

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
University Secretariat
MEMORANDUM

To: Senate
From: Alison Watt
Subject: Academic Amnesty motion
Date: 19 December, 2006

Senate Wei Li forwarded this motion which was considered by the Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules.

Academic Amnesty Motion

November 20th, 2006

Reference was made to the wording of a previous motion dealing with this issue in 2003, and M. Dunnet stated that since this seemed to be a preferable wording, she would like to substitute the wording of the motion before Senate

Moved by M. Dunnet, seconded by P. Percival

“Senate requests that instructors do not penalize students academically for their participation in the February 7, 2007 National ‘Day of Action’, and
 Senate requests that faculty make every effort to accommodate those students who wish to participate in the February 7, 2007 National ‘Day of Action’ ”

purposes on February 7, 2007.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Senate endorses lawful activities to increase awareness to the need for Canada and British Columbia to reinvest in affordable, high-quality education at the post-secondary level.

A similar matter was considered by Senate in December 2003 concerning a Day of Action in February 2004. A motion was forwarded to Senate by a student Senator (attachment 1). Senate amended and approved the amended motion (also shown on attachment 1). A communiqué was issued to the University following the Senate action (attachment 2).



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.03-116

*as amended by
Senate 1 Dec 03*

Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: Camilla Sears
Student Member
Senate

RE: February 4th National Day of Action

DATE: November 13, 2003

I wish to bring forward the following motion and rationale concerning the February 4th National Day of Action before the attention of the Senate.

Motion:

Whereas the Senate of Simon Fraser University has called on the provincial and federal governments to increase funding to post-secondary education, and

Whereas the National "Day of Action" is an event that gives students across Canada an opportunity to draw attention to student issues, and

Whereas funding to post-secondary education has been a prominent student issue in Canada in recent years,

Be it resolved that Senate requests that ~~no student~~ *instructors do not penalize students* be penalized academically for his or her participation in the February 4, 2004 National "Day of Action," and

Be it further resolved that Senate requests that faculty make every effort to accommodate those students who wish to participate in the February 4, 2004 National "Day of Action."

Rationale:

Student associations across Canada are working together to organize a National "Day of Action" to raise awareness for student issues in Canada on February 4th, 2004. National Days of Action have traditionally given students across Canada an opportunity to have their voices heard and to make issues of post-secondary education visible. As well, National Days of Action are historically among the most heavily promoted and massively attended events at Simon Fraser University. Therefore, the Simon Fraser Student Society is currently encouraging as many students as possible to take part in the rally and activities that will take place on that day.

Many other institutions' Senates and/or Education Councils have passed similar resolutions in the past, including Carleton, York, Dalhousie, King's College, Ryerson, Kwantlen, University of Toronto, University of Winnipeg, University College of Cape

Breton, and Mount Saint Vincent University. The Senate of the University of Victoria has recently passed a similar motion for the upcoming February 4th Day of Action.

We are asking that Senate support the Day of Action in principle, and that faculty be advised well ahead of time that students will be interested in participating and encouraged to participate on February 4th. Since this resolution would be a request and not a demand, it would not force faculty to disrupt their class schedules. However, hopefully it will have the effect of encouraging faculty, lecturers and TAs to modify, where necessary, their plans for the semester to allow as many students as possible to take part. These modifications could include, for example, the rescheduling of exams or assignment due dates, or simply granting accommodations to individual students who wish to participate. This motion is not intended to absolve students of the responsibility of catching up on account of missed work or class material.

As well, this resolution would discourage academic penalties – damage to grades or other performance evaluations – being levied against students who miss class to participate in the Day of Action. Again, it would be a request, and not a demand of instructors. Nonetheless, it would have the effect of letting instructors know ahead of time that Senate supports the Day of Action, and that students will want to participate.

The Senate of Simon Fraser University has already taken the step of publicly declaring that **“provincial government underfunding to post-secondary education in BC is contributing to decreasing quality and accessibility to post-secondary education in BC.”** The National Day of Action seeks to draw attention to this very important matter. Thus, I believe that Senate would be well-advised to support the Day of Action by passing this motion.

* October 6, 2003

administrators-group@sfu.ca, reg-das@sfu.ca, 12/16/03 1:54 PM -0800, Student Day of A

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To: administrators-group@sfu.ca, reg-das@sfu.ca
 From: Alison Watt <Alison_Watt@sfu.ca>
 Subject: Student Day of Action - February 2004
 Cc: Bobbie Grant <bgrant@sfu.ca>
 Bcc:
 X-Attachments: :MacAlison:172346:Day/Action motion Dec03 Senate:

Dear Chairs and Directors, Program Directors and Deans,

Senate approved the following motion at its meeting on 1 December, 2003

That Senate requests that instructors do not penalize students academically for **their** participation in the February 4, 2004 National "Day of Action," and

That Senate requests that faculty make every effort to accommodate those students who wish to participate in the February 4, 2004 National "Day of Action."

In discussion it was stated that this was a request, and it was suggested that instructors could accommodate students by choosing not to hold tests or exams on that day, thereby accommodating students who wished to participate in the National Day of Action. However, if an instructor is unable to make accommodations for students on that day (scheduled laboratories, studio work, etc.), students will have to choose whether to attend classes or attend the National Day of Action, understanding that if they do not complete some elements of the academic requirements of a course, there may be academic consequences.

I attach a copy of the full motion and rationale for your information. Please advise all faculty members and other instructional staff who will be teaching in the spring semester 2004 about this request from Senate.

Yours sincerely,

*Alison Watt
 Director, University Secretariat*

Attachment (amended Senate paper S 03-166)

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