

Provincial Budget 2023 Consultations: Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services Report

An Analysis

by

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA BC)

October 2022



ABOUT CUFA BC

Celebrating fifty years of leadership and engagement, CUFA BC represents more than 5,500 faculty members, including professors, academic librarians, lecturers, instructors, and sessionals at five research and doctoral universities in BC: University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, University of Northern British Columbia, and Royal Roads University.

Our mandate is to act as the unified voice of our members on a variety of issues affecting post-secondary education in BC. We promote the value of high-quality post-secondary education; academic freedom; university governance; academic labour relations; and research and teaching to the provincial government and wider public. We produce timely research on a variety of subjects, including university governance, government policies, trends in funding and developments at research universities, and policy analyses.



Table of Contents

Background.....	4
Consultation Process	4
CUFA BC Recommendations.....	5
CUFA BC’s Take Away: Too Many Needs for Any One Provincial Budget	6
Highlighting Our Successes.....	6
Looking to Others.....	7
Public Support for Advanced Education	9
Summary.....	10

Appendices

Appendix A: 2023 Budget Report on Advanced Education.....	11
Composition of the Committee.....	12
Terms of Reference.....	13
Executive Summary.....	14
Advanced Education.....	18
Summary of Recommendation.....	27
Public Survey Results.....	38
Appendix B: CUFA BC Recommendations to 2023 Provincial Budget.....	42
Addendum to the Submission.....	51



Budget 2023 Consultations: Analysis of Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services Report

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the “Committee”) submitted its report to the legislative assembly on August 11, 2022 following their provincial Budget 2023 Consultation.¹ The full report comprises 128 pages and is organized into sections addressing each of British Columbia’s public sectors. For the purpose of this analysis, CUFA BC will focus on the advanced education section, which has been enclosed in Appendix A.

Background

Each year, the Committee opens itself to the public as part of a consultation process to inform the upcoming provincial budget. This Committee comprises members of the legislative assembly from across the political spectrum and is itself non-partisan.² Information about the Committee, including members and terms of reference are included in Appendix A. The Minister of Finance provides an initial consultation paper directing their work.³ This year, the Minister of Finance identified the province’s priorities as putting people first; creating a strong, sustainable economy for everyone; building a stronger environment for our future; and helping to reduce costs for British Columbians. Government’s vision for an economic future is an inclusive, sustainable, and innovative economy. The Committee made 216 recommendations, 20 of which pertain to Advanced Education and Skills Training.

Consultation Process

The consultation process took place in June 2022 and involved a public survey, presentations from community members and organizations, as well as options for submitting recommendations in writing and audio-visual formats. During the consultation period, the Committee heard 306 presentations and received 372 submissions and 861 responses to an online survey. Presentations were primarily virtual with limited opportunity to present in-person. All presentations were livestreamed with Hansards.⁴ Like in previous years since the pandemic started, prospective presenters submitted a request to present and, upon approval, organizers arranged presenters into groups with similar interests and assigned meeting dates/times. Consultations from post-secondary interest groups were organized virtually on June 18. In our assigned schedule, CUFA BC President Dr. Dan Laitsch presented alongside representatives from FPSE and Camosun College Faculty Association. CUFA BC also provided a formal written submission and follow-up submission at the request of the Committee (Appendix B).

¹ The report can be found here <https://www.leg.bc.ca/content/CommitteeDocuments/42nd-parliament/3rd-session/fgs/budget-consultation/Budget-2023-Consultation-Report.pdf>

² <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees/42ndparliament-3rdsession-fgs/members>

³ 2022 Consultation Paper: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/government-finances/bc-budget/2023-budget-consultation.pdf>

⁴ Hansards from the public presentation can be found <https://www.leg.bc.ca/documents-data/committees-transcripts/20220607am-Finance-Victoria-Blues>



CUFA BC Recommendations

Our recommendations for the budget consultation focused on several themes, including stability and recovery, as well as rebalancing the economic and social systems. CUFA BC argued that public universities have been instrumental to the Government of British Columbia's priorities in putting people first; addressing lasting and meaningful reconciliation; addressing equity and racism; creating a better future through addressing climate change; and contributing to a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone. BC's public universities have long been recognized as vital to ensuring the social and economic well-being of the province and British Columbians. Our members provide a crucial level of support to Government and the public, driving the recovery, innovation, and transformation of our society.

