



**SFUFA**

THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION OF SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

## SFUFA NEWS

January 2008

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### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **A Change in E-mail for Contacting SFUFA**

If you need help with a particular work-related situation or have questions about university policies and procedures, please send your e-mail to [sfufa@sfu.ca](mailto:sfufa@sfu.ca) rather than to the personal e-mail addresses of the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director. E-mail to this address goes to both senior staff members ensuring that inquiries will be answered in a timely fashion.

If you have questions about SFUFA mail-lists, the TransLink employee pass program, want to place an accommodation ad, or are seeking general information about the University, please continue to contact the Administrative Assistant at [gloria\\_asmundson@sfu.ca](mailto:gloria_asmundson@sfu.ca).

You can contact this year's SFUFA President directly at [dmirhady@sfu.ca](mailto:dmirhady@sfu.ca).

#### **SFUFA Annual General Meeting**

Mark your calendars! The Faculty Association's Annual General Meeting will be held March 31, 2008 from 1:30 to 3:30 in Halpern 126. An agenda and other information will be sent to all members closer to that date.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**David Mirhady, Department of Humanities**  
**dmirhady@sfu.ca local 23906**

I am almost halfway through my term as SFUFA President now and, on the whole, it has been an interesting experience that I would not discourage others from taking it on. I am struck that two former SFUFA Presidents, Glenn Chapman and Jon Driver, are currently being considered for senior administrative posts at SFU. As a historian of the ancient world, in my own thinking I liken the SFUFA Presidency to the role of Roman Tribune of the People, which was not part of the normal *cursus honorum* that led to the consulship, republican Rome's highest office. But in standing up for the interests of the *plebs*, the tribunes could make the senators and magistrates take a second look at things, although not always with the intended results. (Rome's most famous *tribuni plebis*, the Gracchi brothers, were both assassinated.)

### **Faculty Restructuring**

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey on Faculty Restructuring. The issue is obviously one of great interest to a large number of our members. We will be reporting the results to members and to Senators for use in their deliberations regarding the restructuring initiative. You will find links to the Task Force Report and Executive Summary on the front page of the SFUFA website (<http://www.sfu.ca>).

### **Transit**

In December, after two months of postponements I joined VP Finance and Operations, Pat Hibbitts, SFSS President, Derrick Harder, and representatives of staff for a meeting with TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company representatives. We discussed a range of issues surrounding the long line-ups and pass-bys that we experienced in September and October and the steps that they were taking to overcome them. You will have seen several new articulated buses in service in January.

TransLink, the university, and UniverCity will be undertaking a broad study of transportation issues on campus in the near future. There is likely to be a new end station for buses built (though the old one doesn't seem very old), and perhaps some of Premier Campbell's new billions for Transit will come our way. However, it seems unlikely that we will get a SkyTrain extension up the hill like the one planned out to UBC (through whose constituency, Premier?). Nevertheless, the Evergreen line will be welcome.

The idea of a UPass for faculty cannot be anticipated: TransLink is still some years away from even getting it extended to all the local community college

students, who are rightly a higher priority. My thought is that we could do a better job of making the Employee Pass an attractive option for faculty; even a modestly improved price advantage over the current offer would likely create a much better subscription. If you aren't aware of the employee pass program, please see the brief description of the program provided later in this newsletter.

### **Access Copyright**

For years, the expense and red tape involved in dealing with Access Copyright and its predecessor, CANCOPY, have frustrated many faculty members. In the fall, in response to threatened legal action from Access Copyright, the administration sent emails to some of our colleagues and threatened legal and/or disciplinary measures if they did not desist from making course packets elsewhere and not through the university bookstore's custom courseware service. They also threatened with eviction the SFSS-run Quad Books and Campus Copying, which is in the Cornerstone building. The university administration, understandably, does not want to leave itself legally open.

My sense was that this was not an SFU issue alone, but one that affects university communities across the country, so I met with a CAUT staff member in Ottawa Jan. 11th. There is likely to be an article on the subject soon in the *CAUT Bulletin*.

