

Dear Members:

The following bulletin contains information on the following:

- Collective Agreement implementation and retro pay
- Changes to SFU Email Protocols
- New SFUFA members and process for consideration of possible members
- Hiring Freeze and budget
- Faculty parking
- Academic Discussion Forum Terms of Usage
- Alternate Contacts

Collective Agreement Implementation and Retroactive Pay

Many members have inquired regarding the implementation of the new Collective Agreement and when faculty might expect to see retroactive pay.

SFU has not provided a specific time frame for retroactive pay to be processed. We do appreciate that such work takes time, and that other bargaining units who settled before us needed to be prioritized. We also understand that there were issues with SFU's computer software that caused delays for those other employees. All that said, we do expect the University to move quickly to process retroactive pay. Though we did not expect to see monies processed prior to the end of the calendar year, we have indicated that we expect SFU to ensure that retro payments are made in advance of the February 29th RRSP deadline.

Regarding the new Health Spending Account, we are actively meeting with SFU to finalize the precise terms. Once finalized, it will take some time to implement the program with our benefits provider, Blue Cross. Members are advised to hold receipts so that they can easily be reimbursed once implementation is complete.

As to text of the new Agreement, we anticipate having a formatted draft to review in the coming days. Once we have ensured it is accurate and captures the agreed changes, we and SFU will move as quickly as possible to have the complete text made available.

Changes to SFU Email Protocols

SFU recently announced a number of changes to its email management that caused significant community concern. In response to initiatives by third parties such as Google and Yahoo, the University announced measures that would, among other things, impact alumni accounts and restrict access by external emails to SFU-based email lists. Many faculty members noted the drastic impact such measures would have, and both SFUFA and individual members raised these concerns directly with SFU's senior administration.

SFU has recognized that faculty members require easy and ongoing communication, including via maillists, with a wide range of people and institutions outside of SFU, and that if the current maillist system cannot accommodate the new demands of Google and Yahoo, an alternative must be put into place. We reproduce below a communication from SFU's Chief Information Officer, Brian Stewart, in response to the community pushback.

Thank you to you and your members for taking the time to share your thoughts on the upcoming email practice changes at the SFUFA meeting on Thursday. The discussion clarified that the necessity for faculty to have the ongoing ability to collaborate with large groups of researchers from other universities and organizations, is of similar importance to our ability to be able to contact our students without encumbrance. Furthermore, we understand the urgency and need to have a replacement for this SFU Maillist function in place before the email practice changes take effect on February 1, 2024.

Since learning of the changes Google and Yahoo are implementing to combat spam and phishing attacks, IT Services has been looking at potential alternatives to comply with the new requirements. As shared in our recent meeting, IT Services has identified that the custom-built program SFU Maillist cannot be updated to meet Google and Yahoo's new requirements. Therefore, after February 1, the SFU Maillist will be limited to internal SFU emails only.

Recognizing the importance of SFU Maillist, we are developing a draft list of potential options for group emails that could fit for our needs at SFU. We are also in contact with other post-secondary institutions to understand what solutions they have put in place to manage the changes on their end and identify if any of those solutions can be implemented in our current SFU systems. Our intention is to deploy a replacement by February 1st, with the knowledge that any substitute for Maillist is unlikely to match its range of functionality.

I would like to reassure you that IT Services and the university is committed to finding a solution to support our community through this change and maintain our relationships with external scholars and the global research community.

New SFUFA members and process for consideration of possible members

SFUFA is pleased to welcome a new group of members to the Association. Until recently, those working in the Centre for Educational Excellence (CEE) were members of APSA, which represents administrative and professional staff at SFU. Many of these people, however, have been doing work that is far more closely aligned with faculty, including research and curriculum development, and their primary professional interactions are also with SFUFA members. Following their expression of interest in joining SFUFA, and a careful review of the situation by the Executive, we began working with the group last year to see if their inclusion in the Faculty Association could be arranged. In December, SFU and SFUFA reached agreement in support of the move,

and the BC Labour Relations Board officially formalized the inclusion of some 15 CEE positions in SFUFA. Please join us in welcoming these colleagues to the Faculty Association.

It is not often that new groups join SFUFA, but the question does arise periodically. The following are the issues that the Executive considers when a group approaches us inquiring about SFUFA membership.

First, there is a critical question of whether the group is already unionized. If so, this group of workers already has union representation and, in general, the Association does not consider such groups for membership. In the case of the CEE colleagues, they were members of APSA, but APSA is a professional organization and not a trade union under the law.

If the group is eligible to be considered for membership in the Association, the SFUFA Executive then needs to consider whether SFUFA would be interested in expanding to represent the people in question, and there are several important questions to consider:

- Is the group engaged in the core academic mission of the University, ie, research and/ or provision of teaching and learning services?
- Does the work generally require graduate-level academic training?
- Is the group academically-oriented in relation to such matters as collegial governance and academic freedom?
- Is there likely to be conflict of interest between the group and existing members of the Association?

