

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.71-40

MEMORANDUM

To..... SENATE

From..... G. D. BASHAM

..... SENATOR

Subject..... OPEN MEETINGS - S.71-40

Date..... FEBRUARY 11, 1971

MOTION:

"That the public session of Senate be open to faculty, students and staff and entry be subject to presentation of a valid library card and limited by the physical constraints of seating."

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Moved: "That the public session of Senate be open to faculty, students and staff and entry be subject to presentation of a valid library card and limited by the physical constraints of seating."

It is understood that any meeting, or portion thereof, may be closed at the discretion of the Chairman and that audio-visual coverage may be substituted if so desired.

The times that brought about the closing of the public session are now history. The openness of Senate is no longer a contentious issue outside the confines of the Senate room. Rather, it serves to create a situation which discourages those faculty and students who would, and should, be interested in discussions of new programs and policies for their faculty or department.

Representative democracy is a vital element in the academic community and there are obligations on the part of those representatives to encourage and stimulate interest concerning the academic planning and policies of the University. This is an important consideration for faculty, student, convocation and government appointed Senators alike.

The audio-visual procedure is costly, boring, and extremely difficult to follow. It is time that Senate encouraged interest in its proceedings by the simple act of enabling persons to be physically present in the audience.

In the time I have been on Senate I have noted the dwindling numbers of viewers. At present it is approaching zero. It is time that we examine the ratings of our meetings and establish a policy to fit the times.

Many Senators who hold no strong position on this issue will undoubtedly be influenced by those who were on Senate during the crises which saw this body politicized to the extent that normal business was haltingly accomplished and new business and proposals virtually non-existent. Unfortunately, this situation was aided by some Senators who unwittingly encouraged audience participation and still others who knowingly created a climate of hostility.

It cannot be emphasized more that the era of confrontation is not now, or seemingly, near revitalization. Students recognize the Senate as a legitimate means to obtain policy changes and solve problems. It is now up to the Senate to decide if it is capable of conducting its business publicly and responsibly in a climate which is much more conducive to legitimate channels of discussion.

If Senate is incapable, and that may well be the feeling of some, then it is time we recognized that as the problem and resolve that in the electoral processes. Recognizing that good manners and conduct cannot be legislated, the Senate should not continue to penalize this community for actions of the past and for any downfalls of members of Senate.