CUFA BC made six recommendations organized around three topics:

I. Support People at BC's Research Universities

1. **Strategically Reinvest:** Government has the opportunity to strategically reinvest in BC's research universities at a time when they will best contribute to the economy and a *just recovery* for all.
2. **Restructure the Funding Model:** Restructure the funding model to focus on people, assert the primacy of public funding to universities by reducing overreliance on precarious employment and international student tuition.
3. **Stability:** Create a stabilization fund offset the huge impacts of inflation and subsequent consequences on the currency exchange that impacts teaching and research materials:
 - a. support the human infrastructure of post-secondary institutions by expanding faculty personnel.
 - b. support better health plans and comprehensive mental health initiatives for all campus community members, including faculty.
 - c. address institutions' risk exposure caused by expanded reliance on international student tuition by freezing international student tuition, implementing seat caps, and providing funding to offset the loss of income until the system stabilizes.
 - d. provide institutions with supports for essential US-based resources and supplies affected by fluctuating currency exchange rates, such as online textbooks, journals, software, and other licenses, as well as lab supplies and reagents for research and teaching needs.

II. Support Research

4. **Provincial Transitional Research Grant:** Create a broad-based provincial research grant open to all disciplines, STEM and non-STEM, to support researchers negatively impacted by the pandemic and rising inflation. Jumpstarting research programmes is necessary. It requires a targeted infusion of resources to support research until grant monies and inflation levels return to normal, personnel are re-hired and trained, labs are fully restored, and research collaborations can be rejuvenated.

III. Support Truth and Reconciliation, Equity, and Inclusiveness

5. **Internet Access As Essential Service:** Through the lenses of Truth and Reconciliation as well as equity and inclusion, continue investing in province-wide internet access, connectivity, and infrastructure. We must ensure Indigenous communities, as well as all rural and remote communities, have access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet.
6. **Truth and Reconciliation:** Implement the Calls to Action for the post-secondary education made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is an ethical imperative that Government provide ongoing funding to support BC universities and colleges in creating degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages (**Call to Action #16**), to hire Indigenous faculty into permanent positions, and to finance research programmes aimed at dismantling systems of racism, discriminations, the



criminalization of poverty, and state-sanctioned brutality. Further, work with the federal government and your provincial colleagues to implement the following:

- a. **Call to Action #11:** We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
- b. **Call to Action #62(ii):** We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- c. **Call to Action #63:** We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including developing learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- d. **Call to Action #65:** We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

CUFA BC's Take Away: Too Many Needs for Any One Provincial Budget

The Committee's recommendations are broad and touch on issues that generally represent the interests of all the presenters, even if they don't specifically focus on faculty and research issues. The recommendations address the need for greater funding in the system overall; issues of affordability for students and institutions; problematic reliance on revenue from international students; and investment in retaining students in critical sectors upon their graduation. There were specific recommendations that would support growing faculty complement, expand diversity and inclusion for equity-deserving communities, and support research in BC's post-secondary institutions.

There were a lot of asks this year representing a plurality of interests. In reading the report, it was clear that the Committee's biggest challenge was translating what they heard into cohesive recommendations that could meet the needs of everyone in the sector. Indeed, the bigger challenge will be for the Minister of Finance to satisfy the needs of the sector in budget 2023. Overall, the volume of needs of post-secondary stakeholders far outpaces the ability of any single budget to remediate. There is a singular, overarching need for systemic shift in post-secondary planning and funding at the provincial level.

Highlighting Our Successes

The Committee captured well the recommendations they received during stakeholder consultations. We were heard across the sector, and CUFA BC was recognized by name in several comments throughout the summary review. The Committee was also interested in what we had to say about international student enrolment trends and followed up with us to hear more. Since there were fewer participants in the consultation process this year than in previous years, there was greater opportunity to engage in discussion during the question and answer period of the presentations. Most importantly, a few of CUFA BC's recommendations were incorporated into the Committee's final recommendations to Government.

Of twenty recommendations made for the advanced education sector, the final report made the following recommendations, which reflect those made in our submission:

Diversity and Inclusion

Recommendation 17: Enable workforce development by committing the necessary learning supports to ensure full post-secondary access and retention for under-represented groups, including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, immigrants, and persons with disabilities.

Operational Funding

Recommendation 21: Work with post-secondary institutions to retain instructors, including by funding faculty positions in predictable, long-term contracts.

Research and Innovation

Recommendation 24: Support knowledge creation in BC through increased investment in post-secondary research.