My concerns are several: 1) the guidelines for copying are neither clear nor readily accessible; 2) the guidelines, once one finds them, may not accurately reflect the law; 3) the law may be overly restrictive of the concept of fair dealing; 4) there is a perception that if faculty do prepare courseware packets under the Access Copyright guidelines, their students are being charged fees even on a great deal of material that is either covered by fair dealing or is in the public domain and on which fees need not be paid; 5) faculty are under-informed on the issues. Such a range of issues clearly needs to be dealt with in a range of forums.

### **Employment Equity**

As many of you will know, the university went through an employment equity audit in the fall. SFUFA played an active role, giving our own feedback and getting together a focus group. Empirical data show us that the move toward equity hiring across Canada stalled about fifteen years ago. Women, visible minorities, people with disabilities, and aboriginal people are still markedly underrepresented in university faculty positions. My sense is that as individuals, we all need to give these issues more attention in order to find ways to welcome the broadest ranges of talented people into our profession. Institutional changes can only go so far.

### **Campus 2020**

Our provincial organization, the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA/BC), organized a seminar in late November in

Victoria on the provincial government's report on post-secondary education written by former Attorney General, Geoff Plant. Speakers, including Geoff Plant himself, emphasized the need to distinguish the differing but complementary roles that need to be played by BC universities, colleges, and vocational schools. These roles have become too blurred in recent years and we need increased core university funding in order to deliver on the provincial government's promise to make BC the best-educated province in Canada. The seminar was followed by a reception for MLAs, which as many as forty attended (since it followed their first day back in the Legislature in the fall term). At the end of January, CUFA representatives will be meeting again with representatives of the Ministry for Advanced Education to discuss practical measures for implementing the Campus 2020 recommendations.

### **CAUT**

I attended my first national Council meeting of the Canadian Association of University Teachers in November and took a more active role in it than I had anticipated. There were two issues that dominated the meeting. The first was membership: should CAUT make itself more open to membership for teacher organizations (*viz.* unions) at colleges. With the support of our colleagues at UBC, UVic, and so on, I introduced what I thought were several modest amendments to recommendations for the vetting of such membership applications. The process of debating and voting on these amendments ended up devouring an entire day of the meeting. Representatives of the colleges, together with the CAUT Executive, threw up every possible procedural obstacle. The issue inspired vigorous dialectic and, in the end, most of the amendments were accepted, but surely there was a better use of the Council's time.

The second dominant issue involved our sister faculty associations at Trent and Lakehead universities. Here member associations had come to serious disagreements with actions of the CAUT executive leadership. In the Trent case, a CAUT lawyer had even sued the Trent faculty association, with the financial support of CAUT. There was understandably a great deal of concern that such situations had been allowed to develop. (Thankfully, the litigation with Trent has since been resolved through mediation.)

CAUT is a formidable organization, but my sense is that there is a serious need for effective people to be elected to the CAUT national executive to stand up for the interests of the member associations. CAUT has a unique voice for university teachers that needs to be promoted and safeguarded.

### **FAUST**

On December 27th the administration at St. Thomas University in Fredericton NB locked out the Faculty Association of STU (Faust), a tactic that strikes me as egregiously callous and irresponsible. Thankfully, our relations with the SFU

administration have been much more positive, as I hope they will continue to be. But as the video on the YouTube website attests (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxz7zpNtTW8&eurl>), the STU administration's actions have only provoked a very pro-union atmosphere in the STU faculty. I have sent a strongly worded letter to the Chair of the STU Board of Governors urging him to take a more responsible position.

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## **VOTING TRANSPARENCY: GETTING IT**

**Bob Hackett, SFUFA Vice-President  
Communications**

Openness is a basic principle of democratic governance. More specifically, the outcome of the processes of collective decision-making should be publicly available. It would seem to follow that the results of departmental elections should be publicly available. The SFUFA Executive made this assumption, viewing the public availability of the results of departmental elections as playing a role in building trust in the fairness of decision-making procedures and putting everyone on an equal footing with regard to knowledge about the state of opinion within the department.

