

Minutes of the SFUFA Executive Meeting
Held January 7, 2021
Via zoom video conference
9.30 – 12 noon

In attendance:

Kumari Beck (Education)
Sherryl Bisgrove (Biological Sciences)
Dave Hannah (Business)
Dai Heide (Philosophy)
Dan Laitsch (Education)
Steeve Mongrain (Economics)
Suzanne Norman (Publishing)
Janice Regan (Computing Science)
Michael Sjoerdsma (Engineering Science) Chair
Alexandra Wieland (Archives)

Regrets:

Brian Green (Executive Director)
Melanie Lam (Minutes)
Jennifer Scott (Member Services)

The meeting was called to order at 9.32 am.

1. Approval of Agenda

Approved with the following additions: Follow up on Covid-19 study; Donation request to *The Juggling Mother* event.

Moved: Dan Laitsch/Alexandra Wieland

Carried.

2. Approval of Minutes of December 10th minutes

Approved as circulated.

Moved: Dave Hannah/Steeve Mongrain

Carried.

3. Business arising

- i. Academic Women, the department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, the Labour Studies program and the SFU Library are co-sponsoring an event titled *The Juggling Mother: Coming Undone in the age of anxiety (Covid)*, based on the book by Amanda Watson, about the invisible labour of mothering, and the impact of Covid on women and children. The event is planned for Women's Day on March 8th, and SFUFA has received a request to provide either a financial donation, assistance with advertising

or organizing, or an honorarium. After some discussion, the executive noted they would support the event but will review SFUFA's donation guidelines first before making a decision about the dollar amount.

- ii. Invisible Struggles: Impacts of Covid-19 on SFUFA members – a joint report was released in early December, what are the next steps? Mike Sjoerdsma reported that Diane Finegood (SFU Centre for Dialogue) is hosting an interactive webinar on January 18th in an effort to expand on these conversations. He also reported that he would reviewing the findings from the study, with the VP Academic and the President.

4. **Presidents Report – Mike Sjoerdsma**

- SFUFA Collective Agreement – the vote concluded on December 21st, the turnout was roughly 50% of eligible voters and 90% voted in favour. Thank you to the bargaining team and to Brian Green and Jennifer Scott for their hard work and dedication over the past several months.
- The temporary modification of the biennial review process has been finalized and most faculty members have given SFUFA positive feedback on the initiative. All faculty members will receive 1.5 steps and Deans will be allotted .6% and will be carried forward and awarded at the Deans' discretion.
- On January 11th, the senate will be voting on two motions related to implementation of a new temporary undergrad grading system of Pass/Credit/No Credit (P/CR/NC) for the spring, summer and fall 2021 terms. This grading scheme may be used towards a maximum of 12 units deemed as electives within a student's program, over the pilot period. Students may choose this grading system no later than the last day of classes for the spring 2021 term. After some discussion the executive noted this may turn out to be an issue for some faculties such as Engineering Science, and may have a negative impact on workload for some members. Dan Laitsch is willing to bring forward SFUFA's viewpoints to Senate and executive members are being asked to send their comments/thoughts/feedback to Dan before the 11th.
- Kumari Beck has volunteered to sit on the search committee for the new VP People, Equity and Inclusion (VPPEI) position, whose portfolio will start in the Fall of 2021. SFUFA will be taking an active role in providing feedback on the position description, and Sherryl Bisgrove and Kumari Beck volunteered to form a subcommittee to work on this. Please email Mike if you are interested in joining. Some members have noted that they are reluctant to step forward for the search committee without sufficient information about what the job might entail and SFUFA will be bringing this forward as a discussion item at the next consul.
- Intellectual Property discussion: Traditionally, academic staff have had rights in the

intellectual property that they create, however, with universities transitioning to online education and remote instruction through various platforms, there are increased opportunities for IP rights to be violated. This item has been on SFUFA's radar for a while and Mike noted that an email will be drafted (Brian and Jennifer) to bring it to the attention of SFUFA members.