Where the committee did not adopt our recommendations, they acknowledged our input in summary:

- “Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC advocated for a stabilization fund which would focus on reduction of institutional budgetary risk caused by an overreliance on international student tuition.” (page 20)
- “The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC stated that research supports are one of the best ways to help students, because they are often hired under grants to manage projects where they further develop the skills that feed into innovative developments and public private start-ups. They also noted that universities require a targeted infusion of resources to support research.” (page 21)

Overall, CUFA BC did well in being recognized by the Committee, and advanced the interests of the organization through participating in this public consultation process.

Looking to Others

In looking at what other groups in our sector presented, there was rich insight into the experiences of post-secondary from the perspectives of labour, employer, and student groups. Together, we provided nuance to a complex system. Other presenters highlighted the need for the following:

- Capital funding
 - invest in research space and modernizing facilities (UBC);
 - invest in specific capital projects for innovation building, interdisciplinary collaboration, and affordable on-campus housing (SFU; UBC; RRU; UVic Student’s Society); and
 - redress chronic underfunding that hits hard on campus services and facilities (CUPE Vancouver Island District Council).
- Diversity and Inclusion
 - invest in inclusive and accessible education, student accommodations and inclusive technology (UBC; Kwantlen Student Association; VIUFA; College of the Rockies FA); and
 - support Indigenous activities (Kwantlen Polytechnic University).
- International Students
 - address an equitable system that regulates the limits on international student tuition fee increases (VIU SU; BCIT SA; BCFS; Capilano SU).



- Operational Funding
 - invest in faculty and staff compensation, regularize faculty, and bring outsourced workers in-house (Camosun College FA; FPSE; CUPE Vancouver Island District Council);
 - invest in graduate student research, research, development, and innovation (RUCBC);
 - provide stable, transparent, predictable funding (TRU; Douglas Students' Union; Students' Union Okanagan of UBC); and
 - support greater financial flexibility for colleges similar to what the universities have for accumulated savings and reserves for long-term investments (BC Association of Institutes and Universities; College of the Rockies).
- Research and Innovation
 - invest in research and graduate student research (RUCBC; GSS BC); and
 - expand research supports at institutions other than the main research-intensive ones that are conducting research (BC Association of Institutes and Universities).
- Rural and Remote Institutions
 - better support funding to institutions and programs in rural communities (BC Colleges; College of the Rockies FA; NIC FA).
- Student Supports
 - invest in better mental health and wrap-around supports for students and staff (SFU Student Society; College of the Rockies FA; Capilano Students' Union).
- Work-Integrated Learning
 - fund co-op and work-integrated learning programs and on-the-job experience (Alma Mater Society; MOSAIC).

In reviewing the other advanced education presentations, there continues to be a political theme from last year and this about international students displacing domestic students. Presenters and Committee members discussed the trends of increased reliance on international students and concomitant tuition revenue, and suggested that domestic enrolments have declined as a result of preferential enrolments for international students. This argument is a false narrative. It pits students against each other and exacerbates xenophobic beliefs that “other” international students. It also obfuscates demographic trends in Canada with political decisions by governments to underfund post-secondary education.⁵ There has been a decrease in domestic student enrolments as a result of demographic shifts in the population. The increase in international student enrolments is independent of domestic enrolment trends, but have not resulted in displaced domestic students. It is the case, however, that international students are increasingly relied upon by institutions as a revenue stream that offsets funding shortfalls from government.

As in previous years, student issues continue to be the singular, truncated lens through which our sector advances issues about faculty, funding, research, and even articulating the diversity of needs for colleges, polytechnics, and teaching, research, and doctoral universities. Student groups, faculty and staff organizations, administrations, and other stakeholders centre their advocacy around students' needs in order to advance their positions. While it might be a necessary strategy for lobbying Government, it limits us. It feeds the narrative that faculty interests are valid only in relation—and secondarily—to those of students. CUFA BC affirms its goal to establish itself as a legitimate audience without needing to piggyback off the backs of student interests.

