

Student Issues Backgrounder 2025



Students have been some of the hardest hit by our cost-of-living crisis. Limited availability of student housing and long commutes to campus on overcrowded buses have worsened our housing crisis and transportation services. Excessive demand for under-resourced student foodbanks has worsened our food security crisis. Limited protections for campus tenants, reduced revenues from a university funding model that's over-reliant on international students, and limited workers' rights for Graduate Research Assistants have only made these problems worse.

The following Student Unions and organizations here today, representing BC's largest universities, are grateful to have the privilege of meeting with you and look forward to working in collaboration with government to accomplish more for students:

- Alliance of BC Students
- Alma Mater Society of The University of British Columbia Vancouver
- Capilano Students' Union
- Graduate Student Society of the University of British Columbia
- University of British Columbia Student's Union Okanagan
- University of the Fraser Valley Student Union Society
- University of Victoria Students' Society
- Royal Roads University Student Association
- Simon Fraser Student Society

This is why we are recommending that the provincial government take the following actions:

Combat the Affordability Crisis

1. Create the Student Food Security Grant, committing an annual grant worth \$1.50 per student enrolled in a public BC post-secondary institution to the student union representing that institution to fund student food bank jobs.
2. Increase the maximum annual BC Access Grant to \$5,000 per year and extend grant access to graduate students.
3. Include commitments to increased student financial aid in the 2026 Provincial Budget.

Enshrine On-Campus Student Rights

4. Create a province-wide policy to protect the rights of student tenants for safety, affordability, and accessibility in on-campus student housing.
5. Amend the BC Labour Code to ensure student workers are counted as employees.
6. Allocate \$5 million in funding to ensure the BC Labour Relations Board can process cases within their allotted 180-day timeframe.

Protect Affordable Education

7. Protect the 2% tuition cap for domestic students.
8. Extend the 2% tuition cap to international students.
9. Enforce the Ministry's International Education Guidelines.

Prioritize Student Safety

10. Create a Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Fund of \$5 million that post-secondary institutions and student organizations can access to operate sexualized violence prevention offices and services on campuses across BC.
11. Amend the *Sexual Violence Policy Act* to require all public and private post-secondary institutions' sexual violence policies meet the 11 minimum standards identified by Students For Consent Culture.

Invest in Fast and Efficient Public Transportation

12. Expedite the release of the Business Case for the UBC SkyTrain Extension, publicly release and commit to a comprehensive timeline for the funding and delivery of the UBC SkyTrain Extension, and work with the Government of Canada to release a combined funding agreement for the construction of the UBC SkyTrain Extension.
13. Include a combined funding commitment for the UBC SkyTrain Extension in the 2026 Provincial Budget.
14. Instate a \$10 flat-rate ferry fare for post-secondary students travelling as foot passengers, taking shape as a one-year trial.
15. Adequately fund BC Transit and TransLink to increase operational capacity, ensuring that university-bound routes that serve students have adequate total service hours.

These changes will help support students by ensuring that every single student has access to the essentials of housing near campus, adequate nutrition, efficient transportation, labour rights, safe campuses, and sensible tuition. We look forward to continued work with the government and key stakeholders to ensure action is taken on these priorities.



Student Food Security Grant



Create the Student Food Security Grant, committing an annual grant worth \$1.50 per student enrolled in a public BC post-secondary institution to the student union representing that institution to fund student food bank jobs.

Introduction

Across BC, the cost of living poses challenges for people from all walks of life. Since 2020, we've seen a 20.19% inflation rate according to Bank of Canada CPI data, and the cost of renting in Metro Vancouver has increased by 36.6% since 2019.¹ Prices for groceries purchased in stores rose 11.4% in 2022.³ Students are one of the populations hardest hit by the cost of living crisis, based on the most recent data from each institution, 46% of UBC Vancouver students,⁴ 42% of UBC Okanagan students,⁵ 56% of SFU students,⁶ and 63.8% of UVic students are food insecure.⁷

At the province's largest university campus, UBC Vancouver, 82% of students and 70% of children in student households reported being moderately or severely food insecure.⁸ This issue affects students at campuses across the province, which is why we are striving to create a long-term structural solution to adequately fund student union food banks.

For a number of student unions, their foodbanks are underfunded or understaffed. At UBC and UVic, hiring staff to meet rapidly growing needs means that resources that could be put towards food procurement need to be spent towards staffing. At SFU, UFV, CapU, and UBCO, a lack of staffing leads to difficulties managing full-time foodbanks, instead relying on a number of smaller food security initiatives. At smaller universities and colleges across BC, there may be a lack of food security initiatives at all.

All student unions suffer from a lack of resources to maintain food security initiatives, which is why we are calling on the provincial government **to combat food insecurity on public post-secondary campuses by creating the Student Food Security Grant, committing an annual grant worth \$1.50 per student enrolled in a public BC post-secondary institution to the student union**

representing that institution to fund student food bank jobs. Using the 2022/2023 enrollment set out in a 2025 report by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Future Skills, the cost to fund this entire grant program, create student jobs on every campus, and ensure every student union can provide food security to their students, would be just \$647,943.⁹

Section 1: Increasing Usage of Food Banks

With the rising cost of living, food bank usage has increased across BC, with students being one of the most affected demographics. According to Food Banks BC,¹⁰ since 2019, the number of individuals accessing food banks in British Columbia has risen by 32%, with the number of visits by households increasing by 81% from 2019 to 2024. Student union food banks have been disproportionately impacted by this rise in food insecurity, as students with less access to financial resources increasingly turn to these food banks for support. For example, BC's largest student union food bank, the AMS Food Bank, has seen an 1800% increase in usage between 2019 and 2025 (see figure 1),¹¹ clearly showing that students are one of the groups most impacted by rising food insecurity. At the UVSS, food bank usage increased by 1090.5% from spring 2020 to spring 2024.¹²

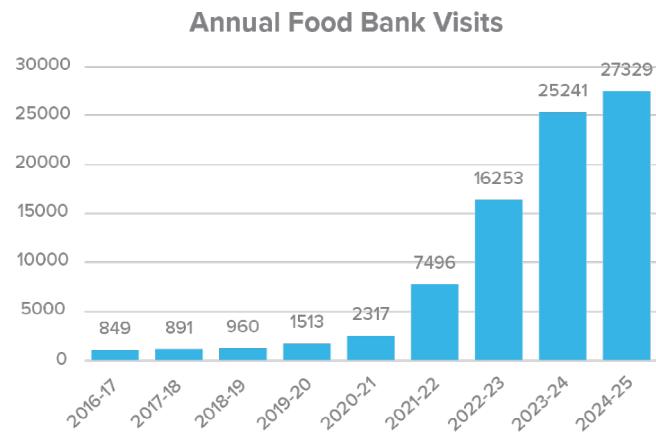


Figure 1: Number of annual visits to the AMS food bank over the last 9 academic sessions

This increase in usage is both unsustainable for student unions to handle effectively and is also bound to continue because of structural barriers that students currently face, such as PhD stipends being considerably below the living wage (see figure 2). There is also no minimum funding guarantee for master's students. This makes the role of student food banks especially crucial at BC's research universities, with 49% of visits to the AMS Food Bank being made by graduate students at UBC, despite comprising only 20% of the student population. This is also true for SFSS Food Services, with over 60% of the students accessing services being enrolled in graduate studies.

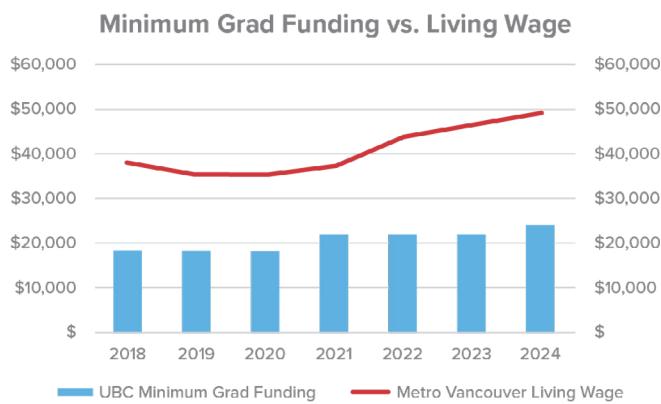


Figure 2: UBC Minimum PhD funding vs Metro Vancouver Living Wage

Additionally, many universities and colleges in BC have little to no support for students facing food insecurity. SFU, the provinces' second largest post-secondary institution, and a research university with thousands of graduate students, has no food bank, instead relying on a food pantry overseen by the Student Society that is almost completely sustained through grants acquired externally with no stable reserve fund, as well as a program where students can apply for \$50 worth of food certificates to Nesters Market and T&T Supermarket once per semester.

Many other smaller universities and colleges have community pantries or cupboards, but no consistent, reliable food bank service. Students who attend colleges without existing food bank infrastructure in smaller communities, such as North Island College or Northern Lights College, are especially at risk, as their communities at-large may

lack consistent food bank services. For instance, Port Hardy¹³ and Fort Nelson's¹⁴ food banks only give out food every two weeks, Campbell River's¹⁵ only once a month, and the main food bank in Dawson Creek¹⁶ is scrambling to keep up with increasing demand, seeing 800 visits in September 2025, double its average.

Section 2: Student Food Security Grant Program

With increasing food bank demand, student unions, which operate as non-profit organizations with tight budgets, are put under financial pressure to hire and pay enough workers (on top of hundreds of volunteers) to maintain smooth operations, in addition to bearing the costs of transportation and equipment. According to data from the AMS as well as the UVSS, a student union spends on average \$1.50 on labour costs for their food bank per every student at their institution, so if for example, a college had 10,000 students, their student union can expect to pay about \$15,000 annually in labour costs to operate a food bank which adequately meets student needs. Student union food banks typically hire a few part-time students who work 10-20 hours a week for around \$20 an hour.

Post-Secondary Institution	Student Population	Total FSI Staff Funding	Staff Hours (Assuming \$25/Hour Pay)
UBC Vancouver	60,491	\$90,736	3,629
SFU	37,037	\$55,555	2,222
UVic	22,000	\$33,000	1,320
UFV	15,960	\$23,940	958
CapU	12,700	\$19,050	762
UBC Okanagan	11,748	\$17,622	705
RRU	4,250	\$6,375	255

Note: The institutions listed are those in attendance at Lobby Week, this list is not comprehensive of all BC Post-Secondary Institutions that would benefit from the Student Food Security Grant program.

The exponential increase in food bank usage has put student unions in a difficult financial state, as student unions largely operate on student fees and have a low budgetary ceiling, while having to keep up with food bank demand. This is why we ask that the government help student unions combat food insecurity by creating the Student Food Security Grant, committing an annual grant worth \$1.50 per student enrolled in a public BC post-secondary institution to the student union representing from that institution. This would be just \$647,943, according to the 2025 report.¹⁷

In the case of post-secondary institutions where the student union does not have the capacity to organize a food bank, this money could be transferred to the student union to their institution. For example, at UFV, the university administration manages the operation of the on-campus foodbank.

This funding would be used to fund student jobs, creating good, on-campus work where students have the opportunity to help their peers. This money would be proportionately allocated to each student union based on their enrolment. For established food banks like those at UBC and

UVic, this funding would help ease financial strain caused by increased use. For smaller food banks and student unions without food banks, the funds could help hire a student or two who could build/expand their food bank service, which is especially important for colleges in non-urban environments where alternative food banks could be difficult to access or low capacity.

This proposal would help tackle food insecurity and create on-campus jobs at relatively little cost. By directly providing grants to student unions to operate food banks on campus, the provincial government will specifically contribute to alleviating the food insecurity crisis and create a more supportive environment for education. Establishing a Food Security Grant Program can provide essential financial support to post-secondary students, ensuring their well-being and contributing to a healthier and more productive future workforce, while creating good, high-impact job opportunities for students. By proactively addressing this issue, the province can play a vital role in ensuring that no university student must make the choice between paying for tuition or eating.

