

Call to Order – 12:32 pm, February 26, 2015 | Build SFU Think Tank

## 1. Roll Call of Attendance

### Committee Composition

Vice President External Relations ( <i>chair</i> ) .....	Darwin Binesh
President ( <i>ex officio</i> ) .....	Chardaye Bueckert
Vice President Student Life .....	Kayode Fatoba ( <i>late</i> )
Board of Directors Representative .....	Brady Wallace ( <i>late medical</i> )
Councilor .....	Michael Fujiwara
Councilor .....	Kathleen Yang
Councilor .....	Andy Untawala
Councilor .....	Melissa Lee
Board of Governors Representative .....	Deven Azevedo
Out On Campus Representative .....	
Women’s Centre Representative .....	Anjali Biju
Senate Representative .....	
Student At-Large .....	
Student At-Large .....	Arjan Mundy

### Society Staff

Campaigns, Research, and Policy Coordinator .....	Pierre Cassidy
Minute Taker .....	Dion Chong

### Regrets

Board of Directors Representative .....	Rebecca Langmead ( <i>medical</i> )
Vice President University Relations .....	Moe Kopahi ( <i>class</i> )

### Guest

Board of Directors Representative .....	Tesicca Truong
Member .....	Arr Farah
SFU Ancillary Services Executive Director .....	Mark McLaughlin
SFU Bookstore Director .....	Mikhail Dzuba

## 2. Adoption of the Agenda

### MOTION ADV 2015-02-26:01

Azevedo

*Be it resolved to adopt the agenda as presented.*

*Lobby days followup discussion, BOG action discussion, and culture awareness day motion added.*

### CARRIED AS AMENDED

## 3. Ratification of Regrets

### MOTION ADV 2015-02-26:02

Biju

*Be it resolved to ratify regrets from:*

Board of Directors Representative .....	Rebecca Langmead ( <i>medical</i> )
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**CARRIED**

**4. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

**MOTION ADV 2015-02-26:03**

Biju

*Be it resolved to approve the minutes of 2015-02-19*

**CARRIED**

**5. Guest Speakers**

**a. SFU Read**

Representatives from the SFU Bookstore and Ancillary Services presented the SFU Read programme to the committee.

Taskforce for Textbook Affordability spawned discussions on initiatives that were could reduce the costs of textbooks for students. As a cost-recovery operation, the bookstore sought opportunities to enhance its efficiency and reduce textbook costs on students through its sphere of influence, including the elimination of underutilized services such as the Tech Shop.

The major issue identified by the bookstore was the transition from print to digital course material —publishers did not expect print textbooks within 3 to 5 years. Digital learning management platforms were the primary area of investment at the moment for major publishers. The existing model for textbook provision was seen to be broken with these coming changes, and the desire of both Ancillary Services and the Bookstore was to have SFU lead the changes and frame the conversation in a way that reduces costs for students who depend on textbooks for classes. It was felt that if the bookstore did nothing to anticipate and manage these changes, faculty would simply begin to require students to pay for course codes, which are already beginning to become extremely unaffordable. While efforts continued to maximize usage of fair dealing clauses, more efforts were needed.

The Bookstore therefore proposed to delivery of course material as an upfront fee with all course materials delivered to all students from the first day of classes forward, accessed through Canvas. This was similar to the UPass model, in that the large scale of student participation would result in significant cost reductions for textbooks. SFU Read has negotiated for digital textbooks to cost 50% of print book pricing, as opposed to the 60% cost of existing eTextbooks. This also includes a 2% cap on price increases for textbooks for a seven year period, tied to the maximum tuition fee increase cap instituted by the provincial government. These discussions and these limits were led by SFU, as opposed to the publishers. Pearson has accepted these limits, while Wylie and Nelson are currently in negotiations with SFU. Ancillary Services recognized the leverage that SFU held given its size.

The Bookstore has been negotiating with publishers around the primary issues with eBooks, such as the subscription model where book access expires, as well as limited print rights. Currently, nearly 200 textbooks per semester are provided via digital access codes, and these were the first concern of the SFU Read programme.

Students have been polled at a smaller scale, and a larger student consultation would be underway soon. The university administration has indicated that student support would be necessary for any progress to continue with the initiative, including pilot projects and partial

rollout. Ancillary Services had no desire to push forward with a mandatory fee without student support.

