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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	DATE	October 4, 2013
FROM	Gordon Myers, Chair Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies	PAGES	1/1
RE:	Requirement Term Language for SFU Credentials (REVISED SCUS 13-42)		

For information:

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies at its meeting of October 3, 2013, gives rise to the following recommendation to take effect in Fall 2014:

Motion:

"That Senate approve the following Calendar language:

The requirements that apply to a particular student are generally those in effect at the time of admission, known as the requirement term. The requirement term for university-level requirements is the time of university admission; the requirement term for faculty-level requirements is the time of faculty admission; and the requirement term for a specific subject or concentration is the time of approved declaration of the subject or concentration. However, the ability to use the requirements at the time of admission is not indefinite. University and faculty-level requirements apply for at most 8 years, while subject or area of study requirements apply for at most 6 years. If a graduation check determines that a student has not completed requirements within these limits, the term of the graduation application becomes the requirement term.

Students may take advantage of new curriculum by changing their requirement term at any time."

**Simon Fraser University
Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies
Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review SFU Credentials**

An Ad Hoc subcommittee of Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies consisting of Gordon Meyers, Jo Hinchliffe, Paul Budra and Rob Cameron has been reviewing undergraduate credentials at Simon Fraser University. At its meeting of July 31, 2013, the subcommittee forwarded a proposal for requirement terms to SCUS, motivated in part by a 5-year limit on the applicability of calendar language as outlined in Senate minutes of December 2, 1968. The language was approved by SCUS at its meeting of September 12, 2013. Subsequent discussion suggested that some refinements be made to deal with the expiry of requirement terms as well as criteria for appeals.

Revised Proposal for Requirement Term Language

Moved that the following revised language be introduced to set limits on how long the requirements laid out in a particular calendar apply.

Requirement Terms

The requirements that apply to a particular student are generally those in effect at the time of admission, known as the requirement term. The requirement term for university-level requirements is the time of university admission, the requirement term for faculty-level requirements is the time of faculty admission, and the requirement term for a specific subject or concentration is the time of approved declaration of the subject or concentration. However, the ability to use the requirements at the time of admission is not indefinite. University and faculty-level requirements apply for at most 8 years, while subject or area of study requirements apply for at most 6 years. If a student applies to graduate with an expired requirement term on record, the term of the graduation application becomes the requirement term.

Units should advise students of curriculum changes and the opportunity to update requirement terms. Students may take advantage of new curriculum by changing their requirement term to the current term at any time. An appeal to the Faculty Dean to retroactively change the requirement term may be made on the basis that a student was not advised of the opportunity to change requirement term at the time of curriculum change or for other extenuating circumstances.

Rationale

Each semester SFU publishes a new academic calendar outlining the overall degree requirements of the university and its faculties and programs. Students making timely progress are generally entitled to graduate under the provisions of the calendar requirements in force at the time of admission, or under those in force at the time of graduation, whichever is to their benefit. Although the calendar does not generally spell out how long its provisions remain in force, the Senate minutes of December 2, 1968 spelled out a five-year rule:

“The secretary indicated that under current Senate and calendar requirements a student was permitted to complete graduation requirements under the terms of the calendar under which he registered, for a period of five years thereafter. He explained further that under current regulations if a student declared or changed his major, the regulations then pertaining would be those which would apply, subject to a further five year period after the time of declaration or change.”

However, the 5-year limit is not widely known or applied, with consequent confusion about how long students may continue to benefit from calendar language and how long departments, schools and faculties must maintain graduation programs under the language of each successive calendar. The proposed language on requirement terms remedies this deficiency while also using the present SIMS terminology for requirement terms and slightly increasing time limits to student benefit.

The proposal may also be seen as an essential step in order for units to ensure that curriculum revisions are ultimately reflected in student outcomes in a planned process. With the change, a unit can plan a curriculum revision to achieve particular education goals with the knowledge that from six years hence each graduating class will be fully assessed in terms of those goals as implemented by the revised curriculum.

Subsequent to initial approval by SCUS, the revised language clarifies what happens when a student applies for graduation with an expired requirement term and also introduces an appeal mechanism that doubles as a phase-in provision. In the event that a student does not meet current graduation requirements and the requirement term of record has expired, the Dean may retroactively approve a change of requirement term to allow the student to graduate. A basis of such an appeal is that a student is not advised of the opportunity to update requirement term prior to a curriculum change taking effect. As a phase-in provision, this basis of appeal should be sustained for students adversely affected by curriculum changes prior to September 2015.