As evidenced by concerns raised by members, keeping all but the final outcome of votes secret can lead to suspicion that there is something to hide. In response to these concerns, the Faculty Association Executive has taken the position that a standard format should be used for disclosing election and ratification results and should include the number of eligible voters, the number of Yes and No votes, and the number of abstentions (distinguishing between those who choose to register an abstention, and those who do not vote at all).

The Executive also recommends the use of an online voting system. SFUFA uses the Academic Computing Services survey tool for its elections. (See the October 2007 SFUFA News available on the SFUFA website for more details.) This system preserves the confidentiality of each ballot cast, while permitting off-campus faculty to vote electronically.

We have had no complaints about the call for transparency in voting at the decanal level, but a number of Chairs and Directors are concerned that disclosing votes for their positions could undermine their legitimacy and make it difficult or even impossible to find faculty willing to take on the job. These are legitimate concerns, but so are those of the faculty calling for openness and transparency.

I suggest that if there is a divided vote, it may not come as a surprise to department members. In which case, what is the harm in stating the obvious and disclosing the results? If a divided vote does come as a surprise, this is

information that the citizens of a department should be aware of, and it indicates to the in-coming Chair the need for bridge building.

The Association has been told that in some departments it is extremely difficult to find anyone willing to become Chair and that faculty who are persuaded to accept nomination may withdraw if the full results of ratification votes are to be disclosed. An alternative perspective is that chairing a department is inherently a political position, requiring both acknowledgement of opposition and willingness to hear differences of opinion as well as the ability to make tough decisions at the end of the day. One could argue that somebody who fears disclosure of the results of a democratic process may not be suited to this job.

The SFUFA Executive is interested in knowing what our members think about transparency in voting for Chairs' positions. Should the full results of votes be publicly disclosed? Should only the final outcome be revealed? Or is there a reasonable compromise, whereby the full results are available, but only to eligible voters on request? The Association will conduct a short survey of members, which includes Chairs and Directors, to canvass your opinions sometime after the survey on Faculty Restructuring closes. In the meantime, if you have any comments on this matter, please email [sfufa@sfu.ca](mailto:sfufa@sfu.ca) to let the Association know what you think.

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### **CHILD CARE AT SFU: WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? WHERE ARE WE GOING?** **Jinko Graham, Statistics and Actuarial Science**

According to the Vancouver Foundation, "Families are a foundation of society and come in many forms, each with their own unique challenges." This is certainly the case for the SFU Children's Centre, with its mix of lone- and dual-parent families headed by graduate and undergraduate students (domestic and international), faculty, staff, alumni, UniverCity residents, and other community members. The diversity of the Centre comes out of its proud history and, along with high quality early childhood education, is one of its greatest strengths. However, this diversity has been threatened by an accumulation of government cuts to child-care operating funding over the past six years. The University, for its part, is preoccupied with its own budget challenges, and with accessing new provincial subsidies for graduate students that would minimize cuts passed on to individual departments. The Children's Centre has much potential for recruiting graduate students with families and could be an important asset to the University in this regard. Moreover, during a period of faculty and staff renewal, the Centre continues to play a key role in building an equitable workplace.

The diversity of the Centre traces back to its humble roots as a family co-op run in a student lounge of the AQ. The transition to a licensed, state-of-the-art facility

was not without challenges. However, by the mid-1970's, SFU's commitment to providing campus child-care services that would attract mature students, championed by Stan Roberts, then-VP Student Services, and a progressive Board of Governors, lead to a \$1.2 million capital budget for construction of the current facility, which opened in 1977. Today, the University continues to support the Centre, with direct and in-kind contributions valued at approximately \$300,000 annually. The support of the University has helped position the Centre at the forefront of child care nationally. In return, the Centre has helped garner positive media attention for the University, such as recent placements on *Maclean's* top-100 employers list and the Canada top-ten family-friendly employers list of *Today's Parent* magazine; it has also helped to recruit families to UniverCity. Many of us have seen the benefits of the Centre at a personal level. For example, I and other parents won't soon forget cheering on a single-parent international student as she completed her PhD on schedule and secured a respected post-doc at a major Canadian university. Success stories like hers simply would not be possible without the Children's Centre.