⁵ See Statistics Canada enrolment report <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5017> and Higher Education Strategy Associate's analysis <https://higheredstrategy.com/statscan-enrolment-day-2021/>

Public Support for Advanced Education

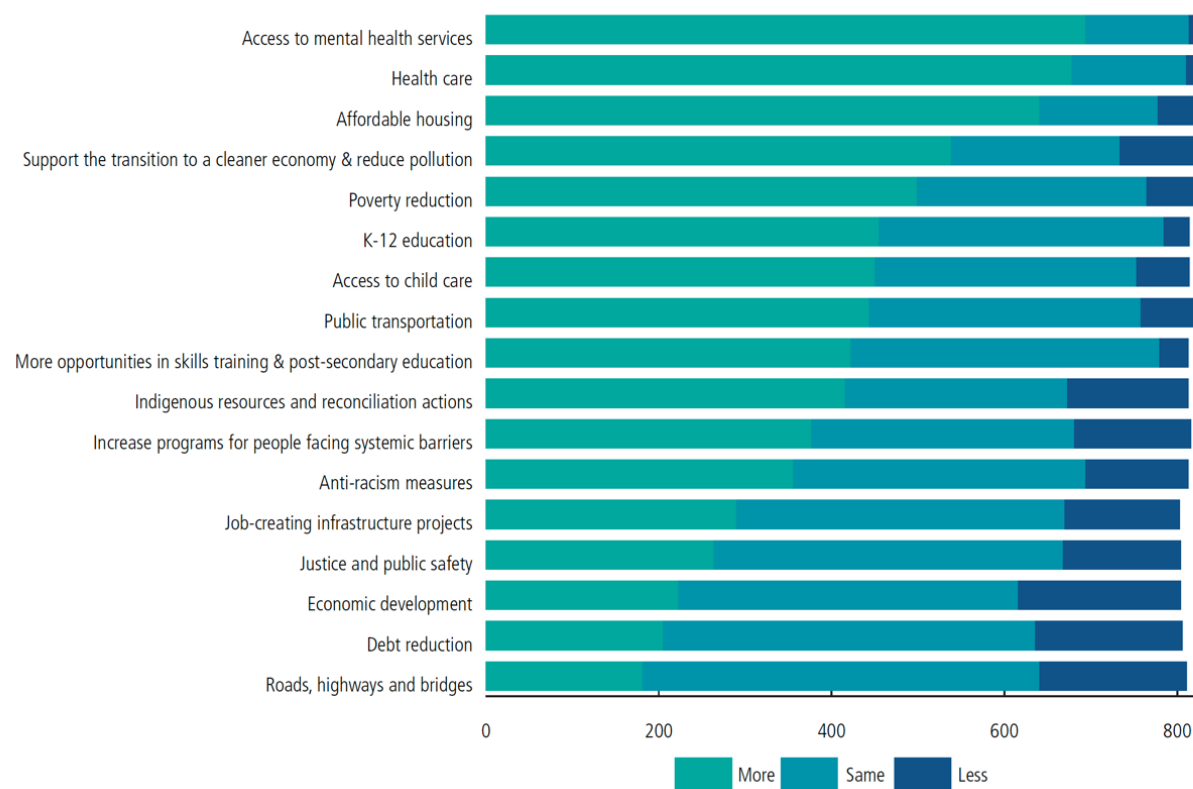
Advanced education is incredibly valuable to the province through its indirect role in building an educated and skilled society. It is not, however, a rallying cry at the forefront of public opinion. When asked to rank priorities in spending more, less, or the same in BC public sectors, top choices were access to mental health services; healthcare, and affordable housing (Fig. 1). Compared with last year’s survey, K-12 and Advanced Education, which were merged into one category, ranked number six on the provincial priority list. This year, post-secondary education was combined with opportunities in skills training and separated from K-12 education. Post -secondary education ranked ninth while K-12 education ranked sixth.

Figure 1. Survey Question 4

QUESTION 4

Which areas do you think should receive more, the same or less funding? (833 responses)

282 respondents wrote in other categories for this question. They advocated for more environmental protection specifically for old growth forests, with a smaller number requesting more climate change mitigation. Other respondents called for more support for neurodivergent individuals, those with disabilities, and seniors. Less frequent responses included improvements to healthcare and called for a halt to the Royal BC Museum renovation.

