

Minutes of the SFUFA Executive Meeting
Held Thursday, March 9, 2023
In Halpern 126 (in person & via zoom)
9.30 – noon

In attendance:

Lyn Bartram (SIAT)
Bertille Antoine (Economics)
Kumari Beck (Education) Chair
David Broun (Physics) via zoom
Dave Hannah (Business)
Dan Laitsch (Education)
Rochelle Tucker (Health Sciences)
Ljiljana Trajkovic (Engineering Science) via zoom
Baharak Yousefi (Library) via zoom
Brian Green (Executive Director)
Melanie Lam (Executive Assistant, Minutes)
Jennifer Scott (Member Services)

Regrets:

Janice Regan (Computing Science)

The meeting was called to order at 9.37 am.

1. Approval of Agenda

Approved with one amendment – move item 3b to 10.

Moved: Lyn Bartram/Dave Hannah

Carried.

2. Approval of the February 16th minutes

Approved as circulated.

Moved: Rochelle Tucker/Dan Laitsch

Carried.

3. Business arising – Update on Research Ethics Board (REB).

For the past few weeks, SFUFA has been actively involved in protesting SFU's administrative interference with the REB, the inappropriate removal of REB members and Chair, the proposed changes to governance and procedures brought forward by the VPPRI, and disagreement with the administration that ethics approvals are continuing as usual. Following Monday's senate meeting, it was reported that the Chair and previous members of the REB have been reinstated, the VPRI's proposed policy revisions were not enacted, and the formation of a joint committee to review policies and procedures was established. Thanks to Senators, SFUFA members, past and current members of the REB and SFUFA staff for spending many hours on this and working together to raise the profile of this issue and to ultimately protect collegial governance at SFU. Moving forward, SFUFA will be keeping a close eye on the formation of the "joint committee" and its actions.

4. Presidents Report – Kumari Beck

- Search committees: Kumari is sitting on the search committee for the Provost and VP Academic and noted that interviews are currently taking place. The AVP Learning and Teaching search is scheduled to begin soon.
- Kumari, Dave Hannah and Dan Laitsch will be working on a plan to put in place a better structure

for SFUFA staff.

- In late 2022, a request was made by the office of the VPPEI, for SFUFA to provide support for two special program applications to the BC Human Rights Commission, regarding the cluster hiring of Black and Indigenous faculty. It was noted that the Black Caucus at SFU has some concerns and would like to be involved in the on-boarding process for the new hires. As a follow up, SFUFA has met twice with indigenous faculty and has created a mail list to help them connect with each other. SFUFA is advocating for SFU to support existing indigenous faculty.
- Dr Jonathan Moore from SFU Biological Sciences has won a CUFA Career Achievement Award. SFUFA will be following up with the administration to see if these kind of accomplishments by faculty members' can be given recognition and communicated to the rest of the SFU community.
- Kris Magnussen, Dean Pro-Tem, Faculty of Education, has been seconded as the Senior Strategic Advisor to the VPA office to oversee the governance structure of the proposed new medical school at SFU. Brian and Kumari have consulted with Kris, who will be giving an update to the executive at today's meeting.
- Over 1300 faculty members at Laval University in Quebec City are on strike and the SFUFA executive voted on the following motion:

Motion:

That SFUFA donate \$1000 towards the general strike fund of Laval University Faculty Association.

Moved: Dan Laitsch/Dave Hannah

Carried.

The donations line item in the budget is currently over by \$3000, not counting the above donation, and includes a donation to an endowment award for Allan Black. Many Faculty Associations have recently been going on strike and as a sign of solidarity, SFUFA has made donations to their strike funds. The executive discussed ways in which the Association could clarify the limits on and responsibilities of the donations policy. For example, should the line item be split into CAUT donations (strikes) or Academic Labour Relations vs other general donations? Or should it be limited to a newly created reserve? Or a core expense? It was recommended that this be formalized and communicated back to the membership.