As important as University support has been for the Centre, federal and provincial operating funding have been even more critical. Unfortunately, according to the Human Early Learning Partnership, since 2002 BC has cut \$50 million from its share of the annual childcare budget and this year federal child care transfers to BC have been reduced by an estimated \$108 million. To offset these cuts to operating funding, governments have offered tax credits and other incentives for employers to create their own childcare spaces through programs such as WorkLifeBC.

Both levels of government seem to be betting on employers to pick up the slack in order to remain competitive in a tightening labour market. However, most employers are reluctant to enter the childcare business and tax credits are irrelevant for non-profit organizations. To cope with these funding realities, the Centre has had to raise fees quite substantially over the past two years. It is feared that additional fee increases scheduled for spring may completely shut out the Centre's most vulnerable yet vital constituents.

Student families currently make up about 36% of the Centre, staff 32%, faculty 25%, and UniverCity/ Alumni/ Community families 7%. In the student category, I will focus on graduate students because, in a time of fiscal crisis, the University's budget is counting on increasing graduate enrollments by 25% to access new subsidies from the BC Ministry of Advanced Education. These subsidies amount to some \$20,000 annually per student added to current enrollment. Even so, the University's draft budget for 2008 calls for 1.3% cuts across the board. If the ambitious targets for graduate enrollment are not met, SFUFA members and their departments can expect similar cost-cutting measures from the University in future years. This is where the Children's Centre comes in.

According to a recent SFSS survey by Graduate Issues Officer, Clea Moray, about 1 in 5 graduate students is a parent. As related by one graduate student parent, many of them have chosen SFU because of the Children's Centre:

The presence of the childcare facility on campus (along with the TSSU bursary) was one of the reasons why I chose SFU over a competing offer... I have heard from other students as well that the presence of the childcare facility adjacent to family housing was a factor in their decision to come to SFU.

Given the Centre's potential for recruiting graduate students with families, for retaining them, and for facilitating timely completion of their degrees, it should be considered as a strategic student service. Recruitment and retention of graduate students, along with timely completion of degree programs are concerns shared by both the University and the BC Ministry of Advanced Education. These concerns are now directly linked to the bottom line of the University and therefore to the well being of faculty.

The University's reputation among prospective graduate students will be important as it strives to meet the new enrollment targets and attract the best candidates. To build a reputation among student parents, we must acknowledge that family responsibilities limit their capacity to take on additional employment outside the University. International graduate students with families are frequently recruited with assurances that their non-student partner will be able to find work; indeed, the needs assessment formulas applied by Financial Assistance assume this. Unfortunately, once here, these parents can face a Catch-22 of not getting childcare without employment, and not getting employment without childcare. They usually live on campus and have no car, so that commuting to childcare off the mountain is a challenge (see, e.g., <http://www.peak.sfu.ca/the-peak/2007-2/issue4/op-daycare.html>). Furthermore, the unpredictability of campus childcare spots makes it impossible to arrange childcare to coincide with the start of a job. Paying for childcare before starting a job is not an option because of their low family income, their ineligibility for provincial childcare subsidies, and their ineligibility for federal child tax credits in the first 18 months of residence. In addition, Financial Assistance does not award childcare bursaries when the income of the non-student parent is zero on the grounds that the family has no childcare need if one parent is not working. Though decisions can be appealed, the appeal process is arduous and, in the words of one graduate-student parent,

There is an emotional stress going through each semester not knowing what our income will be until after classes have finished, having to jump through the various appeal hurdles to obtain something we understood

was an employment benefit [the TSSU Child Care Bursary], and having to scrimp and defer expenditure, and max out our credit cards in the interim.

As a result, many of these parents find themselves turning to services such as the SFU Food Bank to feed their families. Indeed, the recent SFSS survey reports 29% of international graduate-student parents have used the SFU Food Bank in the past six months compared to 7% of domestic graduate-student parents and 6% of non-parent graduate students. Increased financial support to such families, to help them find jobs and childcare in their new environment, could bolster SFU's reputation abroad among prospective graduate students. In contrast, maintaining the status quo risks alienating international graduate students who are already here, as well as those who would follow. This would be a huge loss to the University, as these students are often among our most dedicated and talented.