¹<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

²[https://www.biv.com/news/real-estate/vancouver-housing-apartment-monthly-rent-comparison-cost-2019-2024-8635594#:~:text=At%20%2C280%2C%20Vancouver%20had%20the,or%20under%20\\$500%20were%20removed.&text=Have%20a%20story%20idea?](https://www.biv.com/news/real-estate/vancouver-housing-apartment-monthly-rent-comparison-cost-2019-2024-8635594#:~:text=At%20%2C280%2C%20Vancouver%20had%20the,or%20under%20$500%20were%20removed.&text=Have%20a%20story%20idea?)

³<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1810000201>

⁴<https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025-AMS-Academic-Experience-Survey-Report.pdf>

⁵<https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/examples-and-research/why-42-ubco-students-are-food-insecure-and-how-were-working-change#:~:text=After%20a%20pre%2DCOVID%20poll,do%20to%20improve%20food%20security.>

⁶<https://sfss.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SFSS-Food-Bank-Research-Project.pdf>

⁷<https://vicnews.com/2025/04/12/letter-uvic-needs-to-do-more-to-address-student-food-insecurity/>

⁸https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/202425-Services-Report_Final.pdf

⁹https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/data-research/stp/stp2023_international_research_results_2025-02-07_final2.pdf

¹⁰<https://www.foodbanksbc.com/hunger-report-2024>

¹¹AMS 2024 Food Bank - EOY Report

¹²<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1awhljKHruVr-ggG5NPvVmdcNm88zGV6v5nQmCnOWXjY/edit?gid=1658599942#gid=1658599942>

¹³<https://www.vifoodbank.org/port-hardy-individuals>

¹⁴<https://www.facebook.com/p/Fort-Nelson-Food-Bank-100083455536150/>

¹⁵<https://crfoodbank.ca/>

¹⁶<https://www.cjdctv.com/news/article/dawson-creek-food-bank-struggles-to-keep-up-as-visits-almost-double/>

¹⁷https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/data-research/stp/stp2023_international_research_results_2025-02-07_final2.pdf

Increase the BC Access Grant



To ensure education remains accessible for students, we recommend that the Government of British Columbia:

- 1. Increase the maximum annual BC Access Grant to \$5,000 per year and extend grant access to graduate students.**
- 2. Include commitments to increased student financial aid in the 2026 Provincial Budget.**

In the AMS's 2025 Academic Experience Survey Report, more than 52% of students experienced financial hardship related to housing, 46% have experienced food insecurity in the last year, and 37% rely on government student loans.¹ The 2024/25 Academic Experience Survey revealed that 22% of UBC students indicated that financial issues are a barrier to their ability to continue their education at UBC, with 91% of federal student aid recipients expressing concern about covering basic costs. At the AMS Food Bank, usage increased by 1800% between 2019 and 2025.² At the UVSS, food bank usage increased by 1090.5% from spring 2020 to spring 2024.³ At CapU, students skipped an average of 6 meals per month.⁴ The Lower Mainland is a very unaffordable region, with Vancouver as the most expensive city in Canada, with living costs averaging \$2,600 to \$3,600 and the average rent being \$2,823 a month.⁵

Since the creation of the BC Access Grant in 2020, the amounts students are eligible for have not kept pace with the rising cost of living; the grant has remained capped at \$4,000 without change. Using bank of Canada CPI data, a 20.19% inflation rate since 2020 would require the BC Access Grant to be increased to \$4,800 to match inflation.⁶ Vancouver rent prices have increased by 36.6% since 2019;⁷ if the BC Access Grant were pegged to the cost of housing, it would be over \$5,400 in 2025.

To support students through the cost-of-living crisis and lower barriers to post-secondary education, we urge the Government of BC to increase the annual maximum BC Access Grant to \$5,000.

Additionally, even though graduate students are among those who demonstrate the greatest financial need, the grant is currently limited to undergraduate students. The AMS's 2024/25 Services Report shows that, despite comprising only 20% of UBC's student population, graduate students accounted for 49% of food bank visits. Graduate students are also more likely to have families, increased financial burdens, and less access to financial aid. Due to the increased burdens and needs demonstrated by graduate students, we urge the Government of BC to ensure that graduate students are able to access the BC Access Grant.

¹<https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-AMS-Academic-Experience-Survey-Report.pdf>

² AMS 2024 Food Bank - EOY Report

³<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1awhljKHruVr-ggG5NPvVmdcNm88zGV6v5nQmCnOWXjY/edit?gid=1658599942#gid=1658599942>

⁴ CSU Student Experience Survey 2024-2025 Q84

⁵<https://rentals.ca/blog/canada-national-rent-reports>

⁶<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

⁷[https://www.biv.com/news/real-estate/vancouver-housing-apartment-monthly-rent-comparison-cost-2019-2024-8635594#:~:text=At%20\\$2%2C280%2C%20Vancouver%20had%20the,or%20under%20\\$500%20were%20removed.&text=Have%20a%20story%20idea?](https://www.biv.com/news/real-estate/vancouver-housing-apartment-monthly-rent-comparison-cost-2019-2024-8635594#:~:text=At%20$2%2C280%2C%20Vancouver%20had%20the,or%20under%20$500%20were%20removed.&text=Have%20a%20story%20idea?)

Student Tenancy Rights Policy



GSS
UBC VANCOUVER



simon fraser
student society



We are calling upon the provincial government to work with post-secondary institutions and student unions, using the 2016 Rent with Rights Recommendations, 2022 Leading Practices report, and this brief as frameworks to create a province-wide policy to protect the rights of student tenants for safety, affordability, and accessibility in on-campus student housing.

Introduction

In 2002, the provincial government under Premier Gordon Campbell removed student housing operated by post-secondary institutions from the BC Residential Tenancy Act (RTA). Due to this legislative change, student tenants living in on-campus housing are not afforded the same rights and protections as other tenants in BC. Student housing contracts are often one-sided, without due attention to procedural fairness, and often not meeting the standard of rights expected in other rental units such as reasonable privacy for the tenant or a fair appeals process.

The lack of rights afforded to on-campus student tenants is especially worrying given the power imbalance between students and their institutions. The post-secondary institution already holds power over a student's academic future, and further holds power over a student's living situation without any legislative framework to govern it.

Since the 2002 amendment to the RTA, student groups have repeatedly called for a framework of on-campus tenancy rights. Student tenancy rights has been a recurring priority in student asks to the Provincial Government on lobby trips, has been in student lobby briefs since at least 2012, and notably the AMS, SFSS, UVSS, and ABCS launched the Rent with Rights campaign (RWR) in 2016 following a 20% rent increase at UBC in 2014.¹

Given the long history of advocacy on this issue and the importance of ensuring post-secondary students have rental rights while still meeting the flexibility and unique needs required of on-campus housing we want to see the provincial government bring in legislation to support student tenancy rights.

Section 1: Current lack of rights

Due to the lack of provincial legislation governing student tenant rights on campus, students have no RTA enshrined tenancy rights.

A few key rights missing include;

- Section 29, which prohibits landlords from entering a unit without at least 24 hours' notice, protecting the tenant's rights to privacy and personal space
- Sections 41, 42, and 43, which limit rent increases to once-per-year and tie rent increases to the provincial caps
- Section 47 and 49, which govern the types of cause for evictions

In the 2016 RWR Campaign led by the AMS, UVSS, SFSS, and ABCS, 9 recommendations were made for the rights that the Provincial Government should guarantee for on-campus student tenants. Focusing on a broad aspect of student housing issues from ensuring rights and responsibilities are explicitly laid out in residence contracts to protections against unjust evictions, this campaign has provided a framework for continued advocacy and has informed the provincial government's 2022 Leading Practices in Student Housing Agreements report, which is explored further in the following section.

For example, by comparing the RWR recommendations with the 2025/2026 UBC Residence Contract, we can see that only 2/9 recommendations are met;

Rent with Rights Campaign (RWR)	2025/26 UBC Residence Contract
<p>Recommendation 1: Housing contracts explicitly list the rights of tenants, along with corresponding responsibilities of the tenant.</p>	<p>Recommendation has been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p>Section 2.01 of the contract is titled “Statement of Rights and Accompanying Responsibilities of the Individual within the Residence Community,” and links to UBC Housing’s website where a full list of individual rights can be found.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Housing contracts include an outline of a clear and specific process for tenants to report problems in their residence</p>	<p>Recommendation has been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p>The contract describes how students can raise concerns with their Residence Life Manager and submit maintenance requests online through the Online Service Centre. Still, there is no neutral third party to oversee disputes like the RWR campaign suggests.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Barring emergency or unforeseen circumstances, the institution must provide posted notice of entry to a unit at least 24 hours prior to said entry. The notice must also include a window of time in which that entry will occur. That window of time can be no greater than 72 hours. Housing may only enter rooms with less than 24 hours in the event that there is an emergency, and entry is necessary to protect life and/or property.</p>	<p>Recommendation has NOT been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p>While there is notice given in some cases, Section 1.25 enforces the university’s right to enter your accommodation unannounced in both emergencies and a range of other circumstances, such as investigating pests, fulfilling a maintenance request by a previous occupant, or to take action to address an ongoing source of disruption or nuisance.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Transfers between housing units are only permitted for reasons of safety, extended repairs, or as requested by a tenant. In the event that a room switch is initiated by the institution, the tenant should not be required to pay new residence or meal plan fees. This rule does not apply in cases where an individual’s conduct is the reason for the housing transfer.</p>	<p>Recommendation has NOT been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p><i>Section 1.09 states that: “The University reserves the right, without notice, to assign or change roommates, to change accommodation assignments and/or to consolidate vacancies by requiring you or other residents to move from one accommodation to another. This may include requiring you to move to a different residence area, floor, building or different type of room or unit. If this happens to you, you are required to pay the residence fees stipulated for the new accommodation, including the meal plan, if applicable.”</i></p>

Rent with Rights Campaign (RWR)	2025/26 UBC Residence Contract
<p>Recommendation 5: All institutions have a Community Standards Appeals Process, which will be a transparent committee group, composed of students and the option of faculty or staff.</p>	<p>Recommendation has NOT been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p>The process for appeals outlined in Section 2.03 excludes student decision-makers, with the primary decision maker being the Residence Life Manager who assigns sanctions and standards points. The policy also states that <i>“You may appeal the assignment of standards points and/or the sanctions imposed according to the procedures outlined by Student Housing and Community Services in its residence standards appeal brochure, as it may be amended from time to time.”</i> This gives zero independent judgement to the appeals process.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: In the event that a student is served with an eviction notice, they must receive at minimum, one month's posted notice, regardless of the violation. If a resident has not paid their rent, the notice period is shortened to 10 days. The one month notice period can be waived only by a predesignated university official, in situations where safety and wellbeing of residents is at risk. In all cases, students still have the right to appeal the eviction through the Community Standards Appeals Process.</p>	<p>Recommendation has NOT been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p>In addition to eviction being immediate if you lose four standards point, Section 2.03 also states that <i>“If the Associate Vice-President of Student Housing and Community Services, or their designate, is of the opinion that you pose a threat to the well-being or ability to study of yourself, or any other resident, then they may without notice impose immediate sanctions including eviction from your accommodation, a ban from all residence property, including your accommodation, your residence building, parking lots, and surrounding grounds, and termination of this Contract.”</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 7: The housing contract must explain what tenants can expect during a maintenance disruption, in addition to repair timelines. If residents believe that an outage has not been adequately addressed, they can file a complaint and request for compensation with the institution. If the institution does not approve the request, the decision can be appealed to the Community Standards Appeals Committee.</p>	<p>Recommendation has NOT been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p>The residence contract in Section 1.35 explains expectations for maintenance periods broadly but does this explicitly to reserve the right to relocate students, whilst denying compensation: <i>“Residents may be required to temporarily or permanently relocate to facilitate construction or renovations to their residence area. There will be no compensation or reduction to your residence fees due to disruption and/or relocation.”</i></p>

