



SFU NOW Nights or Weekends: From the Cable Technician to the Tailor

**CAUCE 2015 Conference Presentation
May 28, 2015**

**Kim Hockey, Joti Muker, and Yvonne Tabin
Simon Fraser University
Lifelong Learning**



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Session Outline

- **The Context: SFU**
 - **The Program: SFU NOW - Nights or Weekends**
 - **Our Students: Expectations and Realities**
 - **Admissions Policies: The Good Ones, the Gaps**
 - **Overcoming Policy Challenges: What We Do**
 - **Admission Prep (Quick Admit)**
 - **Future directions. . . Time for discussion**
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SFU Background

- 30,000 undergraduate students (22,800 FTEs)
 - 5,300 graduate students (3,300 FTEs)
 - Comprehensive university, 8 faculties + LL
 - 2nd largest university in BC
 - Established in 1965 (50 years)
 - 3 campuses: Burnaby, Vancouver, Surrey
 - “Community engaged, research driven, student focused”
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A Changing University Demographic

- Students study and work (university is expensive)
 - 53% of SFU students are employed/self-employed
 - 11% work 30 or more hours per week
 - 20% work 20 to 29 hours per week
 - 42% work 10 to 19 hours per week
- Students have other responsibilities and commitments
- Students expect their educational needs to be met: client/customer



SFU NOW: Background

- Degrees for adult students working 30+ hours per week
- Evening and weekend scheduling at Vancouver campus
- Not cohort-based
- Prioritized enrolment (3 weeks)
- SFU admissions requirements
- SFU policies
- SFU tuition
- SFU degrees
- SFU courses





SFU NOW: Programming

- Four majors: CMNS, CRIM, POL, SA
- Seven minors (+ ENGL, HUM, IS)
- Possibility of Business Minor
- All prerequisites
- All electives
- . . . through evening and weekend



SFU NOW Program Office

Centralized office for:

- Student support and information
- Marketing and administration
- Program and course planning
- Liaison with departments



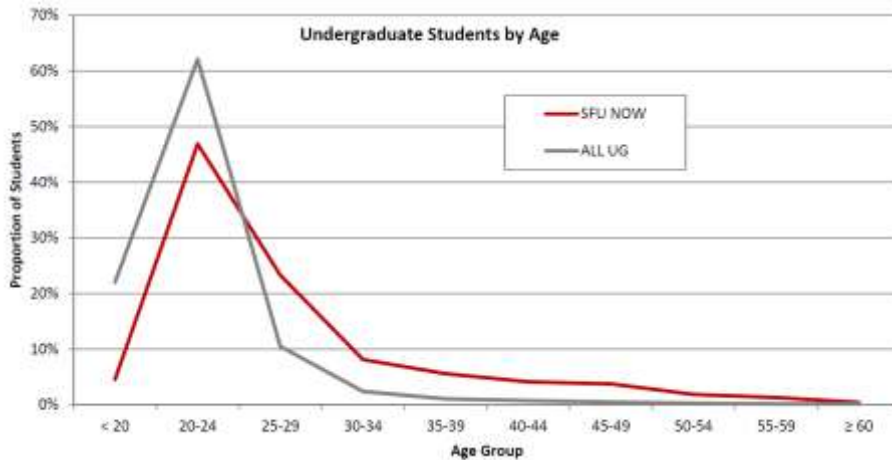
Who We Expected

- 35 to 45 year olds
- Working full-time: 40 hours per week or more
- 9 to 5 Monday to Friday schedules
- Family commitments
- A partial degree or no higher education
- Completing a degree to advance a career



Who We Got

- Younger students
- Multiple and varied job responsibilities:
 - shift work
 - flexible work schedules
 - multiple part-time jobs
 - self-employment
 - co-op terms
- Other responsibilities
 - child, elder or spousal care
- Multiple and varied academic histories and careers



Who They Are

- Tailor and DJ
- Cable technician, ironman, and ballroom dancer
- Lifeguard
- Published poet
- Chinese immigrant with young children
- African refugee with grown children
- Single parent
- Stay-at-home parent
- Co-op student
- Indigenous student