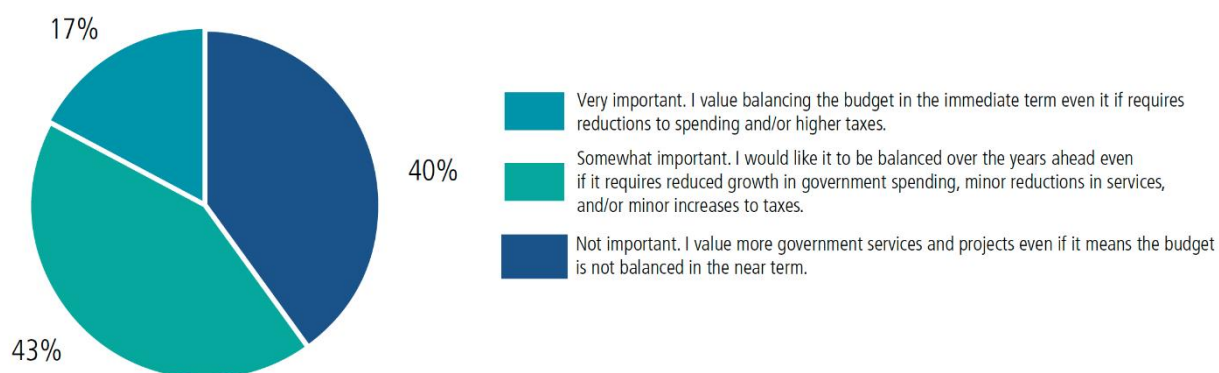


When asked how important it was to British Columbians for Government to have a balanced budget, 43% of respondents recommended against cuts to public services and tax increases, while 40% reported they supported a repayment strategy that would balance the books in the near term (Fig. 2). Compared to last year’s responses, however, there was higher support for maintaining government services and projects even if it meant the budget wasn’t balanced. There is an upward shift in the importance British Columbians assign to the deficit and Government spending.

Figure 2. Survey Question 5

QUESTION 5

How important is it to you to have a balanced budget? (848 responses)



Government’s understanding of advanced education is informed by public opinion. Advanced education isn’t a focus of Government nor is it on the radar of the broader public. It means that Government doesn’t have a nuanced understanding of our sector and yet has a great deal of influence over the health and success of post-secondary education through funding and policy decisions. All of this is to say that while advanced education has had public support in previous years, we don’t know how British Columbians value advanced education this year. For the 2023 provincial budget, the majority of respondents indicated they support Government’s priority to maintain services even if it means carrying a deficit for a decade or more. Considering the developments in public sector bargaining with the highest mandates we’ve seen in thirty years, it’s welcome that the majority of British Columbians view Government spending and balanced books as somewhat or not at all important.

Summary

The Budget 2023 consultations provided us with an opportunity to affirm the value and role of BC’s research universities. Advanced education is incredibly valuable to the province through its role in building an educated and skilled society. There are 72,000 workers in BC’s public post-secondary institutions; 39,000 of which are at the institutions of CUFA BC’s member faculty associations. The research universities and the faculty who work within them are a powerhouse of economic growth and opportunity in this province as employers, as contributors to the research and understanding of our geopolitical times, and as skilled educators leading the way in comprehensive skills training to the population. And in recent years, they have been asked to play a bigger role in the ‘just recovery’ as we continue to educate the population for the jobs of tomorrow, and support British Columbians in making life better for everyone.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services heard loud and clear from post-secondary stakeholders that the status quo of past provincial budgets can no longer meet the needs of our sector. We need a stronger economic and policy environment to build a strong, educated future for British Columbians. The Committee has made a series of recommendations that touch on significant gaps in a complex post-secondary system. We will see what the Minister of Finance does with these recommendations and CUFA BC will do its part in advocating for solutions with the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. We are at a moment in time that requires a systemic shift in post-secondary planning and funding at the provincial level.

Select Standing Committee on Finance and
Government Services

REPORT ON THE BUDGET 2023 CONSULTATION

August 2022



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Second Report
Third Session, 42nd Parliament

11 of 53

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Janet Routledge, MLA, Chair
Burnaby North

Karin Kirkpatrick, MLA, Deputy Chair
West Vancouver-Capilano

Brenda Bailey, MLA
Vancouver-False Creek

Megan Dykeman, MLA
Langley East

Renee Merrifield, MLA
Kelowna-Mission

Harwinder Sandhu, MLA
Vernon-Monashee

Mike Starchuk, MLA
Surrey-Cloverdale

Ben Stewart, MLA
Kelowna West

Henry Yao, MLA
Richmond South Centre

COMMITTEE STAFF

Jennifer Arril, Clerk of Committees

Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant

Katey Stickle, Committee Research Analyst

Natalie Beaton, Committee Research Analyst

Jesse Gordon, Committee Researcher

Jonathon Hamilton, Committee Research Assistant

Victor Lucy, Committee Research Assistant (Co-op)

