

Minutes of the SFUFA Executive Meeting

Held February 8, 2024

In Halpern 114

9.30 – 12 noon

In attendance:

Bertille Antoine (Economics)
Ronda Arab (English)
Kumari Beck (Education, Chair)
Adena Brons (Library)
David Broun (Physics)
Tim Beischlag (Health Sciences)
Janice Regan (Computing Science)
Mike Sjoerdsma (Engineering Science)
Ljiljana Trajkovic (Engineering Science)
Rochelle Tucker (Health Sciences)

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

Regrets:

The meeting was called to order at 9.36 am.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Approved as circulated.

Moved: Tim Beishchlag/ Adena Brons

Carried.

2. **Approval of the January 18th meeting minutes**

Approved as circulated.

Moved: Bertille Antoine/Tim Beishchlag

Carried.

3. **Business arising**

- Retro collective agreement salary adjustments – The administration reported at the last consult that they are working on this as fast as they can to get this through for faculty, and turned down SFUFA's request to look into the processing of a lump sum adjustment, or to process the GWI's first, noting this can't be done due to the old payroll system that is unable to handle such one-of-a-kind adjustments. SFUFA will include an update on this to members in the next bulletin.
- The Health Spending Account (HSA) update: FR was supposed to meet with SFUFA to review the numbers/data, but this has yet to happen.
- Budget cuts: Further cuts have been made to programs in the FOE and Semester in Dialogue. How can this be justified when SFU is still posting Managerial jobs? Although budget cuts was discussed at the last consult, SFUFA continues to be concerned about the impact of these cuts on the academic mission of the university.
- Bathroom cleanliness across campus: In response to SFUFA's complaints at the last consult. a written status report was circulated to the SFUFA executive from Facilities Services.
- IT Mail lists and changes in email practices: SFUFA raised concerns about the change to SFU Mail Lists at last month's consult meeting and it now appears that SFU is going back to the drawing board to try to find a solution for this issue, and the February deadline is no longer valid.

4. Presidents Report

- Kumari, Mike Sjoerdsma, Jennifer Scott, Adena Brons, Rochelle Tucker and Brian Green attended the CUFA governance conference on the 7th & 8th of February. A report will be circulated soon.
- Kumari is on the AVP Research search committee and noted that interviews are scheduled for next week.
- The Dean of Grad Studies has requested a meeting with SFUFA reps to discuss issues impacting her portfolio, and Kumari, Brian Jennifer and Bertille have volunteered to attend.
- Kumari gave an update on her meetings with the President and VP, PEI.
- New guidelines, more aligned with academic freedom are being developed for faculty recruitment and will be brought forward to the SFUFA/SFU Joint Committee.
- The Office of Aboriginal Peoples and SFU International will now report to the Provost and VPA.
- Liaisons to the Deans – senior people within the department will be appointed to work with Deans as “business” partners.
- A review is being conducted of administration policies related to safety and human rights.
- Krishna Pendakur has reviewed data from the data task force regarding a survey for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion that will be shared with the SFUFA Joint Committee.
- It was noted that members of the Equity Office, Student Services, and other groups will be working with the Respect and Personal Safety Working Group at SFU, to develop safety initiatives and education campaigns to address islamophobia and antisemitism.

5. Executive Director report

- BC has a new Minister of Post-Secondary Education, following the resignation of Selina Robinson.
- SFUFA is still working on 3 pieces, leftover from the recent round of bargaining: Leaves for Teaching Faculty, Long Term Disability process, and CEE members.
- TSSU & SFU are at the Labour Relations Board for the next 3 weeks regarding the Research Assistants, and SFUFA is sitting in those hearings.
- A review of the SFUFA Bylaws is underway and will be done in time for SFUFA’s AGM on April 30th.
- Executive Committee nominations will be conducted in March, and Brian noted he will be contacting current exec members to inquire about their future intentions on the executive.
- SFU has shared a draft version of the newest SFUFA Collective Agreement and minor edits are being made.