Rent with Rights Campaign (RWR)	2025/26 UBC Residence Contract
<p>Recommendation 8: The housing contract state that on continuing tenancies, the rate increases can be no more than that year's inflation rate + 2%, and can only happen once every 12 months. Tenants must receive 3 whole months' notice, in writing, of any rent increases. In the event of a proposed increase that is larger than the allowable rate, schools must engage in student consultation, and submit a proposal to the BC Ministry of Advanced Education.</p>	<p>Recommendation has NOT been meaningfully actioned.</p> <p>None of these protections exist, and UBC has historically increased rents by more than inflation rate + 2% in recent years post-COVID.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: Housing contracts must explicitly list a calendar date as to the start and the end of the tenancy agreement. Institutions cannot evict residents prior to the end of the tenancy agreement, unless the student is served with eviction notice for community infractions. The contract end date must be at least 24 hours after the end of the official examination period as determined by the institution's academic calendar.</p> <p>In the event that a student must stay past the contract end date, the University must provide explicit directions on how to temporarily extend the length of the contract.</p>	<p>Recommendation has been partially actioned.</p> <p>While Section 1.02 specifies contract dates, there are a large range of reasons that a tenancy can be terminated before the end date, often with no time before eviction. There is also no consideration for exam timing clashing with move-out dates, although these may not overlap in practice. The section on overholding, Section 1.16, does not specify any mechanism for students in special circumstances to request staying in residence past their move-out date, rather, the section describes the use of force that will be permitted to be used against you to remove you from the property. The only provision for overholding described is that it is only permitted if agreed in writing by the AVP.</p>

Many smaller universities with fewer student housing units have shorter, less developed student housing contracts and may meet none of the nine recommendations. For example, Capilano University's main North Vancouver campus' student housing contract is only five pages. The contract:

- Does not list any tenant rights
- Does not describe any process to resolve issues in residence
- Does not mention entry rights
- "Reserves the right to, at any time and without notice, change roommate, building, and/or room assignments" while being "not responsible for any moving costs" (Section 3.8)
- Not specify any appeals process
- Says that the university can terminate the agreement "for the convenience of the University and without cause" (Section 6.1.5)
- Specifies that "To the extent that the University is unable to fulfill, or is delayed in fulfilling, its obligations under this agreement by any cause beyond its reasonable control, the University shall be relieved from the fulfillment of its obligations during that period. The Resident shall not be entitled to any compensation as a result thereof" (Section 2.3)
- Does not describe what happens during outages or required maintenance
- Does not specify any rules on rent-increases
- Does not have any protections against early evictions or exam clashes (note: move in and move out dates are not mentioned in the contract, but rather in an offer of residence)
- Does not describe any clear contract extension process for special circumstances

Given the above, Capilano University's residence contract does not meet a single one of the RWR campaign's nine recommendations.

Section 2: Non-Binding Recommendations (2022)

In *Leading Practices in Student Housing Agreements for British Columbia's Public Post-Secondary Institutions*, released in 2022, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Future Skills outlines standards for post-secondary institutions to meet in their housing agreements with students.

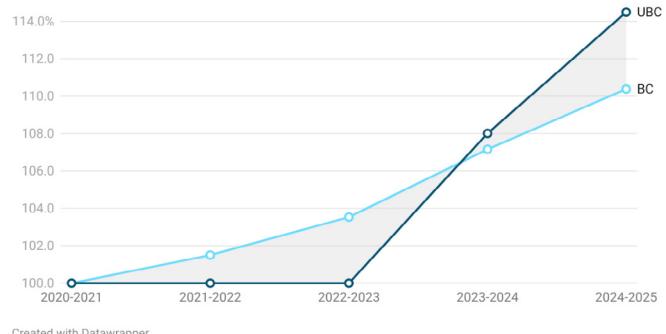
This was made through consultation with the AMS, UVSS, ABCS, and BC Federation of Students, as well as the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, Selkirk College, and the BC Institute of Technology.²

As per the table in section 1, many of the standards included in the 2022 publication and encouraged by the RWR recommendations are not met by all post-secondary housing providers, including but not limited to;

- Reasonable privacy and safety
- Appropriate and reasonable notice to the student [for agreement termination]
- The right to an unbiased appeals process
- Housing departments should give 24-hour notice for entry in non-emergency situations and communicate a window of time when the entry will take place
- If the reason for the move is not the fault of the resident, then the original rate should be offered automatically

While this 2022 report is an important step from the provincial government and sets out a good framework for how post-secondary institutions should ensure students have important rights met in on-campus housing agreements, the report is not binding, and does not set out firm guidelines on protecting students from rent increases above the provincial regulations. Since a period of stability after COVID, rent increases on UBC student housing have grown rapidly, outpacing BC's yearly provincial rent caps.

BC vs. UBC Rent Increases



At other institutions, the 2022 Leading Practices report's recommendation of ensuring students are notified of rent increases early is not being met. At SFU, the prices for undergraduate, graduate, and graduate family student housing in the 2026 school year have not been updated.³ If rent increases were limited or tied to other provincial standards, these increases would prevent rents from increasing beyond the provincial caps such as the case at UBC, and would prevent confusion over future increases such as the case at SFU.

Overall, the lack of RTA rights in on-campus student housing has detrimental effects on students. Students living in residences often do not have the same rights to notice of entry, ability to appeal evictions, or protections from rent increases that other tenants in BC, including their off-campus peers, have through the RTA. Despite years of consistent student advocacy on this issue, current government recommendations are non-binding, and university contracts do not meet the standards of the Rent with Rights recommendations or the government's 2022 standards.

We understand that the RTA itself is not able to accommodate the unique needs of on-campus student housing, however removing all oversight of tenancy rights from student renters is an unfair and ineffective way to tackle this issue which creates additional issues.

In order to ensure on-campus student renters are afforded basic tenancy rights and ensure the operational success of on-campus residences, **we are calling upon the provincial government to work with post-secondary institutions and student unions, using the Rent with Rights Recommendations, 2022 Leading Practices report, and this brief as frameworks, to create a province wide policy to protect the rights of student tenants for safety, affordability, and accessibility in on-campus student housing.**

¹<https://vancouversun.com/news/education/ubc-student-group-opposes-housing-tuition-fee-increases>

²https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/student-housing/leading_practices_bc_student_housing_rental_agreement_report_v11.pdf

³<https://www.sfu.ca/students/residences/fees/Fall.html>



Protect Student Worker Rights



In order to support the rights of graduate student workers, we call upon the provincial government to:

- 1. Amend the BC Labour Code to ensure student workers are counted as employees**
- 2. Allocate \$5 million in funding to ensure the BC Labour Relations Board can process cases within their allotted 180-day timeframe**

Graduate students are some of the most vulnerable in the face of the cost-of-living crisis, as graduate student stipends have consistently been far below the living wage in Vancouver.¹ This number is even higher for post-secondary students, with the AMS Foodbank at UBC seeing an 1800% increase in usage in the same time period. Graduate students are even further disproportionately impacted, making up 49% of visits despite being only 20% of the student body. At SFU, over 60% of food service recipients are graduate students.

Beyond the regular economic burdens faced by undergraduate students, graduate students often have families or children and higher expenses. At the province's largest research university, UBC Vancouver, 70% of children in student households are reported as being moderately or severely food insecure.² For Graduate Research Assistants, this is made worse by low graduate stipends and low pay. Low wages and struggling with day-to-day costs, alongside exploitative and unequal work environments, were all cited as reasons that GRAs at UBC, SFU, and UVic have decided to launch unionization drives.^{3 4 5}

Despite popular unionization attempts among students, the UBC and SFU cases have not only been challenged by their universities and denied due to the definition of "employee" currently in the BC Labour Code, but have also been delayed by a lack of capacity and funding at the BC Labour Relations Board, causing these cases to take over two years to process, well over the 180 days set out by the Labour Relations Act. In fact, the LRB took until November 7th, 2025, to approve the unionization attempts for the GRAs at SFU.

1) Amend the BC Labour Code to ensure student workers are counted as employees

Currently, the BC Labour Code provides little guidance as to the definition of "employee";

"employee" means a person employed by an employer, and includes a dependent contractor, but does not include a person who, in the board's opinion,

(a) performs the functions of a manager or superintendent, or

(b) is employed in a confidential capacity in matters relating to labour relations or personnel

In the 2024 BC Labour Code Review, the panel recommended that this definition be retained. However, the lack of guidance has created confusion and unclarity and has led to the exclusion of student workers, especially GRAs, from the right to join a union.⁶ In *University of British Columbia and Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2278 (2025 BCLRB 85)* the Labour Relations Board (LRB) determined that Graduate Research Assistants did not meet the definition of "employee" under the Code.

The BC LRB's ruling came despite other LRB cases where similar student workers who provided substantial benefit to their employers/places of learning were deemed to be employees under this definition.

In *St. Paul's Hospital (BCLRB No. 43/76)* the LRB found student interns and residents were employees,⁷ and in *Vancouver General Hospital (BCLRB No. 38/81)* the LRB determined that a student resident was an employee and allowed to join the bargaining unit.⁸ In both of these cases, the student employees were fulfilling their degrees to further their education and also providing benefit to their institutions, much like GRAs do.

Beyond BC's past cases, these is also a precedent in the rest of the country. Outside of BC, it is commonplace for GRAs to be unionized. In the Quebec Act Respecting Labour, employees are defined as;⁹

“employee” means a person who works for an employer and who is entitled to a wage; this word also includes a worker who is a party to a contract, under which the employee

i. undertakes to perform specified work for a person within the scope and in accordance with the methods and means determined by that person;

ii. undertakes to furnish, for the carrying out of the contract, the material, equipment, raw materials or merchandise chosen by that person and to use them in the manner indicated by him or her;

This definition of “employee” gives more specific information on what type of work is done by employees, in which GRAs are included, and within the scope of this definition. 12 out of the U15 schools, an association of Canada’s leading research universities which includes UBC, have unionized GRAs. From this list, three of Quebec’s four largest universities – McGill University, Laval University, and the University of Montreal – have unionized GRAs.^{10 11 12 13} The *Labour Code*’s definition excludes student workers from the rights and protections other employees are entitled to, meaning UBC and UVic, 2 of BC’s 3 largest research institutions, fall short of the standard set by the other U15 schools across Canada, and the precedent recently set by the case at SFU.

In order to make sure BC follows the precedent set by Quebec and other research institutions across Canada, ensures student workers have the same rights and protections as other employees, and helps protect GRAs from low wages and exploitative working standards, we encourage the government of BC to amend the definition of “employee” in the *Labour Code* to include student workers. One possible amendment suggested by CUPE in their *Labour Code Review Submission* is;

*“employee” means a person employed by an employer, and includes a dependent contractor, **and persons who, in the course of their employment, also perform work which furthers their education or training,** but does not include a person who, in the board’s opinion,*

(a) performs the functions of a manager or superintendent, or

(b) is employed in a confidential capacity in matters relating to labour relations personnel

The added line “and persons who, in the course of their employment, also perform work which furthers their education or training” would cover GRAs and other student research workers. This would ensure that the standards for student workers are in line with Canada’s other top research universities and ensure fair treatment and protection against exploitation for GRAs in BC’s institutions.

2) Allocate \$5 million in funding to ensure the BC Labour Relations Board can process cases within their allotted 180-day timeframe

In the case of UBC, GRAs launched their unionization drive in September of 2022 with a 55% card signing rate, enough for automatic union certification. UBC’s appeal in May of 2023 delayed this process, and GRAs waited until March of 2025 for a decision from the LRB,¹⁴ well over the 180-day timeframe for LRB cases.

The LRB’s funding was reduced by 40% in 2003, and staffing hasn’t increased since it was reduced as a result of the funding reduction more than two decades ago.¹⁵

According to the *Labour Relations Code’s Prescribed Time Periods for Decisions Regulation*, BC Reg 49/2012, “the prescribed time period for rendering a final decision on a complaint or application is” 180 days.¹⁶ The decision on the UBC GRA’s application to be allowed to unionize took roughly four times that amount of time.

According to the “Recommendations for Amendments to the *Labour Relations Code*” by the *Labour Relations Code Review Panel* in August 2024, the backlog of cases at the LRB “is not sustainable.”¹⁷ The authors of the report write that the backlog will impact the Board’s ability to provide timely decisions and services.” Backlogs on the LRB’s ability to review cases don’t just impact student workers. This has impacts across all sectors and makes the process harder for both unionizing workers and their employers.

Recommendations

Overall, Graduate Research Assistants deserve the same right to unionize as any other workers in the province, especially when they have successful unionization drives. In order to ensure GRAs can access the rights and protections that other workers are afforded, match the precedent set by the SFU BCLRB case and by other provinces and leading research universities in Canada, and help the BCLRB speed up operations to support clarity for workers and employers, we call on the provincial government to action the recommendations of this brief by amending the BC Labour Code to classify GRAs as “employees” and provide \$5 million in funding to ensure the BCLRB can process cases in a timely manner.