Mary Newell, Administrative Coordinator

Jianding Bai, Administrative Assistant

Emma Curtis, Committee Assistant

TERMS OF REFERENCE

On February 17, 2022, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

1. Examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* (S.B.C. 2000, c. 23) and, in particular, to:
 - a. conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year by any means the Committee considers appropriate; and
 - b. prepare a report no later than November 15, 2021, on the results of those consultations.
2. Consider and make recommendations on the annual reports, rolling three-year service plans and budgets of the statutory officers, namely, the:
 - i. Auditor General
 - ii. Chief Electoral Officer
 - iii. Conflict of Interest Commissioner
 - iv. Human Rights Commissioner
 - v. Information and Privacy Commissioner
 - vi. Merit Commissioner
 - vii. Ombudsperson
 - viii. Police Complaint Commissioner
 - ix. Representative for Children and Youth
3. Inquire into and make recommendations with respect to other matters brought to the Committee's attention by any of the aforementioned statutory officers.

That the Committee be designated as the Committee referred to in sections 19, 20, 21 and 23 of the *Auditor General Act* (S.B.C. 2003, c. 2) and that the report in section 22 of the *Auditor General Act* (S.B.C. 2003, c. 2) be referred to the Committee.

That the Committee be designated as the Committee referred to in sections 47.02 and 47.03 of the *Human Rights Code* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 210).

That, in addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committees of the House, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

- a. appoint of its number one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee and to delegate to the subcommittees all or any of its powers except the power to report directly to the House;
- b. sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;
- c. adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and
- d. retain personnel as required to assist the Committee.

That the Committee report to the House as soon as possible; and that during a period of adjournment, the Committee deposit its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, or in the next following Session, as the case may be, the Chair present all reports to the House.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the “Committee”) conducts a consultation on the upcoming provincial budget. Between May 30 and June 24, 2022, British Columbians were invited to share their priorities for Budget 2023. During the consultation period, the Committee heard 306 presentations, received 372 submissions, and 861 responses to an online survey.

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the priorities and ideas shared by British Columbians during the consultation and outlines the Committee’s 216 recommendations. The report begins with a discussion on diversity, equity, and inclusion in recognition of how this theme applies across many of the subsequent topics and policy areas. Thereafter, themes are presented in alphabetical order; the numbering of recommendations does not indicate priority.

In discussing the themes brought forward during the consultation, Members recognize concerns of unaffordability, the rising cost of living, access to health care, and the need to ensure that the budget supports British Columbians during this time. The Committee notes a number of key themes that are evident throughout this report including the impact of climate change and the need to increase mitigation and resiliency, the need for better data to inform policy and decision making, the need for solutions to reflect unique local circumstances rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, and the importance of reconciliation.

With respect to equity and inclusion, Members recognize that accessibility is essential and recommends the creation of an independent disability protection office to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities in BC and advocate for those experiencing abuse, neglect, and discrimination. Other recommendations in this area aim to increase accessibility of public transit and expand employment grants for business owners with disabilities. Committee Members emphasize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all sectors including the arts, education, and sports. They support

practices to ensure opportunities for equity-seeking groups in the workplace and prioritize equal pay. Reconciliation is another theme that runs throughout this report with Members highlighting the need to engage in government-to-government conversations, support Indigenous cultural infrastructure and Indigenous-led conservation efforts, and advance economic reconciliation through revenue-sharing and equity ownership. Recognizing that digital connectivity is required to access online services, engage in remote work opportunities, and to ensure public safety, Committee Members highlight work being done in this area and recommend ensuring that all rural and remote communities have sufficient access to high-speed internet and cell phone connectivity. Members acknowledge the importance of coupling stabilized internet access with digital literacy and recommend stable funding for programs that address digital and financial literacy.

Committee Members agree that climate change is a significant issue that impacts many areas and sectors including transportation, agriculture, forestry, health, and emergency preparedness and response. They note the need for better data in a range of areas including freshwater, environmental protection, and wildlife conservation. Members also point to the need to accelerate the adoption of zero emission vehicles and support the transition to clean energy for individuals and industry. The Committee emphasizes the need for investment into climate adaptation, mitigation, and prevention strategies with a view to reducing the worst impacts of climate change. Regarding environmental protection and wildlife conservation, Members support increased resources as well as integrating science-based approaches and local and Indigenous knowledge into conservation. They also recognize the need for a coordinated water conservation strategy and sustained funding for watershed security. Committee Members acknowledge the value of parks and recreation and support continued investment for maintenance and to build the capacity of volunteers who are vital to this sector. Other recommendations related to the environment aim to address invasive species and promote recycling to reduce waste.

