



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Senate of Simon Fraser University held on  
Monday, October 3, 2022 at 5:30 pm at the West Mall Complex (Room 3210)  
and via Zoom Video Conferencing

## Open Session

**Present:** Joy Johnson, Chair

Ahsan, Shariq  
Bhalloo, Shafik  
Bird, Gwen  
Brennand, Tracy  
Bubela, Tania  
Campbell, Lara  
Chapman, Glenn  
Coleman, Gordon  
Denholm, Julia  
Derksen, Jeff  
Elle, Elizabeth  
Everton, Mike  
Faris, Reema  
Fiume, Eugene  
Gray, Bonnie  
Hendrigan, Holly  
Herrenbrueck, Lucas  
Karaivanov, Alexander  
Krogman, Naomi  
Kumpulainen, Kristiina  
Laitsch, Dan  
Leznoff, Daniel  
Liu, Connie  
Magnusson, Kris  
Masri, Kamal  
Masri, Lynn  
Neustaedter, Carman  
O'Neil, Dugan  
Pantophlet, Ralph  
Parent, Michael  
Parkhouse, Wade  
Parmar, Abhishek  
Percival, Colin  
Rashmi, Samiya

Shinkar, Igor  
Sidhu, Harneer  
Silverman, Michael  
Spector, Stephen  
Stockie, John  
Subbiah, Arun  
Tingling, Peter (for Ujwal Kayande)  
Van Veen, Melissa  
Williams, JF  
Williams, Vance

**Absent:**

Andreoiu, Corina  
Arseneault, Donovan  
Collard, Mark  
Daniel, Bryan  
Dhesa, Priyanka  
Kayande, Ujwal  
Lam, Allan  
McTavish, Rob  
Murphy, David  
Myers, Gord  
Nagy, Judit  
Nepomnaschy, Pablo  
Schiphorst, Thecla  
Tran, Lisa  
Vrooman, Tamara

**In Attendance:**

Chilana, Parmit  
Furukawa, Yasutaka

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as distributed.

**2. The Minutes of the Open Session of September 12, 2022 will be considered for approval at the Senate meeting on November 7, 2022****3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

**4. Report of the Chair**

The chair reported that on September 12<sup>th</sup> Nobel Peace Prize laureate, SFU Honorary Degree recipient and journalist Maria Ressa gave a talk for SFU Public Square on the spread of disinformation and the role social media plays in creating isolation and undermining social cohesion. Also, on September 15<sup>th</sup> Angela Davis and Gina Dent presented on their new book *Abolition. Feminism. Now.* which recognizes the narratives that have helped to define abolition and feminism in the 21st century.

The Chair thanked all those who participated in the annual Terry Fox Run, held on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. 2022 marked the 42nd anniversary of Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope, with SFU surpassing its goal by raising more than \$14,000 for cancer research.

The chair reported that Vice-President, People, Equity and Inclusion, Dr Yabome Gilpin-Jackson, has been working on an Equity Compass, which will provide a concise summary of equity themes and focus areas that will guide efforts across the University. The Equity Compass builds on information gathered over the past several years including surveys, engagements, needs and opportunities.

**i) Report of the Provost**

The Provost provided the following undergraduate enrolment updates:

- The University surpassed its domestic new students' enrolment by 11%.
- Overall, enrolment is .4% above compared to last year.
- Full-time students have increased by 3.1%, while part-time students have decreased by 2.3%.
- New international students are 11% below target.
- AFTEs have shown a modest increase of .4%.
- Co-op enrolment is down 9.5%.
- The University expects to be 4% above for domestic undergraduate enrolments.

The Provost reported that the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) should be rendering its decision shortly on the Master of Science in Professional Cybersecurity and the Master of Science in Professional Visual Computing.

The Provost reported that over the past few years SFU has been working on an agritech program and it is anticipated that such a program will be coming from the School of Mechatronic Systems

Engineering in the Faculty of Applied Sciences shortly. It is also expected to have an agritech program in the Faculty of Science in about three years.

The Provost reported that there have been discussions about Co-op FAN and FAL becoming integrated credit rather than added credit where appropriate. Though steps must be taken for academic quality assurance, it is expected that this will be coming to Senate within this academic year.

The Provost reported that SCUS is following up a discussion from last May to look at course accessibility and reducing the complexity of programs to ensure that students have courses that are accessible.

The Provost reported that the Provincial Government is looking to allocate 2900 new tech seats across 25 postsecondary institutions next summer. The University will continue to work with the government to make sure a reasonable number of those seats are allocated to SFU.