6. Member Services report – Jennifer Scott

- SFUFA is working with other unions (Employee Council) on various projects and are trying to establish a meeting time and date with senior administration to discuss budget cuts. CUPE is unhappy about several cuts being made to frontline staff in Student Services and in the Library, and it was noted that most of these positions directly support faculty members in their work.
- Jennifer gave a report on her advocacy cases and noted that there are lots of outstanding member cases which are getting resolved too slowly. In many instances, grievances are needing to be filed before a resolution is achieved with SFU.

7. a) Treasurer Report

- We are 4 months into the new fiscal year which started on October 1, 2023. Most items are on track including legal expenses. Once the retro salary increases for faculty are processed by Payroll, the dues income will also increase. A question was asked as to why the “Office Expense” line item is slightly over budget, and Melanie noted she would investigate and advise. Teaching Releases are usually paid out in

March and the expense is not reflected in this report. It was noted that SFUFA Teaching Release amounts are paid as per the Collective Agreement.

b) BC Minister of Post-Secondary Education resignation

- The Minister called for the resignation of Dr Natalie Knight, a Professor at Langara College, for comments she had made about the Israel/Gaza conflict at a demonstration in October. Even though Langara College had cleared Dr Knight of wrongdoing, Dr Knight was fired from her post following the Ministers public post.
- There was much discussion about this item and the executive noted the following: That SFUFA stands with the statements made by FPSE (Federation of post-secondary Educators), CUFA (Confederation of University Faculty Associations), and CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers) on the matter. The Minister is seen to have politically interfered with the College's internal affairs and undermined their independence and the academic freedom of faculty, which is necessary to preserve, share and advance knowledge. That a minister intervened directly with the College, calling for the firing of a tenured faculty member is viewed as highly inappropriate and CAUT is assisting Langara College to grieve the firing of Dr. Knight.
- Every university and college has an obligation to create a safe environment for everyone, in addition to protecting the academic freedom of faculty. SFUFA will follow up re the details of the grievance once it becomes publicly available.

c) Budget cuts – already addressed under business arising and items for consultation.

8. Committee reports

- Parking committee: SFU handed out an unprecedented number of tickets to violators who had parked in accessible parking spots. Rochelle Tucker will follow up with the Director of Parking about the “Parking Ambassadors” who are not visible most of the time and don't appear give out correct information to faculty looking for parking. SFUFA feels that those who pay for monthly parking – faculty and staff, should be given designated parking spots and the Association will keep pushing for this.
- Equity & Human Rights committee: The committee is now a subcommittee of the SFUFA executive committee, and the terms of reference have been revised to reflect this. It was noted that feedback on the revisions has been sought from committee members. One important recommendation is that committee members are appointed and not elected. Once the executive committee has reviewed the feedback from the Equity Committee, it will approve it. It was noted that Krishna Pendakur will be updating the committee on the data collection piece.
- Community Engagement: Senate – discussion was on the med school and budget cuts and Janice gave an update on this.

9. Items for Consultation – February 15th

- i. Retro pay - there continues to be no commitment as to when our members can expect to see their pay increases processed; we want to know which aspects of the adjustments are so complicated and hear specifically what SFU seems unable to do.
- ii. Budget cuts - SFUFA continues to be very concerned about cuts to important aspects of the academic mission and have three in particular we want to hear about: program cuts in Education, cuts to Library

services, de-funding of the Centre for Dialogue. We want to hear specifically why these areas are not being protected; how is it justified that managerial positions continue to be posted while these cuts happen?

- iii. Protocols for complaints related to academic freedom - we spoke last time of the faculty member whose word had a disclaimer attached after informal complaints were made about their work. We did not hear specifically what protocols SFU will put into place to ensure academic freedom is prioritized when such issues rise again.
- iv. And one new item: We understand that further information on the status of the medical school was provided to Senate and Board members. We would like an update on the latest developments, and particularly any budgetary issues - funding that is expected, and what measures would be in place should there be a shortfall. We also understand there are a few models for governance of the med school being considered - we would like to hear what these are, and which SFU is currently inclined towards.

10. Other Business - none.

11. Adjournment. There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.