content of particular offerings should rest with departmental chairmen. To guard against possible abuse, we have recommended that each department, through the Faculty Dean, report each semester to Senate on its offerings. In this way, Senate can maintain control without individually approving the content of each course offered.

6. Issue

COURSE/CONTACT HOUR RELATIONSHIP (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES\* ONLY)

\* A regularly scheduled course is defined as a semester length course expected to be meeting for a predetermined total number of contact hours per week in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory as approved by Senate.

Recommendation

1. That the determination of the appropriate relationship between credit and contact hours rest with departmental undergraduate curriculum committees subject to the approval of Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate.

Rationale

For both lower and upper division courses within the Faculty of Education, contact hours generally equal credit hours. This relationship applies irrespective of whether the contact hour is in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory.

Within the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, practices differ. In Communication Studies, a one-to-one relationship generally exists although laboratory and tutorial contact hours in excess of credit hours are sometimes required for upper division courses. In Kinesiology, lower division courses operate on a one-to-one basis but the amount of contact time per credit hour increases with upper division courses. In other areas of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, the relationship depends primarily on the amount of outside class work required although follow-up is weak. For lower division courses offered by the Faculty of Arts, contact hours equal credit hours. This is true irrespective of whether the contact hour is in lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory. The only identified exceptions to this policy are Commerce 223-5 and three or four D.M.L. four credit language courses. Credit for upper division courses offered by the Faculty of Arts is either two, three or five hours. For both the two and three credit hour upper division courses, two laboratory hours equal one hour of credit while one hour of tutorial, seminar or lecture equals one credit hour.

The major point of variation within the Faculty of Arts is that different departments, and sometimes different courses within the same department,

do not require the same amount of in-class time for a five credit hour course. Some require five hours of in-class time, others three. So far as it has been possible to establish, no seminar meets for less than three hours per week\* although two departments sometimes allow a seminar to meet two hours per week provided the faculty member sets aside a fixed time for individual instruction for each enrollee in the seminar, usually one hour per student. In general, most departments in the Faculty of Arts give five hours of credit for three hours of in-class seminar work.

All departments in the Faculty of Science equate one credit hour to one lecture hour. Tutorial contact hours are not counted. Practice varies regarding laboratory hours. The Department of Chemistry sets one credit hour equal to two laboratory hours. In the Department of Biological Sciences, the relationship is one to three. In the Department of Physics, one credit hour equals two laboratory hours, three credit hours equal four laboratory hours and four credit hours equal six laboratory hours.

While departments recognized the need for University standards in this area, there was no unanimity as to a proposed standard. The options expressed were:

- a) relate credit hours solely to lecture hours taught
- b) one-to-one relationship for non-laboratory courses with courses involving laboratory work requiring a greater number of contact hours per hour of credit
- c) relating credit hours to the amount of outside work required
- d) relating credit hours to the amount of both in-class and out-of-class time required for the course
- e) relating credit hours to difficulty of materials encompassed by the course
- f) one-to-one relationship for all lower division courses. For upper division courses, no less than two contact hours for a two credit hour, no less than three contact hours for a three credit course, and no less than four contact hours for a five credit course. No distinction to be made between lecture, tutorial, seminar or laboratory contact hours.



The difficulty with option (a) is that it forces all courses to be offered on a lecture basis since the proposal would provide no credit for seminar courses. Options (c), (d) and (e) would be difficult, if not impossible, to legislate because of the lack of definitive norms against which to measure either the amount of outside work spent on the course or the difficulty of course materials. Moreover, the amount of time spent by individual students on a given course is as much a function of the student's interest and ability as it is class assignments or difficulty of course material. Thus, only options (b) and (f) appeared to merit further consideration.

Implementation of either alternative (b) or (f) or some combination thereof would require a major reorganization of the curriculum in both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science. While there was no disagreement with the principle that a relationship between credit and contact hours is desirable in an ad novum situation, the Committee is convinced that the costs involved in a major restructuring of the present curriculum of two Faculties far outweigh the benefits to be derived from implementation of a University or even Faculty-wide credit/contact hour relationship.