Motivations

- Job advancement
 - Career change
 - Canadian degree
 - Unfinished business
 - Personal interest
 - Current SFU students seeking flexibility
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Academic Backgrounds

- International degrees or partial credentials
 - Canadian degrees (2nd degree students)
 - Previous college/university credit
 - Associate Degree holders
 - Previously required-to-withdraw (SFU and other)
 - Non-transferable college credentials and courses
 - No previous college or university study
 - Current SFU students
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Admission Requirements

- English Language Requirement
 - High School English
 - Transferable English course (W: Writing)
 - TOEFL/IELTS
- Quantitative/Analytical Skills Requirement
 - High School Math
 - Transferable Q-certified course (Q: Quantitative)



Our Students - on paper

- No HS English or Math
- HS English and/or Math scores below the minimum
- No transcripts: civil strife, war, school no longer exists
- Only one copy of transcript per lifetime



Our Students - in reality

Have developed:

- Math skills - mathematical reasoning
- English skills - speaking, reading, and writing
- . . . through life and work experience and non-transferable course work

Have developed maturity and confidence and have overcome or resolved previous roadblocks and challenges

**** Old transcripts are no longer relevant**



Policy Challenges: Admissions

- No pre-admissions advising
- No PLAR process
- Diverse Qualifications (DQ) policy excludes Required to Withdraw (RTW) students (and minimum required GPA is 2.0)
- Mature students (23+) must meet the term competitive GPA (and fewer than 24 transfer credits)



Policy Challenges

- English language requirement:
 - TOEFL/IELTS testing for adults who have lived and worked in an English speaking environment
 - English-speaking school in a non-English speaking country
- Withdrawal Under Extenuating Circumstances (WE): five-year limit
- RTW: No forgiveness policy



A 9 to 5 university in a 24/7 world

Most student services and courses available only during business hours





SFU NOW Services

- Evening information sessions
 - Personal information sessions (phone or in-person)
 - Direct access
 - Immediate callback/email reply
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SFU NOW - Admissions

- Provide pre-admissions information
 - Preliminary assessment of transcripts
 - Liaise with Admissions for preliminary transcript review
 - Advise on basis of admission
 - Guide/track students through the admissions process
 - Advocate for student admission: special acceptance
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SFU NOW - Admitted Students

- Fall term orientation
- Academic options evening
- Two workshops per term
- Updates on university dates and deadlines
- Connect students with available services
- Seek information on student's behalf



Supportive University Policies

- Online: 300+ courses annually
- Tri-semester system
- SFU: Minimum one course per year to remain "active"
- SFU NOW: Minimum one SFU NOW course per year
- Simple reactivation process
- Withdrawals and WE
- Basis of Admission: Readmit, Mature, DQ
- Foundations of Academic Numeracy/Literacy Courses (FAN and FAL)





A 9 to 5 university?

Extended/evening hours for:

- Advising
- Student Learning Commons
- Registration/information desk



Admission Prep ("Quick Admit")

Who:

- do not meet SFU's admission requirements
- RTW student eligible after five years away

What:

- May enrol in a subset of SFU NOW courses without being admitted to SFU (including Q and W courses)
- Maximum 24 credits then must withdraw or apply to SFU





Admission Prep ("Quick Admit")

Why:

- Meet SFU's Q and W requirements
- Increase GPA
- Comply with SFU's RTW return policy



Admission Prep (Quick Admit)

- Maximum one course in first term
- No Q (Quantitative) or W (Writing) courses in first term
- Restricted to two courses per term
- All SFU policies and fees apply
- Courses and GPA would "transfer" to SFU





Admission Prep (Quick Admit)

- Must “apply” through SFU NOW
- “In-house “application” process
- Application fee
- Writing sample
- Self-evaluation options for appropriate & course selection (e.g. Phil, Econ, Math, Stats)



Changes to SFU policies

- Longer WE eligibility
- Forgiveness policy
- Alternate testing options
- FAL/FAN for program credit (or no GPA calculation)





Other Initiatives

- Prior Learning
- Laddering
- Credit Bank



Questions/Discussion





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