It was expressed that this was one of many options for faculty. Should they wish to pursue open textbooks, they could do so with no charge to students. If they wished to adopt eTextbooks from the major publishers as many faculty members have already done, SFU Read was the solution being proposed by the Bookstore to limit costs.

Concerns were expressed that the SFU Read programme was currently extremely ambiguous in many respects, and while faculty could still utilize open textbooks, this system would simply encourage faculty to avoid open textbooks in favour of the easier option of selecting an eTextbook.

Questions were raised around the logistics of accommodating students who may pay tuition late or withdraw from classes. It was expressed that Student Services had yet to weight in on their processes to accommodate such issues, but the Bookstore and Ancillary Services were in full support of accommodation, including systems to avoid students being charged for course materials for courses they drop, as well as having to pay for course materials twice for a retake. Some of the other considerations include a certain pool of funding within Financial Aid to refund course material fees for students with financial needs. SFU Read programme development has not reached the point where such fine details could be managed.

While committee members saw value in complete access to course materials and in the proposition as a whole, the mandatory opt in of the programme was seen as a problematic area, as this could be perceived as an indirect tuition hike. Members believed that the university was in a position to negotiate for an opt out mechanism.

Open Textbooks and SFU Reads could occur concurrently, but the mandatory fee have been a high concern. Even if bursaries are available, students would still be subject to fees which may inhibit their participation. It was expressed that the fine details of the programme would likely decide student support or opposition to the programme.

SFU representatives reiterated that they wished for student voices to be part of the discussions and development of the proposal. In particular, they were interested in working collaboratively with students to determine the conditions for student opt-in/opt-outs, which would be brought to the negotiating table. However, the main issue faced by SFU was where to draw the line for opt outs, given their impact on the prices of books and the latitude for textbook cost reductions, given the economies of scale. It would become necessary to test the system and determine the level of opt outs.

At present, there are few if any comparable systems in place or best practices to emulate from other institutions. The team simply sought to collaborate to determine the fundamentals to make the programme as acceptable and as supportive of student learning as possible, regardless of whether students choose to opt in or out.

SFU believes that 50% of print costs was palatable, particularly since prices for eTextbooks will likely increase. The compounding increase beyond the 2% proposed price cap already occurs at present, with textbook prices increasing at three times the Consumer Price Index.

At present, there are 700 publishers that the Bookstore deals with. Up to 80% of materials are sourced from five major publishers, all of whom are represented on and negotiate collectively through the Canadian Publishing Council. Once Nelson and Pearson (50% of textbook market)

opt in, the other three follow suit. As such, textbook cost reductions through SFU Read would affect 80% of textbooks used at SFU, although it was always the faculty member's choice in which materials they use for their classes.

Smaller publishers have a particular set of restrictions (being a traditional publisher and therefore would not likely be affected by the SFU Read programme. They typically do not publish eTextbooks and do not provide return privileges, which are some of the hard costs absorbed by the Bookstore. It was projected to take seven to ten years for the smaller publishers to be onboard with such programmes.

The committee was reminded that the discussion was not about saving the bookstore, but rather fine-tuning the existing role of the bookstore as a negotiator with publishers and centre of faculty book requisition. This ensures that SFU continue to hold the bargaining power inherent in the scale of purchasing done by the university. This was something beyond the power of larger providers such as Amazon, which does not warehouse the books needed for all students. At present, \$3.50 to \$4 from each textbook sale comes from over-ordering and necessity to either absorb book costs or to return the textbook. The reduction in over-ordering with a digital-first model would increase efficiency and result in lower costs to students. Members expressed the need to recognize both students who rely on the bookstore and those who do not and utilize other booksellers or the used market to procure their materials, and how those students wish to participate in such a system, if at all.

At present, 2600+ textbooks are used at SFU, but only one open textbook is used. The open textbook programme was seen as insufficient to cover all the courses which require textbooks.

Concern was raised around the assumption that publishers would continue to control the market, and therefore the goal of positioning of the university as a broker to access a controlled market and getting the best possible deal. While this was one possible model, questions were raised of whether that is the best model, as open access movements within the academic community have been thriving in recent years. There was a desire to avoid divestment of learning outside the control of the university of the professor through various alternatives, including those which have been proposed by the Dean of Library Studies.