Our recommendation, therefore, is that the determination of the credit/contact hour relationship for particular courses be left to the discretion of departments proposing the course; departments should, however, be prepared to justify their recommendations before Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate.

7. Issue

USE OF VECTOR PATTERNS (FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED COURSES)

Recomendations

- a) That all vector patterns be eliminated from University Calendars
- b) That each course description contained in University calendars be accompanied by an indication of the nature of the course, e.g. lecture/

tutorial, lecture/tutorial /laboratory, seminar, etc.

- c) That within the total number of contact hours assigned to a course, and subject to the approval of the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee, the Chairman be permitted to vary the vector pattern. Such vector patterns to reflect only the in-class requirements and the calendar description of the course.
- d) That vector patterns for all regularly scheduled courses be included in Course Guides.
- e) That only departmental approval be required for all course vector patterns to be included in the Course Guide; departmental approval to be in writing and submitted to the Registrar.

#### Rationale

There is considerable confusion regarding vector patterns. This is attributable to the multiple uses for which they are currently utilized. In some cases vector patterns indicate the lecture, tutorial, laboratory pattern of a course. Others utilize the first vector number to indicate the amount of outside work required. Seminars present special problems with some departments indicating vector patterns of 0-5-0 and others the vector 2-3-0. There is agreement, however, that current vector patterns:

- a) often do not bear any relationship to either the contact hours of the course or the credit hours assigned to it.
- b) need not reflect the way in which the course is actually taught.
- c) will vary from semester to semester for individual courses dependent upon the instructor
- d) serve no useful purpose in the University's Calendar
- e) would be of assistance to students if placed in the Course Guide provided they carried a consistent meaning.

Because teaching method and content influence students' choice of courses, it is reasonable to expect that accurate information on both will be supplied to

students in advance of the course. We recognize that individual faculty members will vary in their teaching approach to the same course and that the once-a-year publication of the University's Calendar does not provide an opportunity to reflect these semester changes. Furthermore, the University's Calendar is a statement of general policies and principles and we find little justification for the continued inclusion in it of vector patterns. Because the Calendar is used to determine transfer credit for students enrolling at other universities who have taken courses at this University and because it is a general guide for students taking courses at Simon Fraser, we have recommended that each course description contained in the Calendar be accompanied by a general description of the manner in which the course will be taught. Since the Course Guide provides information on individual semester course offerings, we believe that it is the appropriate place in which to incorporate course vector patterns.

8. Issue

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTACT HOURS AND OUT-OF-CLASS PREPARATION TIME

Recommendation

None

Rationale

Present practice varies. Two departments indicated approximately three to four hours of outside preparation for each contact hour in lower division courses; three departments indicated two hours for every weekly contact hour for all courses. One department indicated three hours per week of outside preparation for each semester hour of credit.

As previously noted, out-of-class effort on the part of students is as much a function of their interest and innate ability as it is the amount of work required or the difficulty of the assignment. Furthermore, while the University theoretically has some responsibility to ensure that the amount of outside class work demanded by individual course instructors is reasonable, there is

no practical way in which it can exercise its responsibility. Therefore, while the Committee recognizes that a principle or guideline would be desirable, it is not prepared to recommend that which cannot be enforced.

9. Issue

RETROACTIVITY OF CALENDAR CHANGES AS THEY AFFECT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Recommendation

Before or upon entering the final 60 credit hours (72 credit hours for the Honors program) students must make a formal Declaration of Major (or Honors) with this formal declaration to establish the requirements for graduation as indicated in the published Calendar in effect at the time of declaration. A change of major or honors field will be deemed a new declaration.

Rationale

Within the Faculty of Arts, students must make a formal Declaration of Major and this formal declaration establishes the exact requirements for graduation as indicated in the published Calendar in effect at the time of declaration. A change of major is deemed to be a new declaration. A declaration of a major is valid for five calendar years.

