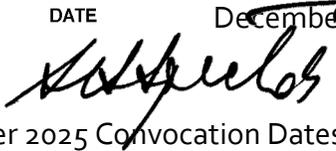


**MEMORANDUM**

ATTENTION Senate DATE December 12, 2024
FROM Stephen Spector
Chair, Senate Calendar Committee 
RE: Revision to Academic Dates – Summer 2025 Convocation Dates

On Monday, December 9, 2024, the Calendar Committee reviewed, for approval by Senate, a revision to the 2024/2025 academic year.

The committee was asked to look at revising the previously approved schedule for 2024/2025 to add one additional ceremony on the afternoon of Monday, June 9, 2025 to the June (Spring) 2025 Convocation ceremony dates.

The rationale for this request is to allow for a reduction in the size of each ceremony in order to provide graduands and guests with the best in-person graduation experience possible.

The Calendar Committee recommends:

MOTION:

“That Senate approve the revised schedule of academic dates for the Summer 2025 term by adding one additional ceremony on the afternoon of Monday, June 9, 2025 to the June/Spring 2025 convocation ceremony. Spring 2025 Convocation will now run from June 9th to June 13th, 2025.”

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Calendar Committee **DATE** December 6, 2024
FROM Sue Porter, Director, Ceremonies and **PAGES**
Events
RE: Spring 2025 Convocation Ceremonies – adding one ceremony to Monday, June 9, 2025

Due to the rising numbers of SFU graduates, particularly for June convocation ceremonies, it has become necessary to add an extra (ninth) ceremony in June 2025. The best day/time of that ceremony must be approved and confirmed by the Calendar Committee before the end of 2024 in order to have time to successfully execute this plan.

BACKGROUND

- SFU has seen consistent growth of graduating class sizes with more new seats coming in the coming years.
- In June 2015, an eighth ceremony was added on Tuesday morning of Convocation week to increase capacity.
- The added capacity is now being exceeded – for example, in June 2024, six of the eight ceremonies were over the 400-grad threshold (see Appendix).

CONSIDERATIONS

- Student experience while attending post-secondary is the number one indicator of their engagement post-graduation. Ensuring convocation ceremonies are a comfortable size and length is a key component in ensuring a positive lasting impression. A negative impression impacts the SFU brand and reputation, and alumni engagement with SFU.
- Large graduating classes contribute directly to the length of ceremonies, event capacity issues and overcrowding, , and parking availability for the university community.
- The ideal length of a convocation ceremony is about 1.5 hours. Ceremonies with numbers exceeding 400 graduands push ceremonies past two hours in length, resulting in graduands and their guests leaving ceremonies early, an overall poorer guest experience, and potential negative impacts on SFU’s reputation as a result. Longer ceremonies also mean less time for staff to reset between ceremonies, and the potential for increased overtime usage.

CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration was made to add a ninth ceremony to an existing ceremony day; however, this scenario would result in significant logistical and staffing challenges including:

- requiring significant amount of overtime for internal and external support crews on the extended day, and therefore a higher budget request for the added ceremony.
- increased difficulty in finding staff support, if they are asked to volunteer outside regular work hours
- major communications and logistical challenges resulting from having one convocation day following a different scheduled with more ceremonies than the other days
- higher risk of ceremony delays if we attempt to shorten the time between ceremonies in order to accommodate an extended, single-day schedule
- increased risk of staff burnout – the Chancellor’s Dinner is already held on the Thursday of Convocation week, so adding a second fourteen-hour day would simply stretch our staff too thin.

RECOMMENDED OPTION:

Add a single ceremony on the Monday afternoon

- This option is most cost effective, as it will not lead to significant increases in overtime
- Will require moving the Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) Honouring Feast, which is currently held on Monday afternoon, to an evening event, likely on the Wednesday
- The Beedie School of Business has the largest number of graduands and, therefore, it is recommended that this ceremony be split into two, with separate ceremonies for undergraduate and graduate programs. The aim is to schedule both ceremonies on the same day, making it easier for the Beedie School of Business Dean to attend both.
- Will require a coordinated effort on the part of Ceremonies & Events, Student Services, and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure we are able to recruit sufficient staff volunteers to support the requirements of nine ceremonies (e.g., regalia support, parchment hand out, ushering, ticket scanning, regalia room support)

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ADDING AN ADDITIONAL CEREMONY

- Greater challenge to recruit the number of volunteers needed to support nine ceremonies
- Increase to overall convocation budget
- Possible confusion of graduands and guests with regards to the added ceremony day. Will require a clear communications plan.
- Impact to and resistance from the faculties that are scheduled for the Monday, or whose ceremony day has changed from past ceremonies
- June Senate meeting may need to be cancelled/moved online as it occurs on the Monday of convocation week.

Please feel to reach out to me if you need any further information.

Sincerely,

Sue Porter (Director)

cc. Kris Nordgren, Assistant Registrar, Senate & Academic Services

Tom Nault, Registrar and Executive Direct, Student Enrolment

Dina Shafey, Associate Registrar, Information, Records and Registration