5. Research Operations – timed at 10 am

In December of 2019 a message was sent to the community regarding issues with the Office of Research Ethics, including backlogs. SFUFA would like to hear what steps are being taken to address these problems and if anything has been addressed so far. Other issues discussed in the past have included software upgrades and use of full board reviews as the norm. There are also complaints about the new software system being not so user friendly. Guests, Trevor Davis, Executive Director, Research Operations and Angela Brooks-Wilson, Associate VP Research, attended today's executive meeting to address some of these issues and the following was reported:

- Over the past few years policies have been re written to bring them in line with the Tri-council policies.
- In recent years the Office of Research Ethics has developed a better working relationship with the RE Board and meets with the Chair regularly to resolve problems.
- The Board has been built up to align more with its needs and to manage all the different types of applications they receive.
- The office lost some key staff members and people from other research ethic boards were brought on board to fill in the gaps.
- The new board is back to managing the smaller less risky applications.
- A new software system was purchased two years ago but did not work out and a new system was implemented this past November. To date, the feedback has been positive, but Trevor noted he would follow up on the bots/notification issue and the formatting guidelines as reported by SFUFA.
- A new Research Integrity Officer position has been created, which is no longer associated with the RE office and Trevor noted he is in that role currently.
- A new R61 (Research Integrity Policy) is being re written to be in compliance with the federal policy, which will include robust training for faculty in the RI area.
- SFUFA will be inviting Trevor back to an executive meeting in April or May for a follow up discussion.

6. Member Services report – Jennifer Scott

- Jen has been busy with collective bargaining and dealing with a variety of advocacy issues and noted that a couple of grievances were settled before the Xmas break.

7. Executive Director report

- Brian has been working on the Collective Agreement language and advocacy cases for most of December.
- As a follow up to the SFUFA planning retreat held in October, Brian has undertaken an audit of faculties in terms of tracking the number of admin posts, Deans budgets, EDI profiles etc. and will be circulating an outline to the executive for feedback shortly.

8. TA appointments

- There was a discussion of how individual academic units determine TA qualifications for specific courses. In some instances, faculty members feel that their instructions regarding TA qualifications for specific courses is not being followed, and in these instances, we have seen an increase in faculty workload. It seems as though there is a disconnect between how individual faculty are expressing what qualifications are required from TAs to best support faculty members, and how these qualifications are being communicated with the TAs and with the TSSU across the Academic Units. Jen is going to meet with the TSSU regarding their collective agreement which governs the relationship between the academic units and the TAs and report back to the Executive.

9. Committee reports – none to report.

10. Items for Consultation – January 14th

- i. Some faculty members have expressed reluctance to step forward for the VPPEI search committee without sufficient idea of what the position might entail. While the Association recognizes the final job description will be developed by the committee, SFUFA would like to hear what are envisioned as key components of the job description. We would also like to ask whether this will be an open search, hoping that SFU will undertake a more transparent process than in past searches for senior administrative roles. Finally, we know that SFU has been consulting with all the stakeholder groups who will fall under the new VPPEI portfolio, and would be interested to know what the feedback from the other campus groups has been thus far.
- ii. SFUFA would like an update on the salary anomaly review recommendations. We understood the report was going to be released in late November 2020. When might we expect that report?
- iii. Follow up from budget consultation: Will non-academic units, including Strand Hall and other Senior Administrative portfolios, be subject to the same across-the-board budget cuts being asked of the academic units? Also, regarding the consulting firm, what does

SFU hope to learn by bringing in this firm that is not already readily available information?

- iv. Covid-19 update: when might we anticipate an official announcement regarding method of course delivery for the Fall 2021 semester?

11. Other Business

- Suzanne hosted two sessions for teaching faculty in November and would like to continue to host monthly meetings.

Adjournment. There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am.