¹2024 Food Bank - EOY Report

²https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/202425-Services-Report_Final.pdf

³<https://ubyssey.ca/news/ubc-gras-expect-bc-labour-relations-board-unionization-ruling/>

⁴ <https://the-peak.ca/2023/07/why-all-sfu-research-assistants-must-act-now-to-finally-win-a-union/>

5 <https://martlet.ca/uvic-graduate-research-assistants-launch-unionization-effort/>

⁶ CUPE package, page 7

⁷https://lrb.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#f40000022yYB/a/Mm000003qn4X/K52YyjzQ.vYWjxyRP_dm6ZX07Za4QJzjDlwfHRgBOfc, page 54

⁸https://lrb.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#f40000022yYB/a/Mm000003qn4X/K52YyjzQ.vYWjxyRP_dm6ZX07Za4QJzjDlwfHRgBOfc, page 55

⁹ <https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/n-11>, chapter 1, article 10

¹⁰ BC Labour Code Letter.docx

¹¹ <https://psacunion.ca/grant-paid-employees-dalhousie-university-join>

¹² <https://psacunion.ca/grant-paid-employees-dalhousie-university-join>

¹³ https://www.instagram.com/p/C8ZuPqAgJ0f/?hl=en&img_index=2

14 <https://choosecupebc.ca/ubc>15 <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2025/06/Labour-Relations-Code-Review-2024-Panel-Revisions-corrected-June-2025.pdf>16 <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/laws/regu/bc-reg-49-2012/latest/bc-reg-49-2012.html>17 <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2025/06/Labour-Relations-Code-Review-2024-Panel-Revisions-corrected-June-2025.pdf>

Protect and Expand the Tuition Cap



Recommendation: We call on the provincial government to:

- 1. Protect the 2% tuition cap for domestic students. The province should reaffirm its commitment to maintaining the Tuition Limit Policy and reject any proposal to lift the 2% cap on domestic tuition and mandatory fees**
- 2. Extend the 2% tuition cap to international students. Amend the *Tuition Limit Policy* to include international tuition fees, ensuring that all students are protected from unpredictable and excessive fee increases.**
- 3. Enforce the Ministry's International Education Guidelines. Convert the Public Post-Secondary International Education Guidelines into binding policy by requiring institutions to:**
 - a. publish multi-year tuition schedules;**
 - b. provide accurate total program costs at the time of admission;**
 - c. and establish mechanisms for oversight and accountability.**

Introduction

British Columbia's public post-secondary funding model is at a breaking point, as it has grown increasingly reliant on tuition fees, especially from international students, to sustain operations. As new federal policies reduce international enrolment, institutions are facing a financial crisis that exposes the fragility of this model.

The provincial government's Tuition Limit Policy currently limits domestic tuition fee increases to two percent per year. However, the security that this cap provides is not provided to international students, thereby permitting institutions to impose unpredictable and substantial increases. These unregulated tuition hikes, which can often reach double-digit percentages, make it nearly impossible for international students to budget for their education and have become a key contributor to BC's affordability crisis for students.

At the same time, domestic students are worried that the government might lift or relax the two

percent domestic tuition cap to fill the financial gap caused by declining international enrolment. Doing so would transfer even more of the cost of government underfunding onto BC students and their families, further eroding affordability and access to higher education across the province.

Section 1: Background and Timeline

Tuition fees for undergraduate international students in BC have grown exponentially over the past three decades. In the 2023–24 academic year, international undergraduate students paid an average of \$35,266, which is 452.5% higher than the \$6,383 paid by domestic undergraduate students. Since 1991,¹ international tuition has risen by 783.6% (from \$3,991 to \$35,266), while domestic tuition increased by 224% (from \$1,970 to \$6,383).²

This extraordinary escalation reflects a broader shift in how BC funds its public post-secondary system. Since 2001, federal and provincial government funding for BC post-secondary institutions has declined from 64% to just 52% of total revenues, while student tuition fees have increased from 20% to 36% of institutional revenues. While higher education was once treated as a public good, it is now being funded largely by cash-strapped students and their families who face increasing tuition alongside financial aid and wages that fail to keep up with the increasing cost of living.³

From 1996 to 2001, the province implemented a tuition freeze that applied to domestic tuition and ancillary fees (though not international students' tuition fees). During this period, BC's undergraduate tuition remained below the national average, protecting affordability while other provinces saw steep increases.⁴ In 2002, the freeze was lifted, and tuition fees rose sharply until the Tuition Limit Policy was introduced in 2005.

The policy has provided important predictability for domestic students, but by excluding international students, it has enabled a dual system where one group of students is protected from volatility while another is left exposed to unpredictable fee hikes.

Section 2: Current International Student Tuition

In 2024, the federal government introduced several reforms to make requirements for incoming international students stricter and reduce the number of incoming students. These policies, and the subsequent financial challenges faced by BC colleges and universities reveal how dependent BC institutions have become on international tuition fee revenue. With international enrolment reduction, many institutions are facing significant budget shortfalls and are considering large tuition hikes for international students to balance their budgets.

This overreliance on international tuition fees is not sustainable. It leaves institutions vulnerable to policy shifts and geopolitical factors outside their control, while exploiting international students who already contribute over \$22.3 billion to the economy per year.⁵

This crisis will be exacerbated by the new rules on international students outlined in the new 2025 Federal Budget. The budget will have a substantial impact on universities through a new 65% cut to international student targets.

Projected number of new student permits in Canada⁶

	2025	2026	2027	2028
Levels announced in 2024	305,900	305,900	305,900	-
Levels announced in 2025	-	155,000	150,000	150,000

Immigration levels plan announced in 2024 and 2025

Section 3: International Student Enrolment Guidelines

In June 2024, the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills released the *Public Postsecondary International Student Enrolment Guidelines* to set expectations for how institutions recruit, admit, and support international students.

The guidelines outline important principles for a fair and sustainable international education system. Among them, institutions are:

Expected to limit international enrolment to approximately 30% of total headcount;

Required to align international student recruitment with institutional capacity and community benefits;

Expected to maintain transparent tuition policies by providing multi-year tuition schedules and disclosing total program costs to students prior to registration; and

Encouraged to ensure that tuition increases remain predictable and reflect the actual cost of program delivery.

However, these guidelines are not legally binding and rely entirely on institutional goodwill for compliance. The Ministry uses advisory language such as “should” and “expected to” rather than regulatory mandates. As a result, many institutions are not complying with these guidelines.

Students continue to report being admitted to programs without being informed of the total cost of their degree or potential future tuition increases. Institutions routinely introduce substantial mid-program tuition increases, undermining the Ministry’s stated goals of transparency and predictability.

Without enforcement, these guidelines have little effect. The provincial government must take the next step by converting them into binding policy, with clear mechanisms for oversight and compliance.

Section 4: The Unreleased Provincial Funding Review

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills completed a comprehensive funding review several years ago to evaluate BC’s institutional grant structure and identify opportunities for reform. However, the report’s findings were never publicly released.

Media reports have revealed that the review was shelved despite growing concern from universities, colleges, and students about the sustainability of

the current funding model. The failure to publish or act on the review has deprived the public and policymakers of a critical opportunity to modernize how post-secondary education is funded.

The ongoing crisis makes it clear that the province can no longer delay action. Releasing the findings of the funding review and engaging stakeholders in a transparent conversation about sustainable funding would be a crucial step toward stabilizing the sector and reducing dependence on tuition revenues.

Section 5: Policy Analysis

The current situation highlights the need for the provincial government to reassert its role as the primary funder of postsecondary education. The *Tuition Limit Policy* has served as an important affordability measure for domestic students, but its exclusion of international tuition fees has undermined both fairness and stability.

Extending the two percent cap to international students would promote financial predictability for all students, restore fairness, and reduce the financial volatility that institutions currently face. At the same time, enforcing and strengthening the Ministry's *Public Post-Secondary International Student Enrolment Guidelines* would ensure that all students receive accurate information about tuition and total program costs before enrolling.

Finally, tuition regulation must be paired with renewed government investment. With provincial funding now accounting for less than half of institutional operating revenue, BC's postsecondary system requires a long-term reinvestment strategy. By recommitting to public funding, the government can limit international tuition fee increases and create a more sustainable, equitable system for all learners.

Recommendations

BC's post-secondary system has reached a tipping point. After years of underfunding, institutions can no longer balance their budgets without relying on escalating international tuition fees. Federal enrollment restrictions have exposed the fragility of this approach.

Students should not be made to bear the costs of provincial underfunding and so the BC government must recommit to postsecondary education as a public good, protect the two percent tuition cap for domestic students, extend it to international students, and enforce transparency across the system.

A renewed investment in public education will not only make life more affordable for students but also ensure the long-term stability and competitiveness of British Columbia's post-secondary institutions.

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that the Government of British Columbia:

Protect the 2% tuition cap for domestic students.

The province should reaffirm its commitment to maintaining the *Tuition Limit Policy* and reject any proposal to lift the 2% cap on domestic tuition and mandatory fees.

Extend the 2% tuition cap to international students.

Amend the *Tuition Limit Policy* to include international tuition fees, ensuring that all students are protected from unpredictable and excessive fee increases.

Enforce the Ministry's International Education Guidelines.

Convert the Public Post-Secondary International Education Guidelines into binding policy by requiring institutions to:

publish multi-year tuition schedules;

provide accurate total program costs at the time of admission; and

establish mechanisms for oversight and accountability.

¹Statistics Canada. Table 37-10-0045-01 Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study (current dollars) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3710004501-eng>

²Average International Undergraduate Student Tuition.” 2017. Canadian Association of University Teachers. Accessed online: <https://www.caut.ca/content/321-average-international-undergraduate-student-tuition>

³Statistics Canada. Table 37-10-0028-01 Revenues of colleges by type of revenues and funds (in current Canadian dollars) (x 1,000) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3710002801-eng>

⁴Statistics Canada, Average Increases in Tuition for Full-Time Students Continue to Outpace Inflation as Institutions Compensate for Reductions in Government Funding, The Daily, August 28, 2000, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/000828/dq000828b-eng.htm>

⁵International Students – March 3, 2022. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Government of Canada. Accessed online September 15, 2023. <https://tinyurl.com/y64brwpn>

⁶<https://dailyhive.com/canada/international-students-federal-budget-2025>

Improve the Sexual Violence Action Plan



- 1. That the provincial government create a Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Fund of \$5 million that post-secondary institutions and student organizations can access to operate sexualized violence prevention offices and services on campuses across BC.**
- 2. That the government amend the *Sexual Violence Policy Act* to require all public and private post-secondary institutions' sexual violence policies meet the 11 minimum standards identified by Students For Consent Culture.**

Background

Sexualized violence is still a crisis on campuses across British Columbia.¹ While government has taken incremental steps towards prevention and better response in the last 10 years, the measures currently in place are nowhere near enough to guarantee a safe environment for all campus community members. One in three Canadian women will experience sexualized violence in their lifetimes.^{2,3} According to a 2019 Statistics Canada survey, approximately one in ten (11%) students who identify as women at Canadian post-secondary institutions were sexually assaulted in a post-secondary setting in the past year, totaling about 110,000 women.⁴ 4% of students who identify as men also reported experiencing sexualized violence.⁵ Both figures are higher than the proportions of women and men sexually assaulted in the general population. 15% of women had been sexually assaulted at one point during their time in a post-secondary setting,⁶ around 197,000 women. However, only 8% of women and 6% of men who experienced sexual assault spoke about what happened with someone associated with their school.⁷

The same survey found that most post-secondary students (71%) of students had either witnessed or experienced unwanted sexualized behaviours.⁸ Unwanted sexual behaviours have extremely negative effects on survivors' academic and personal lives; 23% of women felt fearful because of these experiences, 18% avoided specific

buildings at school, and 7% stopped going to one or more classes.⁹ Survivors often report spending tens of thousands of dollars in extra expenses and graduating late or dropping out.