- CUFA will be hosting a governance conference next year and is collaborating with SFU Labour Studies in a BC funded project about Understanding Precarious Employment in BC.

5. Executive Director report

- Several faculty members have come forward with complaints that faculty accomplishments are not adequately supported and recognized by SFU. There was discussion about this and the executive recommended raising this at the next consult meeting.
- Brian and Jennifer will be taking a partial medical leave starting next Monday and it was noted that during this time, Member Services and work on contract negotiations with SFU will be fully supported.

6. Treasurer Report – year to date fiscal update. D. Laitsch

- We are 1/3 of the way through the 22/23 budget and most line items are on track and there are no major concerns. IT support & Insurance are reflected as being high – because they are paid for in full at the beginning of the fiscal year. Meeting expenses are slightly higher than budgeted since SFUFA is now holding all executive meetings away from the SFUFA office.

7. Member Services report – postponed to the next meeting.

8. Update on proposed medical school at SFU - Kris Magnusson

- Kris has been seconded as Senior Strategic Advisor to the VPA, to provide feedback on the governance structure, and the “pulse” of the SFU community and SFUFA.
- In early Fall of 2022, the Province announced \$4.9 million in startup funding for the medical school.
- The program will focus on Family Practice and educating primary care physicians. The last two years of the 4-year undergrad program will be community based.
- A business case including full costing is expected to be completed by May 31, 2023. It is expected to go to Cabinet for approval by March 2024.
- SFU is in search of a founding Dean for the medical school. Dr. Roger Strasser has been hired as an interim Dean to assist with leadership and planning.
- The first intake is expected to be in the Fall of 2026 with an intake goal of 120 students.
- Accreditation could take up to 18 months.
- Once the founding Dean is in place, and a governance structure has been established, it will be taken to Senate for approval.

9. Committee Reports

- Equity committee: Has updated their website and is trying to get a rep from Academic Women. A group of SFUFA members has sent a letter to the committee asking for SFUFA to establish an Academic Freedom Committee. After some discussion it was recommended that SFUFA rep’s from the executive committee (Dave Hannah, Kumari Beck, Bertille Antoine) meet with the group to further discuss their concerns.

10. Academic Freedom letter – postponed to next meeting.

11. Items for Consultation – March 16th at 10:30

- i. Communications and faculty work – SFUFA has heard concerns that faculty members feel significant accomplishments are not adequately recognized. SFUFA would like to discuss ways SFU's communications strategy might better emphasize faculty contributions and spotlight the important work internally that SFU researchers are doing.
- ii. Calendar - SFU's calendar for 2024 appears to be out of sync with both public schools and other post-secondary institutions. In particular, we are concerned that the plan to return to session on January 2nd rather than January 8th (for all other institutions) may prove problematic for several reasons. SFUFA

would like to discuss the reasons for this decision and how we might better align our calendar and others in future.

- iii. Web support - faculty members are expected to maintain an internet presence for their research programs, but the supports and capabilities offered are often not developed in consultation with faculty, and do not appear to recognize the diversity of needs across the university. Faculty members need IT support that enables rather than constrains, and we would like to hear from IT leaders about the ways SFU's large scale information architecture can be better informed by and responsive to faculty needs.
- iv. Medical School - We understand SFU is developing a business case for the proposed medical school, with a deadline of May 31. While recognizing it may not be possible to release a full document publicly prior to government review, we do want to discuss the transparency of the process and how SFU might ensure the widest possible access at different points in the process.
- v. Funding cuts - despite documents that indicate an overall University surplus, we understand that support - including front line staff positions - is being reduced in areas that should be operational priorities, such as student services. SFUFA would like to understand why direct support for community members is being reduced and front-line support staff are being laid off while the University's executive and managerial ranks continue to expand.

12. Other business – none to report.

13. Adjournment: There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned at 12:31pm.