If all of the above are answered in ways that support potential membership, then the Executive will consult with legal counsel and may request further details on the group in question before taking a vote on whether to support an application for membership. If the decision is taken to support an application, then and only then would SFUFA begin the work of formalizing an application to the Labour Relations Board.

SFUFA is an organization of faculty, focused on the core academic mission of the University and dedicated to supporting the foundational role of faculty in the governance of the University. As the institution grows, however, and as the administration increasingly hires into staff ranks at the expense of faculty ranks, it becomes critical for us to look closely at not just the job titles people are given, but the work they do to advance the academic mission. We are not interested in expanding our numbers for the sake of expanding our numbers, and certainly not at the expense of what makes the Association what it is. If positions are created, however, that look a lot like faculty, and indeed in other institutions would be faculty, then we need to consider those closely so as maintain the principle that it is members of the Association who guide academic decision-making and provision of academic services.

Hiring Freeze and Budget

As previously noted, SFU is facing a budget shortfall. While SFU has committed that faculty appointments will not be affected, we remain concerned that positions that are critical to the research and teaching mission of the University are being cut or left vacant. Counseling and student services, two areas of vital student support, have been cut, as have temporary instruction budgets. Library services, too, have taken a hit, with both Vancouver and Surrey campus libraries reducing hours and closing on weekends. Cuts are sometimes necessary when budgets are unsustainable. The question, then, is what priorities guide budgetary decisions.

While the above areas see services reduced, SFU continues to advertise and hire into middle management and administrative positions. What is more, according to its own [financial statements](#), last year the University spent some \$700,000 on search firms, \$1.3 million on external legal counsel, and over \$3 million on external consultants. Over \$200,000 was spent on Luxury Transport Inc. alone, a company that specializes in luxury transportation between Vancouver and Whistler.

The expenditures in previous budgets are not themselves the issue, and we are pleased that the University is taking steps to prioritize academic programs while it addresses its budget shortfall. Nonetheless, we have not yet seen a commitment by SFU to first eliminate external contractors who perform services that are either unnecessary to the core mission or could be performed by existing employees.

Faculty Parking

SFUFA has regular discussions with SFU regarding general logistical issues such as parking. One common complaint has been the inability of faculty members to find parking spaces when they arrive later in the day – a challenge particularly for those who teach at multiple campuses and face time constraints in getting from one to another.

SFU has agreed to provide a few reserved overflow parking spaces for faculty who arrive in peak periods and are unable to find parking. Initially there will be 4-6 spaces dedicated in North Lot, and more will be made available as possible. SFU will have a parking ambassador available in North Lot to assist faculty members who require one of these spaces.

In addition, SFU recognizes that its parking signage is insufficient, and will be improving signage for spaces that are reserved or dedicated for accessibility.

Any members who have concerns regarding parking are encouraged to contact SFU's director of parking services, David Agosti, at daagosti@sfu.ca

Academic Discussion Forum Terms of Usage

SFUFA maintains an email list for members to share information and discuss issues of concern (academic-discussion@sfu.ca) The list is unmoderated, and there is no requirement to join. The list facilitates communication amongst faculty on a variety of topics of interest to the academic community. The Association has developed terms of usage for the list which all members should bear in mind – these are reproduced below as a reminder.

Members who wish to join the list can do so by contacting our Office Manager, Melanie Lam, at sfufaea@sfu.ca

Academic Discussion List Terms of Usage

As a member of the list (a “User”), I agree to the following terms:

1. The List is an email list. All Users will receive all the mailings sent to the List, and all Users can post to the List.
2. This List is intended to be a self-moderating community discussion forum for current SFUFA members. Users are encouraged to promote fair and reasonable participation amongst Users.
3. Critical discussion should focus on ideas and arguments rather than on individuals. Users agree not to post defamatory, abusive, threatening or other unlawful materials or information.
4. SFUFA does not moderate the List, nor does it deal with disputes arising from the List. SFUFA's participation in the List is limited to adding and deleting members from the List.
5. Users remain solely responsible for any and all content they submit to the List. Users acknowledge that all posts made to the List express the User's views and opinions only and not the administrators, moderators, webmaster, or officers affiliated with SFUFA.
6. The List is provided as a service to SFUFA members. In consideration for the User's inclusion on the List, the User hereby releases, waives, discharges (and covenants not to sue) SFUFA, its Executive Committee members, officers or staff from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions or causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any loss or damage that may be sustained by them as a result of participating in the discussion list.
7. If a User wishes to be removed from the List, they will send a message to sfufaea@sfu.ca with the subject line, “Remove From Academic Staff Discussion List.”
8. These terms of use may be amended by SFUFA from time to time. In such an event, Users will be notified of the change via email at the address that they have subscribed. A User's continued use of the List after

such a notification has been sent will constitute the User's agreement to the revised terms.

Reminder – Alternate Contacts

Given periodic disruption of SFU's internet and email systems, the Association is collecting alternate contacts (email or phone) for members, to be used only in the event that we need to reach you during a time that the University's communications systems are not functioning. Members can send alternate email addresses and/ or phone numbers to SFUFA Executive Director, Brian Green, at bsgreen@sfu.ca