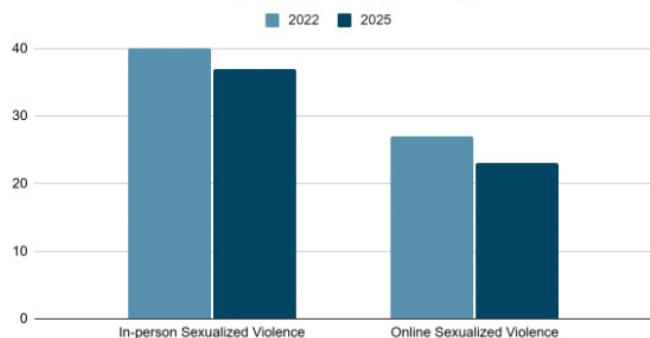
BC Students' Perceptions of Sexualized Violence, Safety, and Institutional Response

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills has twice directed public post-secondary institutions to survey their student population about students' perceptions of sexualized violence on campus. The first Student Perceptions of Sexualized Violence Survey report was published in 2022, and the second such report was conducted for all 25 public post-secondary institutions for the year 2024-2025 and published in 2025. The 2025 report found that while a majority of the 23,462 students surveyed reported feeling relatively safe on their campuses,¹⁰ students reported low levels of faith in institutional application of accountability measures. Students from marginalized groups reported even lower levels of confidence in their institution's prevention efforts.¹¹

While 78% of students surveyed agreed that institutions adequately prevented sexual assault,¹² Inuk/Inuit students (56%) and gender-diverse students (51%) reported much lower levels of confidence in their institution's prevention efforts.¹³ And while most students reported feeling safe from sexualized violence,¹⁴ students with disabilities, Two-Spirit students, and Inuk/Inuit students were less likely to report feeling safe from sexualized violence. Between 2022 and 2025, "While the overall perception of safety has improved, certain demographic groups have consistently lower perceptions of safety."¹⁵

As noted by students surveyed and observed in the *Student Perceptions of Sexualized Violence Survey* data, ***there is a clear disconnect between the students' desire for accountability and trust in institutions to deliver it.*** This crisis of confidence in institutional response discourages survivors from seeking support and justice.

Percentage of BC post-secondary students that believe sexual violence is common in post-secondary settings



BC students had lower confidence in their institutions' ability to prevent technology-facilitated sexual violence than physical sexual violence.¹⁶ Only 66% of students agreed prevention of non-consensual image sharing was sufficient.¹⁷ With ubiquitous high-speed Internet connectivity enabling instant file-sharing and powerful technologies Artificial Intelligence text-to-image tools that can be used to generate sexual images of someone without their consent more widely available than ever before,¹⁸ it is essential that post-secondary institutions possess the tools to address technology-facilitated sexual violence and the confidence of students to do so.

While students report relatively high levels of trust in their institutions to protect their privacy after a report,¹⁹ only 67-70% trusted their institution to apply accountability measures overall, with gender-diverse students and students with disabilities having the least trust.²⁰ The most significant factor used to encourage making a report was the assurance of institutional accountability, yet this area yielded the least confidence in the survey results.²¹ The lack of confidence in institutional follow-through remains a barrier to formal reporting, especially because students cannot appeal their institution's ruling to an independent third party. This could be remedied by allowing students to appeal their institution's rulings to the Office of the Ombudsperson, which would have oversight and enforcement powers vested in it to ensure compliance with the Act.

State of Prevention and Response Service Delivery on Campus

At virtually every post-secondary institution in BC, sexualized violence prevention and response work is primarily carried out "off the side of the desk" of whichever staff member whose job description most closely aligns to the subject. It is rare for post-secondary institutions to have dedicated staff with the necessary expertise and capacity to support student survivors, and appropriate staff training is seldom provided.

At SFU, for example, some of the institution's most prominent and experienced sexualized violence response staff are on temporary contracts, performing work in multiple offices during their tenure. While these particular individuals bring prior experience to the role, at most institutions, staff who are responding to disclosures, handling formal allegations, and delivering educational prevention efforts do not have adequate training or experience, and must juggle this work with other unrelated duties.

Additionally, a majority of the formal response training provided to students at SFU is done in collaboration between SFU's Sexualized Violence Support and Prevention Office and the Simon Fraser Student Society, which provides an opportunity for the Office's educators to facilitate development sessions for the Board of Directors at the beginning of the term.

Funding Gap

When the original *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act* was passed, government intended to eventually provide regular dedicated funding to post-secondary institutions to implement the Act and deliver trauma-informed prevention and response services. Despite years of repeated calls from student advocates, however, no such funding has been established, and with post-secondary institutions facing historic financial difficulties, individual institutions do not have the fiscal flexibility to adequately fund these services by themselves.²²

Institutional sexual violence prevention and response offices are underfunded and understaffed. From years of consultations with frontline workers at post-secondary institutions, student advocates have heard time and again that many people doing this prevention and response work are survivors themselves, and are being forced to do this work off the side of their desk.

PSI sexual violence prevention and response offices typically do not publicly disclose their staffing costs or expenditures, but we know that the UBC SVPROM had an operating budget of \$1.34 million in 2021/2022, but this is an outlier, and other post-secondary institutions in the province have nothing comparable.

The best case scenarios are UBC and UVic, each of which has a student-run organization to support survivors and do prevention training. At UBC, the Alma Mater Society's (AMS) Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC) is reasonably well-funded, but most student unions don't have the fiscal capacity or economies of scale of the AMS, Canada's largest student union. The SASC has three full-time and two part-time frontline support workers that are paid \$31.25/hour; these five frontline workers' wages add up to \$260,000 per year. Frontline workers responding to sexualized violence and supporting student survivors need special training and expertise, and paying frontline workers a living wage helps reduce burnout and turnover.²³

SASC also employs educators to conduct workshops, create and deliver educational materials, and more. Assuming these educators are paid a similar wage and have a similar split of working hours, that would put the staffing costs alone of SASC at \$520,000 per year without taking into consideration CPP, EI, health and dental benefits, etc.

The Anti-Violence Project (AVP) at the University of Victoria is a semi-autonomous student-organization under the University of Victoria Student Society (UVSS) that provides peer-support services and anti-sexualized and gender-based violence educational training. AVP currently has four staff, one of whom works 35 hours per week and makes \$29.34/hour, and three staff who work 20 hours per week at \$28.57/hour. AVP's expenditures for 2025-

2026 will be \$219,255.31, of which \$191,214.93 will be spent on labour costs. The demand for their services far exceeds the resources they have available every year.

The two examples listed, the AMS SASC and AVP, are anomalies in the student world at two of the biggest universities in BC. Most BC post-secondary institutions don't have a student-run support organization, leaving students to depend on their post-secondary institution's under-resourced office for support and help navigating the bureaucratic process involved with making a disclosure or formal allegation. This leaves students unsupported and at risk of being retraumatized when they are seeking support.

As student unions are purely student-funded, most student unions do not have the fiscal capacity to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars more per year. For student unions and post-secondary institutions, hundreds of thousands of dollars is an unattainable amount to come up with, especially during the current funding crisis.²⁴ For government, however, the amount is relatively small in comparison to most government expenditures, and government has the fiscal room to budget for such an amount and make a huge impact by making funds accessible to student organizations and post-secondary institutions for this essential service.

Inadequacy of the New Sexual Violence Policy Act

The government recently passed legislation to replace the *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act* (2016). The 2025 legislation, the *Sexual Violence Policy Act*, has made some welcome improvements over its predecessor. Mandating that institutions make training available, strike an advisory committee with student representation, engage in concerted prevention and awareness efforts, build a culture of consent, and make more information and data available in the required annual reports are all good steps. The legislation also took the extremely important step in allowing survivors to be informed of accountability measures imposed by the institution.

However, the *Sexual Violence Policy Act* is still inadequate in protecting students and survivors. The Act does not require institutions' sexual violence policies to have all 11 minimum standards for sexual violence policies as outlined by Students for Consent Culture in their 2019 *Moving Beyond Potential* report, which was written as a guide for legislators and policymakers. For years, students have been advocating for the legislation to require institutions' policies meet these 11 bare minimum standards so that student survivors are met with survivor-centered, trauma-informed care and are not retraumatized when seeking accountability or support.

There remains a high need for education and training, as many students and staff report not knowing how to appropriately respond to reports and disclosures. Although the *Sexual Violence Policy Act* requires institutions to "make training available,"²⁵ it does not mandate that key decision makers receive this training, which has been a central demand of students over the years.

53% of students had never had training at their post-secondary institution, a figure that was higher (57%) for first-year students.²⁶ This was not for a lack of demand, however, as 77% of students wanted training to respond to disclosures, 76% of students wanted bystander intervention training, 66% wanted education on power dynamics and boundaries.²⁷

When three quarters of the student population want training to respond to sexualized violence and two-thirds want education to understand and prevent it, but more than half of the student population has never gotten it, that is an institutional failing.

We urge the Ministry to amend the *Sexual Violence Policy Act* and prioritize the following changes:

1. Empower the Office of the Ombudsperson to oversee post-secondary institutions' implementation of the *Sexual Violence Policy Act*, ensure the Act is being implemented to the standard intended, and allow students to appeal their institutions' rulings if they feel they were treated unfairly.

- 2. Develop specific supports for Identity-Focused Groups** to address the disparities in reporting and perceived safety between the average student and marginalized groups.
- 3. Strengthen Prevention of Digital and Image-Based Violence** by expanding digital safety education and policy enforcement to address this growing problem
- 4. Enhance Institutional Accountability and Transparency** to address the gap between students' expectation and actual accountability mechanisms being carried out by institutions, increase transparency in case management, ensure consistency in the application of sanctions, and clearly communicate outcomes to survivors.
- 5. Expand and Mandate Trauma-Informed Training and Education to Students, Staff, and Faculty** to ensure that students will feel more comfortable reporting incidents and find people able to provide appropriate support.
- 6. Provide Consistent Funding for Prevention, Education, and Survivor Support Programs** in the form of a continuous annual fund that institutions and student organizations can access to oversee the operation of sexualized violence prevention offices
- 7. Specify conditions for the Minister to request a review of institutional policies** under section 5(1)(b) of the *Sexual Violence Policy Act*²⁸

All post-secondary institutions' sexualized violence policies should meet the 11 minimum standards identified by Students For Consent Culture,²⁹ which include:

- 1. A Defined Stand-Alone Sexual Violence Policy:**
The existence of a stand-alone sexualized violence policy that DOES NOT place the process through the Student Code of Conduct. The procedures must be stand-alone and must be clearly outlined in a step-by-step process for students, staff, and faculty. Per our definition, a policy is only stand-alone if it is a separate document from other policies and has

its own set of procedures that do not refer to procedures of other policies. This is crucial as so many postsecondary institution policies refer to the disciplinary procedures outlined in the Student Code of Conduct or similar documents, but still consider them to be 'stand-alone'.

This is incredibly inappropriate because:

- a. these processes were often made with discipline for academic infractions in mind and therefore are not trauma-informed, nor survivor-centric; and
- b. they often lead to confusion amongst survivors as they bounce from policy to policy unable to follow what a process would look like; therefore are unable to make a fully informed decision about whether or not they wish to go through a complaint process through a policy.

2. Right to both Criminal and Institutional Processes:

The ability to report experiences to both their institution and the police without risk of having a complaint suspended due to the other process.

3. Mandatory Sexual Violence Training for Decision-Makers:

A mandate of quality and expert-informed sexualized violence sensitivity training on trauma-informed approaches for those involved in hearing the sexualized violence complaint and deciding the outcomes.

4. Rape Shield Protections:

Explicit rape shield protections, whereby a complainant cannot be asked questions about their sexual history at any point of the informal or formal complaint process;

5. Protections from Face to Face Encounters:

The inclusion of protections from face to face encounters, a complainant should not

be required to be present at the same time as a respondent. Similar to the criminal justice system, these interests between survivor protections and procedural fairness can be balanced through the use of a screen and/or video technology;

6. Timelines:

Clearly defined and reasonable timelines for a complaint process that DO NOT exceed 45 days for a complaint process and 48 hours for immediate accommodations.