The Committee identifies health care as a priority area referencing shortages of practitioners and barriers to access for many British Columbians, particularly in rural and remote areas. As such, they recommend mechanisms to improve recruitment, training, credentialing, and retention of health care professionals, especially family doctors, as well as exploring the use of physician assistants, midwives, and mental health counsellors to improve access to health care. Further, they recommend a review of primary care to improve access and navigation for the public. Members also support a number of recommendations related to specific conditions and diseases including myalgic encephalomyelitis, brain injury, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and arthritis. Regarding long-term care, Committee Members call for an advisory forum to assist in the development of an evidence-based action plan to reform this sector, as well as improved accountability measures for operators. Members also recognize the value of supporting seniors to age-in-place and recommend more funding in this area. With respect to hospice and palliative care, the Committee recognizes the need for grief and bereavement supports across the province and also recommends that the palliative and end-of-life care policy be extended to include those aged 19 and under. Committee Members support increased funding for mental health and addictions, including increased access to counselling for children and youth who have experienced abuse-induced trauma, as well as funding for identity-based counselling and mental health supports that are intersectional, culturally safe, and LGBTQ2SAI+ focused. Regarding medical and dental coverage, the Committee recognizes the importance of prosthetics and orthotics in enhancing people's lives and allowing them to regain mobility following life altering incidents and recommends a strategy to cover the costs of these devices along with the cost of emergency repairs. Members also support improved dental coverage, especially for British Columbians with disabilities or diabetes, as well as coverage of the prostate-specific antigen test which is critical to early detection and treatment of prostate cancer. With respect to biomedical sciences, Members support more BC-based research and a comprehensive and coordinated life sciences and biomanufacturing strategy in light of supply chain challenges. The Committee also highlights the importance of vaccine supply and accelerating efforts to make antiviral therapies available to fight COVID-19.

Committee Members emphasize the role of advanced education in supporting critical thinking, contributing to

knowledge creation, and addressing labour shortages. Further, they note the need to ensure all students have adequate housing, classroom space, financial assistance, and supports to ensure equitable access to post-secondary education as well as successful completion of credits. Members also support a provincial strategy for international students, recognizing the contributions these students make to the post-secondary community and the labour force, and the barriers created by lack of predictability in tuition. With respect to operational funding, recommendations seek to recognize inflationary pressures for post-secondary institutions, address issues related to faculty retention, and fund additional seats in many programs to address labour shortages. Members also recognize that post-secondary institutions in rural and remote areas have unique circumstances that must be recognized in funding allocations. The Committee makes several recommendations with respect to technology, trades, and skills training, noting their role in the economy and highlighting opportunities to expand innovative programs, micro-credentials, and work-integrated learning.

The Committee's recommendations regarding arts and culture recognize the value of this sector and the difficulties that the sector has had and continues to face due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members support increased funding for the arts and museums across the province, as well as supports for artists and infrastructure funding for new projects and repairs. In particular, Committee Members recognize Science World as an iconic institution which is in need of repairs to ensure continued operations. The Committee also makes recommendations to support diversity within digital media, music, and film while also supporting predictability in tax credits for these three sectors. With respect to public libraries, Committee Members recognize their role as community hubs and centres for information, literacy, and creativity and support increased funding with particular attention to libraries in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Members continue to support investments in sport to improve affordability and ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector.

Regarding economic development, Members emphasize the importance of agriculture, local production, and food security in light of supply chain challenges. Recommendations in this area aim to increase viability for farmers and ranchers, reduce food waste, and ensure resiliency. The Committee also highlights the need for sustainable practices with respect to fisheries and forestry as well as working with Indigenous leadership and local experts regarding forest management.

With respect to labour and jobs, recommendations relate to programs and supports to address shortages and promote diversity and inclusion. Members also recognize shortages and challenges in the Employment Standards Branch and support investments to address wait times in this area. Committee Members emphasize the role of mining and natural resource development in the economy and note the need for minerals to support electrification. They support a clear strategy coupled with transparent policies and make recommendations to promote economic reconciliation and address permitting backlogs. Members also recognize the economy is driven by technology, software, data, and patents, and recommend provincial strategies with respect to intellectual property and data as well as incentives for innovative technology procurement. Further, the Committee highlights BC as a leader in quantum technology and supports investment in this area. Acknowledging the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality, Members recommend working with the sector to ensure BC is a destination for meetings, conferences, events, and leisure travel as well as collecting further data to identify areas of improvement. Regarding trade, Members recommend northern BC trade corridor planning to support export growth, address congestion, and expand employment opportunities for rural communities. They also recognize the need to support port infrastructure and ensure adequate transportation linkages.