These were matters which were being addressed in an academic discussion paper currently being prepared on the initiative, which would be one venue through which faculty members would be engaged on the ongoing discussion. The bookstore sought to counteract the successful sales force of publishers that have convinced faculty to achieve learning outcomes using the textbook tools for millennia. The Teaching and Learning Centre and the Taskforce for Flexible Education were conducting discussions and researching the success of such dynamic content or the value of delivering the content in different and potentially more effective ways. However, at present less than 100 course packs are being compiled and sold as an alternative to textbooks, with 2600 textbooks being requisitioned otherwise. While a radical solution to learning materials were not out of the question, SFU Read was seen by the Ancillary Services and the Bookstore as a solution for today and for the next 15 years until such time that open and alternative learning materials replace existing materials. Until then, publishers continue to invest in learning management systems which are then sold to faculty as the easy option.

Mandatory fees only apply at an individual course level. The professor will continue to have full control over the materials used for classes, and whether they are eTextbooks delivered through SFU Read or as physical textbooks or open textbooks.

It was requested that the student representatives and organizations maintain neutrality at present in order to enable the dialogue to continue and avoiding shutting down the discover and consultation process already occurring. An offer was extended to continue dialogue with the student society on the initiative.

## 6. New Business

### b. Cultural Awareness Day

#### MOTION ADV 2015-02-26:04

Fatoba

*Be it resolved to adopt March 16th as Cultural Awareness Day at SFU,*

*Be it further resolved to promote this campaign through our communications department!*

Members have expressed interest in more overt expressions of cultural heritage.. The campaign would simply have students wearing cultural clothing on campus. This initiative tied into the continuing progress of ISG in holding elections. It was hoped that such an initiative would grow into a cultural celebration across the university in the future.

The event had no budget requirement. Only staff time will be needed to promote the initiative.

#### CARRIED

## 7. Discussion

### a. HeForShe Campaign

UN-WOMEN contacted the SFSS and wished to host a free event on campus, with only endorsement and location booking being needed.

The committee had consensus to support the event through endorsement and location booking.

### b. Media Democracy Event

The initiative arose from a research group within School of Communications. The event has been run for a number of years, and the topic for the upcoming event was Trolling and Intimidation of Vulnerable Communities Online.

The group requested support through any and all promotional avenues, as well as the opportunity to table in the AQ.

Director will attend next week to motivate on their proposal. Documentation would be circulated to the committee.

*Truong left at 1:21pm*

### c. Lobby Days Followup

SFSS participated in the Alliance of British Columbia Students lobby days and met with a wide range of decision makers and support staff. They included senior cabinet ministers, MLAs, as well as student union executives from across the province. The SFSS had significant traction on issues of eliminating the accumulation of student loan interest rates during the grace period, and issues on residence and housing. One member of the Liberal Party was drafting language on

the Residential Tenancy Act. Less traction was found in proposals to allow the university to borrow in order to construct residences.

The budget for Lobby Days was under budgeted, as it did not account for taxes on ferry and accommodations, as well as parking costs. A motion would be put forth in the following week to reimburse for those costs. In addition, the report to the committee was being prepared.

**d. Action for BOG Meeting**

President and Board of Governors Representative discussed the potential for organizing student action before the Board of Governors budget strategy meeting. There was interest in reaching out to cultural clubs and have at least 15 to 20 students downtown to have a presence at the meeting and ensure that the BOG was aware of student interests. Members were requested to support such an action.

The action was seen as an opportunity to mobilize the community such as through CJSF and The Peak, as well as an opportunity to revive the international student facebook page, which could centralize communications for any further actions. However, concerns were raised around the public nature of Facebook and the expressed desire of many members to have their involvement or their stories remain anonymous.

The committee would follow up on the matter after the meeting. The President has created a list of actionables but indicated that committee support was necessary for the initiative to succeed.

*The individuals expressed interest: Bueckert, Fatoba, Mundy, Farah, Lee.*

**8. Attachments**

Media Democracy Project Info.docx  
SFU Read Document.pdf  
SMARTCulturalAwarenessDay.pdf  
UN-WOMEN HeForShe Campaign.pdf

**9. Adjournment 1:29pm**