The Provost reported that the University has been working with the student societies to hear from more students about their priorities for this year and coming years as part of SFU's tuition consultation process.

Citing the 11% increase in domestic new students' enrolment, a question was asked if this increase is made up mostly of British Columbia students or from students across Canada. Senate was informed that detailed data is not available at this point, but that SFU has seen a notable increase from out-of-province applicants. It was added that Student Services has been looking to diversify its application pool by increasing the number of students coming from outside the normal school districts and by recruiting more students from out-of-province.

## **ii) Senate Review**

The Chair reported that SFU is beginning a process to scrutinize its governance structure, starting with the Board of Governors and then moving on to Senate. The objective is to improve operational efficiency, assess current practices and find gaps, all with the goal of enhancing members interactions with governance. Though the overarching role of Senate will not change, a review of Senate will want to consider the following:

- What is the most important thing that Senate does?
- What constitutes the best use of Senators time?
- Are there obstacles preventing the work of Senate from being accomplished?
- Are there processes in place at other institutions that could strengthen SFU's governance structure?
- What can be done to make Senate more engaging?
- How do we best recruit new members to Senate and Senate committees?

The following comments and/or suggestions were made:

- The extent to which Senate exercises its role has changed over time with many things formerly considered by Senate having been delegated to either Senate

committees or staff members. As such, consideration needs to be given to how Senate exercises its authority and if it wants to rein in the use of delegated authority.

- Senate delegated some of its authority to allow it be a more strategic body rather than an operational body, thereby making the best use of members time. However, there may be some instances where it would be desirable for Senate to be consulted on an item, significant changes to programs or policies for example, ahead of being referred to committee.
- Noting that Senate meetings are held in the evening, it was suggested Senate should consider altering its meeting time to make it more accessible, especially to members with young children.
- Noting that SFU has more Senate committees than most other institutions, consideration should be given as to why there are so many, what is their purpose, and if they are all necessary.
- Delegating authority to committees may be an efficient way to deal with certain items, but it's important that Senate not become a rubber stamp. Senate should involve itself in discussions and decisions that impact the final outcome.

### **iii) Strategic Research Plan Presentation**

Dugan O'Neil, Vice-President, Research and International, presented on SFU's next Strategic Research Plan (SRP), following which he answered questions.

Senate was informed that an SRP is required as part of external research funding opportunities and fosters an institution-wide conversation about research, laying out strategic approaches and priorities. It must fit with the President's priorities and should have strong connections to the Academic Plan. Consultations began in Spring 2022 and included townhalls, an SRP feedback survey, and SFU: What's Next? Presidential consultations. Drafting of the next SRP took place in Summer 2022 and a finalized version will be readied in Fall 2022, with a publication date expected by the end of December.

A question was asked as to what resources will be required to implement SRP objectives. Senate was informed that the first step is to determine where the University currently sits so as to determine what can be done and the second step is to implement a plan to achieve the desired outcome. In response to supports for graduate students specifically, SFU does spend money in support of graduate students, but it must be determined if that money is being used as effectively as possible. This could mean finding the correct balance between fewer graduate students with more support or more graduate students with less support.

Noting inconsistencies in the way previous SRPs have come to Senate (either for information, consultation, or approval) and that Canada Research Chairs website states that an SRP must be supported by the university's most senior planning body, a comment was made that future SRPs should be brought to Senate for approval rather than for information.

In reference to SFU's implementation of support for open science, a comment was made that the Library has particular expertise in terms of bibliometric data and measuring scholarly impact, and would like to be involved in that implementation.

A comment was made that as faculties move towards more limited term appointments, pressure is being placed on graduate students due to the limited number of sessional positions being allocated for graduate students. This harms graduate students monetarily in the short term, but it also harms them in the long term because they may be leaving programs without a competitive teaching portfolio.