Note - this is different from Time Limits, which restricts how long after an event the complainant can report it. You want timelines, you do not want time limits;

7. Protections from Gag Orders:

Protections from institutions imposing a gag order on complainants through a broadly defined confidentiality requirement;

8. Broader Scope:

Campus sexualized violence policies must explicitly create a procedure for students to report sexualized violence and/or sexual harassment while participating in a work placement, internship or co-op and require that the institution keep record of in which places sexualized violence has occurred to ensure that future students are not placed at risk of sexualized violence while pursuing co-op opportunities. This will require many institutions broadening the scope of their policies and support to ensure students have access to these accommodations and supports regardless of where violence occurs;

9. Informing of Sanctions:

A mandate that institutions must inform both the complainant and respondent of all sanctions ordered by the review committee. This includes making

appropriate adjustments to provincial privacy and labour law in order to ensure that this can happen - especially when the respondent is an employee of the institution;

10. Student Representation on Committees:

A mandate for the creation of a Sexual Violence Prevention and Support taskforce, with meaningful student representation of at least 30%, at each institution; and

11. Review Period of 2 Years:

We recommend that institutions be required to review their policy every 2 years at most, with every year being ideal. This is due to the fact that our knowledge of best practices for these policies is constantly improving, and due to the fact that student communities are constantly shifting, almost completely changing every 4 years. Reviews of policy must include student participation and feedback opportunities to ensure relevance of the work.

¹<https://globalnews.ca/news/9496476/b-c-campus-sexual-violence-funding/#:~:text=A%20dramatic%20increase%20in%20sexual%20violence%20on%20university%20campuses%20has,Get%20daily%20National%20news>

²<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.pdf?st=Vk4RZmOb>

³<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00003-eng.htm>

⁴<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>

⁵<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>

⁶<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>

⁷<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>

⁸<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>

⁹<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00005/tbl/tbl12-eng.htm>

¹⁰https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹¹https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹²https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹³https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹⁴https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹⁵https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹⁶https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹⁷https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

¹⁸<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3715275.3732107>

¹⁹https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

²⁰https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

²¹https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

²²<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/job-losses-b-c-colleges-international-students-1.7620631>

²³<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/wp-content/uploads/attachments/CCPA-BC-Living-Wage-Update-2022-final.pdf>

²⁴<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-post-secondary-revenue-loss-1.7513726>

²⁵https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/overview/43rd-parliament/1st-session/bills/3rd_read/gov18-3.htm

²⁶https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

²⁷https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/home/featured-services/safe-campuses-bc/student_perceptions_of_sexualized_violence_survey.pdf

²⁸https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/overview/43rd-parliament/1st-session/bills/3rd_read/gov18-3.htm

²⁹https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc4e7bcf4755a6e42b00495/t/5e4c54619acc280f29211ba1/1582060641594/BCadvocacy_LegislatorsGuide.pdf

Fund and Prioritize the UBC SkyTrain Extension



Introduction

Serving 80,000 UBC students, staff, and faculty and 15,000 residents in the growing University Neighbourhoods and beyond, the UBC Skytrain Extension would be a lynchpin for Metro Vancouver's transit network.

Since Gordon Campbell's government committed to build the Skytrain in 2008, the region has been waiting 17 years for progress on the project. In a time of economic uncertainty, the Extension would employ thousands of workers and boost the province's construction industry. Once complete, it would provide 60,000 UBC commuters with a faster route to and from campus, in turn cutting congestion on existing road and bus systems throughout the entire Lower Mainland. It is a key infrastructure priority with benefits that extend far beyond the immediate vicinity of the University.

The Alma Mater Society of UBC asks that the Provincial Government treat the SkyTrain to UBC as a vital regional priority by:

- Expediting the release of the Business Case for the UBC SkyTrain Extension
- Publicly release and commit to a comprehensive timeline for the funding and delivery of the UBC SkyTrain Extension.
- Working with the Government of Canada to release a combined funding agreement for the construction of the UBC SkyTrain Extension.
- Including a combined funding commitment for the UBC SkyTrain Extension in the 2026 Provincial Budget.

Timeline and Community Support



- 2008** In 2008, the Government of British Columbia, under then-Premier Gordon Campbell, announced a series of transit priorities with set completion dates by 2020, including the Evergreen Extension to Coquitlam, the Surrey–Langley Extension, and the UBC Extension.¹
- 2012** In 2012, the UBC Line Rapid Transit Study, sponsored by TransLink and the Government of British Columbia alongside UBC, Musqueam, the University Endowment Lands administration, Metro Vancouver, and the City of Vancouver, found that the UBC SkyTrain extension was a better option than light rail or Bus Rapid Transit on almost every metric.²
These included the highest community acceptability, the highest speed, the shortest travel times, and the lowest operational street-level impacts.
- 2019** In 2019, the Vancouver City Council voted overwhelmingly to support the extension of the Millennium Line to UBC.³
In 2019, Research Co found that 82% of Metro Vancouverites support the UBC SkyTrain Extension, with only 76% agreeing that it should be the first infrastructure priority.⁴
- 2021** In 2021, TransLink's survey on the project found that 92% of the over 15,000 residents polled supported the SkyTrain to UBC.⁵
In 2021, the Federal Government and Provincial Government, under the leadership of Justin Trudeau and John Horgan, respectively, agreed to each fund 40% of the business case for the SkyTrain to UBC.⁶ In an interview, UBC's Associate Vice President of Campus and Community Planning projected a completion date in 2022 for the business case.⁷
- 2025** This year the UBC community, and the wider community in Metro Vancouver, have shown impressive turnout and enthusiasm for the SkyTrain to UBC. The AMS's SkyTrain to UBC Petition garnered more than 15,007 signatures from across the Lower Mainland, and the SkyTrain to UBC Rally on October 1 saw turnout of over 1,000 community members. Additionally, letters of support have come from the University Neighbourhoods Association, the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff at UBC, BC Building Trades, and the BC Federation of Labour.

Over the course of 17 years, polling, studies, and petitions have demonstrated that the UBC SkyTrain Extension is not only a uniquely popular project but also a critical solution to the challenges faced by commuters in the Lower Mainland.

Why the Need?

The UBC Bus Exchange is Metro Vancouver's busiest bus exchange, which lacks rapid transit. With over 22,000 average daily boardings, bus ridership from the UBC Exchange surpasses the 19,000 daily boardings from the Commercial-Broadway SkyTrain Station.⁸ Over 61,000 of UBC's 80,000 students, staff, and faculty members commute from off-campus, with almost 40,000 commuting from outside of the City of Vancouver.⁹ Furthermore, UBC is projected to reach a daytime population of 100,000 community members by 2050, which will both increase the on-campus population in areas like Wesbrook Place and expand the commuting population from across the Lower Mainland.¹⁰ Existing transit infrastructure is not equipped to handle current and future ridership needs; as the busiest bus route in the US and Canada, the 99 B-Line passes over 500,000 commuters annually.¹¹ Additionally, over 37% of students who commute spend more than an hour travelling to campus each way, every day—that is almost 17,000 students.¹² This disproportionately impacts students from cities like Surrey, New Westminster, and the Tri-Cities.

Additionally, the current plan to end the Millennium Line Extension at Arbutus has key flaws, which further demonstrate the need for a SkyTrain Extension to UBC. The Arbutus station is set to open in 2027 in a residential neighbourhood, leaving over 4,000 students stranded half an hour away from UBC by bus at peak hours. The area lacks the necessary infrastructure and amenities to meet the demands of its ridership, which would put increased strain on existing bus routes, such as the 99 B-Line.¹³ While extending the line to Arbutus is useful, terminating it half an hour away from UBC means that the issues with transit capacity are shifted down the line, rather than being addressed.

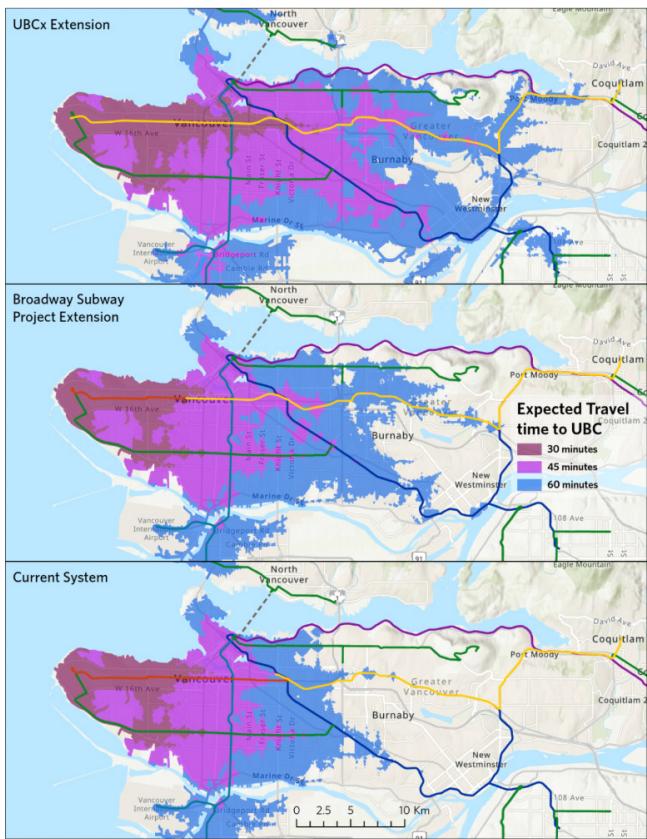
Simultaneously, a number of key UBC-bound routes on the Broadway Corridor have seen cuts to their Annual Service Hours, with Canada's busiest bus route, the 99 B-Line, losing almost 20,000 hours of service. The chart below proves that ridership on key routes has risen post-pandemic despite a cut in service hours to and from UBC.¹⁴

Route	2022 Annual Service Hours	2024 Annual Service Hours	2022 Boardings	2024 Boardings
99 B-Line	136,600	116,800 (-19,800)	9,720,000	10,624,000 (+904,000)
84	38,600	33,700 (-4,900)	1,899,000	2,168,000 (+269,000)
9	87,600	75,900 (-11,700)	3,536,000	3,994,000 (+458,000)

Additionally, the lack of rapid transit service for nearly 40,000 UBC commuters from beyond the City of Vancouver has second-order effects that negatively impact the entire region. Currently, over 77,000 of the 145,000 daily trips to UBC are made by transit; however, the distance and relative inaccessibility of UBC mean that residents of further away municipalities are unable to use transit for commutes to UBC reliably. With over 3,000 UBC students, staff, and faculty residing in the Tri-Cities and another 5,000 in Surrey south of the Fraser, it is not surprising that nearly 70,000 daily trips are made to UBC by car, rather than braving a transit commute of more than an hour and a half. While drivers make up a minority of traffic on campus, the reliance many members of the UBC community have on cars increases gridlock on roadways across the Lower Mainland, especially on important arterial roadways in Vancouver, such as Broadway, 41st Avenue, and Marine Drive.

Benefits to Students and Staff

Given the current commuting needs of the UBC Community, the UBC SkyTrain Extension's benefits for UBC's 80,000 students, staff, and faculty are clear. The project would reduce the majority of commutes by 30 minutes each way. Much of East Vancouver is currently a 45-minute to 1-hour commute away from UBC, and most of Burnaby is beyond a 1-hour commute from campus. The SkyTrain to UBC would reduce commutes to 30-45 minutes for most commuters from these areas. Areas like North Surrey, North Vancouver, New Westminster, and the Tri-Cities are currently close to a one and a half hour commute to UBC. For many students, staff, and faculty members in these cities, commutes would be shortened to under 1 hour.



Reducing commutes by half an hour each way for UBC commuters from further-away cities in the Lower Mainland would also reduce the community's reliance on cars. The SkyTrain to UBC would shorten commutes enough that driving and transiting to campus become equivalent time commitments for many commuters in Coquitlam, New Westminster, and Surrey. Based on the calculations of the AMS's Climate Strategy Coordinator, using transit instead of a small car would save a student commuting from Coquitlam over \$170 per month in fuel costs.¹⁵ Monthly fuel savings would significantly reduce the cost of living for many students at UBC. For larger vehicles driven by staff, the SkyTrain would also help reduce emissions by 377.85 kgCO₂e per driver per month.¹⁶

The SkyTrain to UBC would also have significant impacts on student wellbeing and campus life. For many commuters, especially from cities further away such as Surrey, New Westminster, Coquitlam, the SkyTrain would allow them to save over an hour of commuting time every day. This allows students to spend more time on campus and participate in

on-campus social activities. It also gives students increased time to find jobs, enabling them to support themselves and fund their education. The UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework views the UBC SkyTrain as "critical to meeting sustainability and wellbeing objectives" as it will allow students to be more involved with the community, have more time for employment, and participate more in life in Metro Vancouver.