Both the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Science are silent as to the effect of Calendar changes on graduation requirement.

University opinion is divided on what policy ought to apply. Some believe that a student should be able to graduate under the requirements of any calendar published during the period in which he is enrolled at Simon Fraser. They argue that the graduation requirements contained in all calendars are subject to Senate approval and students might reasonably be expected to have made program decisions on the basis of any of the Calendars to which they were subject. The disadvantages of this approach are twofold. First, it complicates both academic advising and departmental and Faculty Curriculum Committees' consideration of whether individual students have fulfilled graduation requirements. Second, and more serious, is that substantial numbers of students take considerably

longer than four or five years to fulfill graduation requirements. If such a policy were enacted, it would permit students to graduate under regulations no longer deemed appropriate or desirable.

Others believe that the Calendar governing the student should be the one in force at the time of the students' major or honors declaration. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that a student changing from a major to an honors program (or vice versa) within the same department should not be considered as changing the calendar governing him. It should be the one in force at the time of his first declaration in the department. The reason for this is that the major student takes many of the same courses as does the honors student and has to fulfill many of the same requirements. He has fitted himself into a pattern which contains upper division work for both majors and honors students as described in the Calendar of his declaration. This is the pattern he should stick with since, for the most part, changes from major to honors programs (and vice versa) will involve upper level students and should not commit them to what sometimes is a totally different set of regulations.

The advantages of this approach are:

- a) it facilitates the task of both academic advising and Departmental and Faculty Curriculum Committees who must review the work performed by individual students before recommending them for degrees and,
- b) the student is able to build a degree program on the graduation requirements contained in a specific calendar.

The primary disadvantages of this approach is that:

- a) majors of students may be, and often are, changed several times prior to graduation in each of which instances, the requirements for graduation may change.

We see advantages to both approaches. However, given the extent to which departmental and Faculty graduation requirements have changed since the inception of the University, we are more inclined toward the latter than the former approach.

10. Issue

MORATORIUM ON CALENDAR CHANGES

Recommendations

None

Over the past six years, the program requirements and course offerings of many departments have changed frequently. This situation poses a number of difficulties for students and for other departments whose programs interact with those which are revised. Furthermore, it appears to us that because departments have been changing their programs so rapidly, there has often been insufficient time to obtain adequate assessments of the strength and weaknesses of their existing programs.

For these reasons, we believe it would be desirable to impose a two year moratorium whenever a Faculty or department has made substantial revisions to its undergraduate curriculum. This moratorium is the minimum time span that would be permitted to pass in order to allow adequate assessment of the implications of the changes on both students and other departments.

We are not prepared, however, to offer this as a formal recommendation for the following reasons. First, if an action taken has proven unworkable, it should be corrected at the earliest possible date. Second, the introduction of new programs clearly demand that opportunities be provided to them for experimentation. Third, and probably most important, we were unable to agree on a workable definition of "substantial revisions to its undergraduate curriculum". In the absence of such a definition, we foresaw endless and what appears to us to be, unjustified debate over whether or not proposed curriculum changes could be introduced for consideration. For these reasons, we can only suggest that Faculties and departments provide sufficient time to pass that previously introduced curriculum changes may be adequately assessed.

11. Issue

CRITERIA FOR NUMBERING COURSES

Recommendations

- a) That the following criteria be established as guidelines for departments in determining the number levels to be assigned individual courses:
- 1) 000 level courses
  - 2) 100 level courses -- are designed to introduce students to a discipline at the University level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their first and second levels of University; such courses will not demand prerequisites at the University level although previous learning experiences in the discipline or related disciplines at the secondary school level may be recommended or required.
  - 3) 200 level courses -- assume either previous learning experiences in the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than courses offered at the 100 level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their third and fourth levels of University; pre- and co-requisites may be identified.
  - 4) 300 level courses -- assume a substantive amount of previous learning experiences in either the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than courses offered at the 200 level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their fifth and sixth levels of University; only in exceptional circumstances will courses offered at this level not have pre- and/or co-requisites associated with them.
  - 5) 400 level courses -- assume a substantive amount of previous learning experiences in either the discipline or related disciplines; both content and teaching level will be more advanced than courses offered at the 300 level; students will normally be expected to enrol in such courses during their seventh and eighth levels of University; pre-requisites will always be demanded for courses offered at this level.

