

The 2023 Provincial Budget: Ambitious on Skills Training, More Demands on Post-Secondary Education

(For immediate release – Port Moody, BC, 28 February 2023) – The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) welcomes continued investment in BC’s post-secondary education in Budget 2023 “A Stronger BC, for Everyone,” but raises concerns over the priority given to short-term, experimental skills training over more credible, accredited post-secondary education.

“We appreciate the broad investment in social causes reflected in the budget and believe the lives of students and faculty will be improved through investments in housing, health care, and the economy,” says CUFA BC President Dr. Ken Christie. “The budget’s focus on short-term programs combined with a funding increase that is unlikely to address current inflation potentially puts at risk core academic programming.”

With the announcement of \$480 million over three years to skills training, the Honourable Minister Conroy centres the concept of short-term skills training as the key to building a strong, sustainable workforce. The province has allocated \$2.8 billion to the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, \$2.5 billion of which will go toward operating grants at BC’s post-secondary institutions. This funding allocation is about 3.5 per cent of the total operating expenses in Budget 2023, a proportional reduction compared to last year’s 3.7 per cent of budget allocation, which raises concerns about the ability of institutions to meet the Province’s demands amid significant growing financial pressures. Post-secondary institutions will also receive an additional \$818.6 million in capital spending to see through previously approved projects, with most of these projects addressing the real need for affordable on-campus student housing.

This is the NDP government’s first full budget under Premier Dave Eby, and it commits \$80.2 billion to making life better for British Columbians by investing affordable homes, strengthening health care and mental health care, and fighting climate change, while training people for good-paying jobs in a cleaner economy.

There is a great deal of hope for the role of post-secondary education in BC’s future. Faculty will be essential allies to the Province in helping deliver on its financial promises. Faculty at BC’s research universities are excited to be part of the solution to the economic, environmental, and social challenges facing British Columbians today, and look forward to working with the Ministry as a key stakeholder on post-secondary education.



For further information or comment, please contact CUFA BC Executive Director Annabree Fairweather at 604-367-5856 or executive.director@cufa.bc.ca.

CUFA BC represents over 5,500 faculty members, professional librarians, lecturers, instructors, and other academics at the five research-intensive universities in British Columbia, which include University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, Royal Roads University and University of Northern British Columbia.

CUFA BC [celebrates fifty years](#) of working closely with the member Faculty Associations at each institution. Our purposes are to support high-quality post-secondary education and research in British Columbia and to advocate for the interests of our members.