## 5. Question Period

- i) Senator Myers (on behalf of Maite Taboada (FASS), Oliver Schulte (FAS), Nilima Nigam (SCI), and himself) submitted the following question:

*Two reports have been commissioned by SFU in regard to a possible SFU Medical School, the Walker report and the more recent KPMG costing report commissioned by our last Provost. The Walker report will allow us to understand what SFU proposal the province's government was agreeing to in 2017. In particular, what provincial student grant was requested by SFU. More broadly, these reports will allow the SFU community to better understand the financial and academic costs and benefits of the medical program proposal before having to vote on it at Senate and the Board.*

*A serious concern is that the public financial statements for the comparable Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) make it clear that small medical schools cost in the neighborhood of \$200k per student per year. This is something like 10 times the cost of a typical SFU student. NOSM receives approximately \$150k per student per year in government grants to cover some of those costs. A large internal cross subsidy from other SFU units could badly damage the research and education mission of the university, including (but not limited to) our ability to improve the numbers of research and teaching faculty.*

*These reports will allow the SFU community to better understand our situation, and to have a fulsome and constructive discussion in regard to a medical school before voting. Will the President be transparent and release these two reports and any other more recent proposal to government to Senate?*

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

Senate was informed that the University will provide access to the Walker Report and other reports to those that request them so that the University community is well informed about the medical program. It was added, however, that the Walker Report is now five years old and is not consistent with the medical program now envisioned by the government or SFU. The KPMG report that was recently received was provided for the purpose of presenting a concept paper at the end of April to government was highly preliminary and provided no details on class size, curriculum, program length, or research agenda. Some proprietary information in that report needs to be addressed before it can be considered for distribution, but once that is done, there is no issue with its release.

Under bicameral governance, Senate is responsible for academic matters, whereas the Board of Governors is responsible for fiscal matters. That means Senate's responsibility lies with ensuring

the quality of academic programs and its decisions and is not usually related to the financial viability of a program. Other avenues will be provided by which Senators can inform the Board of Governors about concerns that arise at Senate or from the University community. Senate has, in the past, approved many programs that on their own do not attract sufficient funding from government to cover their costs. The President has gone on record that SFU cannot cross-subsidize the medical school and the government is expected to fully fund the medical school.

As with all programs, funding is made-up of many sources, including government grant funding, student domestic and international tuition, research overhead, and endowments. Medical schools in general are more readily able to attract external dollars and funding for postgraduate medical education comes from the Ministry of Health, whereas undergraduate medical education funding comes from Advanced Education. Further, many SFU programs and academic units are cross-subsidized by units attracting more government funding based on their student numbers and many graduate programs could not exist without undergraduate revenue. A university is a sum of its whole, and these cross subsidies are deemed appropriate to ensure the breadth of programming and that SFU's programs meet faculty, students and society's needs.

## 6. Reports of Committees

### A) Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP)

#### i) Establishment of the Visual & INteractive Computing Institute (VINCI) Revised (S.22-88)

Moved by W. Parkhouse, seconded by A. Parmar

“That Senate approve the establishment of the Visual & INteractive Computing Institute (VINCI) as an institute for a five-year term.”

Parmit Chilana, Associate Professor - School of Computing Science, was in attendance to respond to questions.

A question was called and a vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED

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

#### i) Undergraduate Program Changes (S.22-94)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science, School of Engineering Science), the Beedie School of Business, and the Faculty of Science (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry).

#### ii) Undergraduate New Course Proposals (S.22-95)

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved new course proposals in the Faculty of Applied Sciences (School of Computing Science), and the Faculty of Science (Mathematics, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry).

**iii) Undergraduate Course Changes (S.22-96)**

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 Engineering Science, School of Sustainable Energy Engineering), the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (School of Interactive Arts and Technology), the Faculty of Environment (Geography), and the Faculty of Science (Mathematics).

**iv) Faculty of Applied Sciences Admission Requirements from a BC High School (S.22-97)**

Senate received information that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, acting under delegated authority, approved Faculty of Applied Sciences Admission Requirements from a BC High School.

A question was asked as to why Calculus 12 is being designated as a recommended rather than required course for students applying from a BC high school. Senate was informed that Calculus 12 is no longer offered at some high schools and this change is being made to be more inclusive of those who apply to SFU. Also, this change will align SFU with other BC universities that no longer require Calculus 12. In response to concerns around student performance, it was added that typically students that don't do calculus in high school do better in Calculus 2 than students that did calculus in high school and skip Calculus 1 at SFU. As such, this change should not be harmful to student performance.

**C) Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)****i) Graduate Program Changes (S.22-98)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved program changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Economics, French, Psychology).

**ii) Graduate New Course Proposals (S.22-99)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved a new course proposal in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Urban Studies Program).

**iii) Graduate Course Changes (S.22-100)**

Senate received information that the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, acting under delegated authority, approved course changes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Psychology).

**D) Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)****i) Senate Committee Elections (S.22-101 Revised)**

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

**7. Other Business**

**8. Information**

**i) Date of the next regular meeting – Monday, November 7, 2022**

Open session adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Tom Nault  
Senate Secretary