Through graduate school, the post-doc years, and the search for a permanent academic position, childcare continues to be a concern for current and aspiring faculty parents. In my department, the presence of high-quality on-site childcare has been highly effective for recruiting faculty who have young children or wish to start a family. Other parents at SFU have also stressed that high-quality on-site childcare, in particular, and a perception of SFU as a family-friendly institution, more generally, were key factors in their decision to come to SFU. Clearly, this new breed of faculty recruit does not fit the traditional model of the "unencumbered scholar". Importantly, they are usually willing to trade some salary for a family-friendly environment. Here again, the Children's Centre can be viewed as a strategic investment, allowing issues of accessibility to be addressed. As it stands, deans, department chairs, and search committees have to temper their enthusiasm for the Centre with the reality of waiting lists of over a year in some cases. Despite the waiting lists, many faculty parents end up relying heavily on the Centre. This is particularly true for pre-tenure faculty who are at a very vulnerable time in their careers. For example, from a recent survey of female Science research faculty conducted by Nancy Forde in Physics, 11 of the 13 female faculty who have started families while at SFU have used the infant centre.

My impression and those of others on our faculty forum is that two or three years away from research to start a family means the end of an academic career. For faculty who supervise graduate and undergraduate students, even six months away can seriously impact a research program. Quality on-site infant/toddler care allows a new mother the chance to keep a hand in research, with the peace of mind that her child is near when nursing or other needs arise. There is also the peace of mind that comes from knowing one's child is in the care of a wonderful team of experts. For many of us, the early childhood educators at the Children's Centre have become like family, providing comfort,

reassurance, and guidance not only to our children but to us as parents. Without such support, many families, particularly those far away from extended family, may feel forced to sacrifice the career of one parent – a choice that no one should have to make. Historically, mothers have made this choice and this has contributed to the under-representation of women in academia, particularly in senior positions. The presence of high-quality on-site childcare signals that the Administration is committed to an equitable professoriate.

In summary, the SFU Children's Centre has made an enormous contribution to the lives of many students, staff, faculty, and community members over its nearly forty years of existence. Early on, the University had the foresight to establish a leading-edge childcare facility as a campus service for students with children. The University continues to provide critical support to this day. However, government-operating funds for childcare have been at least as critical. As this operating funding dries up, the Centre has been forced to increase its fees, but each fee increase shuts out more constituents and threatens diversity.

A strong and diverse Children's Centre is a strategic advantage for the University as it strives to increase graduate enrollments in an increasingly competitive student-recruitment environment, to maintain its family-friendly reputation in a tight labour market, and to promote an equitable workplace. Going forward, I am hopeful that the Administration and Board of Governors will, once again, provide their leadership and vision in supporting students, faculty, and staff who depend on childcare.

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## **SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR' PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

**Carl Schwarz, SFUFA Chief Negotiator  
Stats & Actuarial Science**

Each January, about half of all faculty undergo a biennial ritual – performance reviews. In this process, which is covered by Faculty Salary Policy A20.01 (<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/academic/a20-01.htm>), members of the Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC) or Teaching-Appointment Review Committee (TARC) must allocate step increases to faculty members. However, there is a limit on the total number of step increments that can be awarded. According to Policy A20.01, “the total number of steps awarded shall not exceed 1.3 times the number of faculty eligible for career progress or merit increments.”

Senior Administrators (Deans and higher) also have a performance review plan in the Executive Compensation Policy (B10.08, Appendix A, <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/board/B10.08.htm>). Their policy states:

Introduction: A performance review and salary advancement process provides a mechanism for accountability and career advancement. The performance review/salary advancement process for vice-presidents and deans is analogous to that for faculty members except that it will operate on an annual rather than biennial cycle.