Rationale

Currently, there are no University guidelines available for determining the appropriate numerical level, i.e. 100, 200, 300 or 400 to be assigned individual courses. Lacking such guidelines, departments have had to use their own discretion with the result that differences in numbering philosophy have become apparent producing both endless and fruitless debate in Faculty Curriculum Committees, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate. To minimize the debate relating to numbering changes, we have recommended a set of criteria to be utilized in establishing numbers for individual courses. It should be understood that adoption of these guidelines does not carry with it a commitment that all departments adopt a 100, 200, 300, 400 course numbering policy. For example, the Department of English has no 300 level courses. Such deviations from the recommendations should be permitted provided they are acceptable to the Faculty Curriculum Committee, Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Senate.

12. Issue

OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR WAIVING COURSE, DEPARTMENT AND FACULTY REQUIREMENTS

Recommendations

- a) That departmental chairmen be empowered in special cases to waive departmental regulations on the recommendation of the departmental undergraduate curriculum committee; that Deans of Faculties be empowered in special cases to waive Faculty regulations on the recommendation of Faculty undergraduate curriculum committees.
- b) That the primary criteria under which waivers may be granted be established as follows:
  - 1) where a student has been misadvised and can provide substantive evidence
  - 2) where a student can demonstrate to a department that he has formal training or background for which he did not receive direct course academic transfer credit. (The waiver does not include the granting of additional formal semester hours credit, but may remove the necessity of undertaking certain prescribed courses.)



- 3) where departmental programs have changed and eliminated courses or otherwise substantially changed the graduation requirements affecting the student.
  - 4) where a student has satisfied the spirit but not the letter of University, Faculty or departmental regulations.
- c) That departmental offices, in the case of departmental waivers, and dean's offices, in the case of Faculty waivers, maintain documentation on all waivers granted and advise in writing the department concerned, the student and the Registrar where affirmative action has been taken on a waiver request.

#### Rationale

Practice varies throughout the University particularly as regards departmental regulations. In some cases, departments retain the right to waive their own regulations through their undergraduate curriculum committees. In other cases, dean's approval is required. Dean's waivers are generally not given without a favorable department recommendation though a favorable departmental recommendation might be refused.

The criteria for granting waivers also varies. In some departments and Faculties, the criteria vary but the general principle followed is that they will be given only to very good students in exceptional circumstances. Other departments and Faculties are more lenient on the grounds that many departmental and Faculty requirements have changed substantially each year of the last six years with the result that students have been misadvised and regulations have been adopted the implications of which for individual students have not been fully understood. Under such conditions it is agreed that it is patently unfair to apply these regulations to students simply because they are the existing University regulations.

Documentation practices also vary. In some cases, documentation is maintained by the Department for its own majors and honors students, in other cases

by the Dean's offices and in still others, by both. Clearly there is insufficient communication with the Registrar's Office for the purpose of formally recording the approved waiver.

We are of the opinion that there should be relatively few instances in which waivers are granted. We recognize, however, that such cases occur and that provision needs to be made for them in the context of University policy. To ensure as much consistency as possible in the granting of waivers across the University, we believe that only departmental chairmen should be empowered to waive departmental regulations and deans to waive Faculty regulations, upon the recommendation of departmental undergraduate curriculum committees and Faculty undergraduate curriculum committees respectively. We do not envision however, that all individual cases will have to go before departmental or Faculty curriculum committees since it is expected that case law principles can be developed to provide general operating guidelines for departmental chairmen and deans.

We believe it is essential that such waivers be formally recorded and have, therefore, recommended that where affirmative action is taken on a waiver request, the departmental chairman or dean concerned advise in writing the student and the Registrar of the action taken.