Benefits to the rest of Metro Vancouver

Outside of the UBC Community, the SkyTrain has numerous benefits that truly mark it as a regional priority for all of Metro Vancouver. By accelerating travel to and from UBC, it allows the UBC Community to spend more time in other areas in the Lower Mainland. The Broadway Corridor is a hub of activity with outsized regional economic importance. Despite making up only 5% of Metro Vancouver's population, the area accounts for 9% of jobs, 9% of regional GDP, and 7% of the region's businesses.¹⁷ Improving the connection for UBC's 20,000-person on-campus population to the corridor would increase the customer base for businesses in the Broadway Corridor and lead to further benefits for regional GDP and economic activity. An underground extension of SkyTrain to UBC would also save drivers using the Broadway corridor over two million hours each year by 2050 and save freight moving along the corridor over 70,000 hours per year by 2050,¹⁸ all of which would enable increased economic activity along the corridor.

The UBC SkyTrain Extension would also reduce the UBC community's reliance on cars, reducing congestion and traffic on major roadways beyond just the Broadway Corridor. The reduced reliance on cars will especially benefit residents of cities like New Westminster, the Tri-Cities, and Surrey by reducing the commuters' need to drive and reducing the strain on roadways like the Port Mann Bridge, Pattullo Bridge, Kingsway, and the Barnet Highway.

Beyond reducing traffic and connecting Vancouver's businesses and jobs to customers at UBC, it also connects Metro Vancouver's residents

to amenities and services at UBC, such as the UBC Faculty of Medicine and healthcare precinct, which provide integrated teaching, research, clinical, and acute/extended care facilities and services. Improved interconnectivity with the region allows residents of Metro Vancouver to access healthcare facilities like UBC Hospital, which has considerably shorter wait times than Vancouver General Hospital. Further connecting the campus to the rest of the region also improves the ability for medical students and professionals to travel between locations, promoting research, reducing barriers to medical school and healthcare training, whilst improving patient outcomes. The SkyTrain would also create tens of thousands of new units of housing near the Broadway Corridor in line with the Provincial Government's legislation to allow for multi-unit buildings on single-family lots,¹⁹ making it easier for young medical and science professionals to live near, or commute to, work. According to the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute, these are all "major assets in attracting and retaining top talent" for BC's healthcare sector.²⁰

Beyond healthcare, the SkyTrain enables residents of Metro Vancouver to access amenities at UBC, such as educational and cultural attractions like the Museum of Anthropology and the Beaty Biodiversity Museum, performance venues like the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, and outdoor spaces like the UBC Farm, Pacific Spirit Park, and Nitobe Gardens. Increased access will promote tourism, increase economic output through events and venue bookings, and strengthen the regional community through increased connectivity.²¹

The SkyTrain to UBC is also projected to boost the economy of Metro Vancouver through the creation of new jobs and new housing. By increasing the availability of transit-oriented development and providing transit capacity to support the residents of new developments, UBC projects the SkyTrain Extension to enable the creation of 50,000 new residential units on the west side of Vancouver.²² It would also help meet the transportation demands for already-approved developments, such as the Jericho Lands, supporting Indigenous-Led projects and economic reconciliation. In addition to unlocking housing in the region, the SkyTrain Extension would create thousands of jobs in

construction for the line itself, as well as for the housing that would follow the line's route.²³

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⁸<https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/metro-vancouver-translink-bus-exchanges-rapid-transit-demand>

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¹³https://amsubc-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/vpexternal_ams_abc_ca/EakzL47PxVdJvxThBP8wfc8B-Aea8MtzemVnaWgZA-J54g?e=xT283H

¹⁴<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/translink/viz/2024TSPR-BusSeaBusSummaries/TheWorkbook>

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¹⁷https://skytrain.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/UBC_COV_Broadway-Corridor_v10.3.pdf

¹⁸https://amsubc-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/vpexternal_ams_abc_ca/EakzL47PxVdJvxThBP8wfc8B-Aea8MtzemVnaWgZA-J54g?e=xT283H

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²⁰https://skytrain.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/UBC_COV_Broadway-Corridor_v10.3.pdf https://skytrain.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/UBC_COV_Broadway-Corridor_v10.3.pdf

²¹https://skytrain.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/UBC_COV_Broadway-Corridor_v10.3.pdf

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²³https://amsubc-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/vpexternal_ams_abc_ca/EakzL47PxVdJvxThBP8wfc8B-Aea8MtzemVnaWgZA-J54g?e=oWd8WI

\$10 Student Rate on BC Ferries



GSS
UBC VANCOUVER



simon fraser
student society



BC Ferries can play a pivotal role in making regional transportation more accessible to students by instating a \$10 flat-rate ferry fare for post-secondary students travelling as foot passengers, taking shape as a one-year trial during off-peak periods.

BC Ferries is not just a service; it is a core part of the transportation infrastructure that glues British Columbia together. As part of the Trans-Canada highway system, BC Ferries often provides the only connection that coastal communities have to one another and to larger metropolitan regions, where people travel for employment, access to services, and education. As BC's flagship university, students from around the province choose to study at UBC, often for programs and research opportunities that are not available elsewhere. Students from Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, the Southern Gulf Islands, the Central and North Coasts, and Haida Gwaii often have no means of transportation between their hometowns and university without using BC Ferries. Students may wish to travel home for Winter and Summer Break, Thanksgiving, Reading Break, and other holidays, but may opt not to due to high fares. Despite there being discounted fares¹ for children, seniors, and K-12 school trips, post-secondary students must pay the full adult fare.

While students continue to face compounding financial pressures, BC Ferries raised fares by 3.2-3.25% in 2024.² With a trip to Nanaimo (Departure Bay) from Vancouver (Horseshoe Bay) costing \$20 on foot or \$70 by car,³ students from central Vancouver Island can expect to pay \$40-\$140 round-trip for a trip home to see family. Additionally, as Indigenous students and students from rural communities are more likely to rely on ferry services, the removal of the once-existing student rate has reinforced barriers to students being able to travel home with ease, increasing inequities in mobility. Allowing students to sail at a reduced cost during off-peak times of the year would fill unused capacity. Monthly traffic reports⁴ also suggest spikes in ferry usage during academic breaks, such as in March and October.

Evidence from similar implemented programs also suggests that a student discount would induce new demand and ridership for ferries. The introduction

of the Transit U-Pass program at UBC and SFU resulted in a 48% increase in ridership.⁵ The introduction of free travel for youth by Washington State Ferries similarly produced 16.5 million youth trips in 2023.⁶ Hullo Ferries, a key competitor to BC Ferries, drove ridership to 400,000 in their first year,⁷ in part due to a 50% youth discount. Ebus and VIA Rail already use student discounts to create brand loyalty and help fill empty seats during off-peak times. By running the program as a one-year pilot during off-peak hours, BC Ferries would also be able to collect data on ridership, revenue impacts, and social outcomes, which could inform future decision-making. Having the pilot project be off-peak will also help fill empty sailings, attracting new riders rather than displacing full-fare riders, and helping offset reduced per-ticket revenues in low-demand periods. With over \$1.11 billion in annual revenues, and a record 22.6M passengers in fiscal year 2024, BC Ferries is well positioned to test a limited, low-cost pilot program.

Higher student mobility would also have other social, ecological, and economic benefits. Students gain increased access to co-op and internship opportunities, conferences, and networking events, thereby supporting workforce development. Student mobility also strengthens local economies and boosts tourism. The flat walk-on fare would also encourage more trips by foot as opposed to by car, reducing emissions, improving road safety, easing traffic congestion, and helping young people build long-term sustainable habits.

A \$10 flat-rate student ferry fare is both economically feasible and socially beneficial. Students are a key part of BC's future, and an investment in students is an investment in the best interests of our province. Building on the provincial government's commitment to youth empowerment, accessibility, sustainability, and education, we hope that our proposal will be implemented so that all students can learn, explore, and thrive in communities across our great province.

¹Ferry fares and fees. BC Ferries (<https://www.bcferries.com/routes-fares/ferry-fares>)

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³p.5, Fare Index. BC Ferries. (https://www.bcferries.com/web_image/hc5/h09/9037480460318.pdf)

⁴Traffic Statistics – Policies, Reports, & Plans. BC Ferries. (<https://www.bcferries.com/in-the-community/resources>)

⁵p. 15, U-Pass at the University of British Columbia: Lessons for Effective Demand Management in the Campus Context. Graham Senft, SFU Urban Studies. (<http://conf.tac-atc.ca/english/resourcecentre/readingroom/conference/conf2005/docs/s9/Senft.pdf>)

⁶Fare-free transit programs boost youth ridership on public transportation statewide. Washington State Department of Transportation. (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/news/2024/fare-free-transit-programs-boost-youth-ridership-public-transportation-statewide>)

⁷Hullo Ferries Celebrates One Year of Sailings. Hullo Ferries. (<https://hullo.com/media/hullo-ferries-celebrates-one-year-of-sailings/>)

Increase Service for University Bus Routes



Students rely on good public transit, as the vast majority of students are commuters. Many students are unable to afford a personal vehicle, and public transit is a clearly vital public service to ensure students can access classes, housing, and employment.

Despite this, all of the universities on this trip have noted a lack of transit capacity. This brief outlines route and service issues at post-secondary institutions across BC, and **we call upon the provincial government to adequately fund BC Transit and TransLink to increase operational capacity, ensuring that university-bound routes that serve students have adequate total service-hours.**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Last year, UBC's number of commuter trips rebounded beyond the pre-pandemic year of 2019. After taking a plunge during the pandemic year of 2020, commuting by public transit is once again the preferred method of transit of campus commuters. This has been borne out not just in percentage terms, but raw numbers, with the number of transit riders in 2024 marking a post-pandemic high.

Travel Mode	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Transit	80,200 (53.9%)	16,800 (26.5%)	65,500 (49.2%)	66,600 (48.6%)	77,100 (53.3%)	79,000 (51.8%)
Total	148,800	63,400	133,100	137,000	144,600	152,400

Simultaneously, a number of key UBC-bound routes have seen cuts to their Annual Service Hours, with Canada's busiest bus route, the 99 B-Line, losing almost 20,000 hours of service. The chart below proves that ridership on key routes has risen post-pandemic despite a cut in service hours to and from UBC.

Route	2022 Annual Service Hours	2024 Annual Service Hours	2022 Boardings	2024 Boardings
99 B-Line	136,600	116,800 (-19,800)	9,720,000	10,624,000 (+904,000)
25	111,000	102,200 (-8,800)	6,050,000	6,361,000 (+311,000)
84	38,600	33,700 (-4,900)	1,899,000	2,168,000 (+269,000)
9	87,600	75,900 (-11,700)	3,536,000	3,994,000 (+458,000)

The provincial government's emergency injection of funding for TransLink is welcome, but it is only a temporary stopgap. The currently 80,000-person strong UBC community (60,000 of whom commute from off campus), is expected to grow to 100,000 by 2050, including doubling the population of the University Neighbourhoods from 15,000 to 30,000. Not only does UBC need the SkyTrain, until then it needs adequate and sufficient bus service.

We are calling on the provincial government to ensure the 99, 25, 84, and 9 are provided adequate service hours to serve UBC's growing commuter population until the UBC SkyTrain is built.

The University of Victoria

Over the last decade, the Capital Regional District has seen a surge in population growth driven by booming Westshore communities like Langford and Colwood.¹ Despite the clear need for growth and the addition of the Royal Roads' Langford Campus, an underserved bus network leaves the District as a patchwork of municipalities struggling to keep pace with population growth or expectations for frequency and reliability. Bus speeds are declining due to congestion and limited yard capacity, with transit-reliant students hard-hit.