The policy also states:

4. The total number of increments awarded should not normally exceed 1.3 multiplied by the total number of eligible vice-presidents and deans. The President and Vice-President Academic will manage the allocation process, except for the position of the Vice-President, Academic.

SFUFA asked for and received a summary of the Executive performance review results since its inception in 2000. These results are presented in Table 1.

Year	Administrators under Review	Total Steps Award	Average step awarded	Number of Anomalies	Average after removing anomalies*
2000	10	12.0	1.20	6	3.25
2001	14	18.5	1.32	0	1.32
2002	12	18.0	1.50	1	1.64
2003	13	16.5	1.27	1	1.38
2004	15	20.5	1.37	2	1.57
2005	15	22.0	1.47	0	1.47
2006	13	19.0	1.46	0	1.46
2007	13	19.5	1.50	0	1.50

\* According to the administration, salary anomalies are usually dealt with at September 1, and the administrator would then not receive a step increase as well. If salary anomalies occur in the period shortly after the annual review, they probably would receive a step increase the following year, but if they occurred near the time of the annual review, they would probably not receive a further step increase.

In many of the years, the average step award is significantly above the 1.3 defined in policy. In the first year, over half of the administrators reviewed received anomaly awards and presumably did not also receive step increases.

The results are disturbing on a number of levels:

This merit plan was introduced to the Board in 2000. At that time, everyone (faculty and administrators) was under severe PSEC wage freezes. This plan was pitched by then President Blaney as a matter of “fairness” for senior administrators (many of whom were former faculty). One of the tenets of SFU is the respect with which various groups treat each other. While the Administration and Faculty often have different objectives and may differ on policy, we can still work together if both sides believe that everyone is being treated equally and fairly. These results undermine this perception.

- As individual faculty members, we are keenly aware of the effects of being restricted to an average of 1.3 steps. If one member of a department is awarded a 1.5 step merit increase, another has to be awarded a 1.0 step increase to keep the Departmental average at or below 1.3. In many cases, minor differences in productivity result in a member being assigned a below-average merit increment. Senior Administrators should operate under similar restraints.
- Chairs of Departments have to make hard decisions in assigning merit steps to colleagues in order to not go above the 1.3 average. Senior administrators should make similar hard decisions.
- The Board of Governors is the senior governing body at Simon Fraser University. The overall responsibility for the business of the University is vested in the Board. These results appear to indicate a lack of oversight on the part of the Board.

By no means am I suggesting that Senior Administrators are undeserving of merit. Indeed, while many members may disagree with decisions, they do respect the difficulties of their jobs.

At the same time, there are also many deserving faculty and staff who did not receive appropriate merit awards because of the 1.3 step limitation imposed by internal policies and external policies such as PSEC.

This is a simple matter of fairness, equity, and respect.

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#### **TRANSLINK EMPLOYEE PASS PROGRAM**

**Gloria Asmundson, SFUFA Administrative Assistant**  
**gloria\_asmundson@sfu.ca or local 24676**

Are you aware that SFU has an employee pass program for transit users?

The SFUFA TransLink program includes passes for both conventional transit

(buses, SkyTrain and SeaBus), and passes for West Coast Express, also valid on conventional services. See the TransLink web site (provided below) for information regarding applying for an employee transit pass.

A few things you should know about the program: Monthly payments are made via Payroll deductions. There is a one-time, non-refundable \$15 registration fee, payable to TransLink, and you need to go to the Burrard SkyTrain station to have your photo taken. The same photo can be used on all subsequent passes. Getting your initial pass is a bit slow (2-3 months) and there is a 12-month commitment to the program, but you save about 15% compared to buying monthly passes and there is a further saving to be made through an income-tax deduction.

For General Information on Employee passes see:

[http://www.translink.bc.ca/Transportation\\_Services/Fares\\_Passes/employers\\_pass/](http://www.translink.bc.ca/Transportation_Services/Fares_Passes/employers_pass/)

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

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#### **NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

Have a topic you'd like discussed, a question you'd like answered, or a contribution you'd like to make to the next newsletter? Please send me a message at [stenenso@sfu.ca](mailto:stenenso@sfu.ca).