Municipality	2020 Population	2021 Population	2022 Population	2023 Population	2024 Population
Langford	46,333	49,199	53,120	55,525	58,320 (+11,987)
Colwood	19,330	19,798	20,896	21,572	22,151 (+2,821)
Sooke	15,236	15,712	16,475	16,897	17,128 (+1,892)
Capital Region	428,098	433,329	445,385	453,035	460,317 (+32,219)

BC Transit's 2025 recommendations offer new and urgent solutions. Automation-ready infrastructure would cut operating costs by up to 40%, freeing resources for service expansion across the district. With a system that can directly compete with private vehicles for travel time and convenience, households will be able to cut costs and get to where they need to be more efficient, safe, and sustainable.

To deliver this, UVSS and RRUSA call upon the provincial government to;

- Fund a Rapid Transit Corridor linking downtown Victoria to the Westshore as a Phase 1 priority to shorten commutes for UVic students
- Plan for 24-hour bus service for major employment hubs to support student shift workers and nightlife economies
- Provide more funding to BC transit to adequately adopt modern service standards that define "rapid" as ≤ 5 -minute peak service and "frequent" as ≤ 10 -minute off-peak.
- A rapid shuttle between Royal Roads' two campuses
- A direct bus from Royal Roads' University Loop to downtown Victoria
- More bus service with access to College Road at the Royal Roads University Drive bus stop

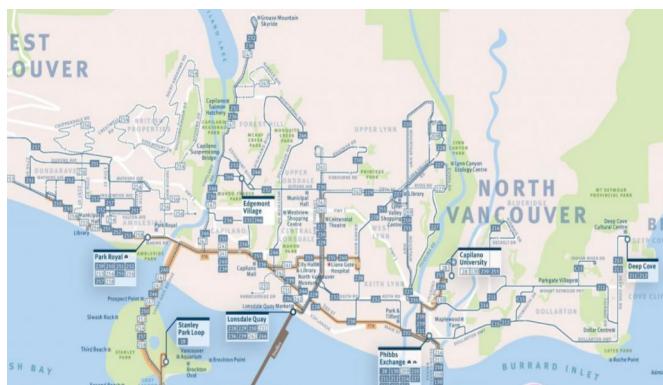
These recommendations would create a connected, rapid, and reliable transit corridor that unites the Capital Regional District and beyond. By cutting back on car dependency and supporting equitable access to jobs, schools, and healthcare, the province can make the Capital Regional District an interconnected hub of opportunity.

In a 2024 Commuter Count Study done by Royal Roads, 1,499 arrivals to campus were counted over the three days.² Since 2018, the share of those arrivals that arrived on public transit increased from 8.1% to 22.5%, reflecting the Royal Roads students' growing need for transit capacity to and from campus.

Capilano University

In 2020, CapU was severed from direct regional transit service to the rest of Metro Vancouver as part of TransLink's cuts to 3 routes: the 239, 130, and 28. Now, as one of the few post-secondary institutions in Metro Vancouver without a direct link, students face commute times averaging 80 minutes each way, with some reporting trips of up to 3 hours.³

Pre 2020



Post 2020



This reorganization has made commuting by transit less convenient, and the numbers bear it out: 27% of CapU students have reported that they were unable to board a bus because it was full once per week,⁴ whilst 44% say they take 3 or more transfers on public transit each way.⁵ With these cuts, more students are driving across Ironworkers Bridge each day and further intensifying the route's long-standing congestion problems, undermining sustainability with packed parking lots and higher emissions.

While TransLink has substituted the 3 routes with 2 new express buses, the R2 and the 222, both terminate at Phibbs Exchange and fall short of direct connectivity to CapU campus. Extending any of these new routes to campus grounds would close the last gap in the network for tens of thousands of riders and reconnect the University to the rest of Metro Vancouver. Those extra 10 minutes of service up the mountain would relieve chronic overcrowding on the 245 and backlog at Phibbs Exchange whilst supporting Transit-Oriented Development housing growth and sustainable commuting as well.

After five years of disconnection, students are simply asking for one thing: a direct, regional transit link that makes it possible to choose public transit again. We urge the provincial government and TransLink to collaborate on restoring at least one direct, regional bus route to Capilano University, whether by extending a new express route or reinstating one of the former lines.

The University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Between 2016 and 2021, Kelowna was the fastest-growing census metropolitan area in all of Canada. With rising student enrolment at UBCO and a growing younger population,⁶ transit service levels are not keeping pace. U-Pass is clearly a vital resource for students, with over 11,000 activations by UBCO students during the 2024-2025 school year. Despite ongoing urban expansion and increasing dependence on BC Transit, service quality and availability are yet to scale accordingly.

In particular, the lack of late-night winter service harms those who are working part-time or attending evening classes. These barriers impact those who need transit the most, whether it be studying late on-campus for academic success or getting back home off-campus without depending on rideshare services.

Insufficient transit capacity and coverage are constraining student participation in education and the workforce while placing additional pressure on already vulnerable groups across the Central Okanagan.

By doubling transit funding from \$30 million to \$60 million as recommended by the City of Kelowna, BC Transit can double the transit fleet over the next 10 years to develop fleet and service capacity with strategic investments such as constructing the BC Transit electric bus facility by 2030. Increasing service by over 15% over the next five years to meet population and ridership projections would reduce student financial strain, decrease dependency on private vehicles, and promote equitable access to education and employment. Moreover, enhanced transit infrastructure will directly support British Columbia's climate and housing goals by promoting urban density and reducing emissions.

University of the Fraser Valley

The University of the Fraser Valley has a student population of nearly 16,000 spread across the Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver (see figure 1), most of whom are commuters who do not live within walking distance of campus.

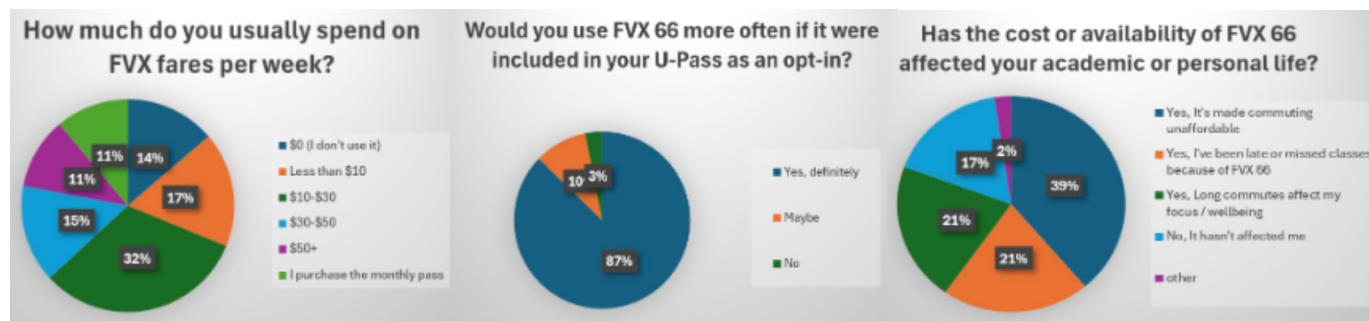
For students living west of Abbotsford, the Fraser Valley Express (FVX 66) is the only public transit service that connects Metro Vancouver to UFV campuses in Abbotsford and Chilliwack, leaving no other option for commuters unless they can afford a car.

FVX 66 has no student pricing model. Monthly adult FVX pass costs are \$100 per month, or approximately \$400 per semester. This is for access to only one single bus route. UFV U-Pass costs \$44.26 per semester and covers Abbotsford, Mission, Chilliwack and access to three recreation facilities.

Therefore, students are paying 10 times more for a single route than they pay for their entire U-Pass package. All these students also have to buy TransLink fare passes because Metro Vancouver is not included in the UFV U-Pass.

Product	Cost per Semester	Coverage
UFV U-Pass	\$44.26	Abbotsford, Mission, Chilliwack + Rec Centers
FVX 66 Pass	~\$400	One single bus route
Total burden for Metro Van student coming to UFV	\$444+	Multiple products just to get to class

In a recent UFVSUS survey, 37.6% report FVX is part of their commute to UFV, 87.2% say they would use FVX more if it were available in a U-Pass opt-in model.



FVX westbound service from Abbotsford ends around 8 pm. UFV class schedule runs to 10 pm. Students routinely leave class early to avoid being stranded.

Capacity is also a reliability problem. Multiple public reports and testimonies describe FVX buses reaching 80 passengers on a 60-passenger unit. FVX remains routinely over capacity at peak periods, with buses reaching passenger loads beyond safe limits, while funding increases announced for additional service hours have not yet translated into visible improvements for students.

We recommend that the provincial government

1. Authorize BC Transit and FVRD to create a student pricing tier on FVX 66, and allow UFV and the Student Union Society to integrate FVX 66 into an opt-in U-Pass model.
2. Expand peak and late-evening service hours for FVX 66 to align with UFV instructional schedule and avoid forcing students to miss class.

SFU

SFU is home to over 35,000 students, and 80% rely on public transit. However, access to the Burnaby Mountain campus remains constrained by limited bus capacity, winter shutdowns, and a lack of alternate routes. More than 25,000 transit trips occur daily, primarily on Route 145, where pass-ups and long waits are common during peak hours.^{7 8 9 10} Severe weather regularly disrupts this service, bus operations are delayed or halted about ten days each winter, isolating the campus and forcing class cancellations.^{11 12} With only two steep roads, Gaglardi Way and Burnaby Mountain Parkway, serving the university, a single accident or snowfall can block access entirely, leaving no reliable redundancy for commuters or emergency vehicles.¹³

The Burnaby Mountain Gondola addresses these challenges by providing a six-minute, all-weather connection between Production Way-University Station and SFU. Using a stable three-cable (3S) system, it will operate safely in snow and high winds, ensuring predictable year-round access. Beyond reliability, the gondola enhances safety and emergency preparedness by offering a secondary evacuation route should road access be cut off by fire, accident, or earthquake.¹⁴

Improved transit will also strengthen the social and economic fabric of the mountain. Easier access to campus facilities and Burnaby Mountain Park will expand tourism and community engagement, while reducing the sense of isolation often experienced by SFU's commuter students, who spend an average of 95 minutes daily in transit. The surrounding UniverCity neighbourhood, projected to grow from 5,000 to 10,000 residents, will benefit from transit-oriented development and rising home values typical of

neighbourhoods linked to rapid transit.^{15 16} In short, it's a project with enormous potential benefits not just for students, but for residents of Burnaby Mountain and the Metro Vancouver region as a whole.

We urge the provincial government to demonstrate a renewed commitment to this project, dedicating the necessary funding and resources, and engaging in transit-oriented conversations in the Legislature that seek to benefit multiple cities and industries.

¹<https://www.crd.ca/media/file/2024populationestimatepdf>

²<https://www.royalroads.ca/sites/default/files/2025-03/2024%20Commuter%20Count%20and%20Mode%20Split%20Study%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>

³https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-5VPFGiLEEL_2BE3hTnXZt2hQ_3D_3D/

⁴https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-5VPFGiLEEL_2BE3hTnXZt2hQ_3D_3D/

⁵https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-5VPFGiLEEL_2BE3hTnXZt2hQ_3D_3D/

⁶<https://infonews.ca/news/86388/kelowna-one-of-the-few-places-getting-younger-in-the-thompson-okanagan/>.

⁷ Simon Fraser University (SFU). (n.d.). Give Students a Lift: Burnaby Mountain

⁸ Gondola Advocacy Page. <https://www.sfu.ca/gondola.html>.

⁹ TransLink. (2011). Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit Business Case Summary. Metro Vancouver: TransLink.

¹⁰ Translink. (2024). 2024 TSPR - Bus/Seabus Summaries. https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/translink/viz/2024TSPR-BusSeaBusSummaries/1_BusRouteSummaries.

¹¹ Fisher, I. (2012). Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit Project: Success in Integrating Sustainable Transportation and Land Use. Transportation Association of Canada.

¹³ TransLink. (2011). Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit Business Case Summary. Metro Vancouver: TransLink.

¹⁴ Gangdev, S. (2022, January 28). Burnaby council endorses proposed Burnaby Mountain gondola project. Burnaby Beacon

¹⁵ Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS). (2021). Federal Transit Advocacy Brief.

¹⁶ Craig, A., & Chernoff, A. (2022). Rapid transit expansion and housing prices in Metro Vancouver. UBC News.