The Committee's recommendations with respect to fiscal and regulatory policy aim to address challenges faced by small- and medium-sized businesses and to support productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. Members also make a number of recommendations to review specific taxation measures including the carbon tax, property tax, provincial sales tax, luxury tax, and employer health tax with the aim of reviewing tax thresholds, incentivizing clean energy, and addressing cost pressures for businesses, homebuyers, and consumers. Committee Members note the negative health impacts of tobacco and recommend exploring a fee to recover associated health costs from the industry. The Committee also recommends the enactment of prompt payment legislation and supports a renewed and modernized relationship between municipal and provincial governments with respect to funding and resources.

With respect to housing, Committee Members emphasize the need for increased supply and affordability. Recommendations include increased resources for the Residential Tenancy Branch, the development of an Indigenous housing strategy,

and support for BC Housing in building non-market housing. The Committee also supports incentives for the private sector to address low housing stock. Members also point to the need for complex care housing sites with full supports for individuals and adequate supports provided within surrounding neighbourhoods. Regarding homelessness, Committee Members recommend investments in programs that prevent evictions and stabilize housing for lower income individuals, increased support to overnight and daytime drop-in centres, and funding for young people leaving foster care to access affordable housing. Other recommendations included improving financial stability, risk management, and insurance pricing for strata councils.

The Committee's recommendations regarding K-12 education recognize the need for funding that is more proactive and responsive to anticipated growth and local needs. Members emphasize the need for increased capital funding as well as operational funding in recognition of increased costs and regional needs, new curriculum initiatives, and the unique needs of rural and remote schools. They also support a review of the policies regarding the use and funding of portables. To address recruitment and retention challenges for teachers, the Committee recommends measures such as providing incentives especially for teachers in rural and remote communities. With respect to student supports, recommendations include increased funding and supports for students with unique learning and development needs, all-encompassing pre-kindergarten wellness checks, and increased funding for mental health supports and to meet the needs of refugee and newcomer students. The Committee also recommends an audit of the education of K-12 students with support needs to find ways to better support students and optimize resources. Recognizing the important work being done by various school food programs, Committee Members support the expansion of these initiatives along with an audit of current programs to determine best practices and gaps. With respect to child care, Committee Members recommend funding to increase accessibility and improve recruitment and retention of early childhood educators.

The Committee makes several recommendations with respect to public safety and justice, including increasing investments in legal aid services, child and youth advocacy centres, and the modernization and digital transformation of court services. Committee Members also recommend specific investments in gender-based violence and sexual assault programs and services, including awareness and prevention programs,

transition housing, and supports for survivors of brain injury resulting from intimate partner violence. They emphasize the need for a system-wide audit of these supports and the creation of a provincial sexual assault policy to ensure consistency of programs and responses. The Committee also recommends investments to improve emergency preparedness and response to natural disasters, including investments in Emergency Management BC, funding for flood and wildlife risk mapping, land-use planning, and community resilience. Committee Members also recognize the rise of contraband tobacco and illicit cannabis in BC and support measures to address this issue. The Committee supports restorative justice programs and peer-led and person-centered programming for sex workers. Other areas of interest include emergency response and communications, including incorporating a new fourth 911 option for mental health.

Regarding social services, Committee Members recommend funding to reduce wait times and improve access to assessments, therapies, programs, and supports for children and youth with support needs, including improving recruitment and retention of service providers in this area. Children and youth in care are another point of focus, with the Committee recommending improved and increased supports to facilitate the jurisdictional transition of child welfare to Indigenous communities. The Committee also emphasizes the need to improve supports for kinship caregivers. Regarding income and disability assistance, Committee Members support a review of eligibility and administration to reduce barriers to work, provide flexibility, and ensure individuals have access to all necessary supports. Other recommendations relate to increased and predictable funding for the community social

services sectors, including administrative funding and supports to address compensation challenges, as well as funding for community-based seniors' centres and senior serving organizations. The Committee also recommends the expansion of social service delivery and the continuum of care to improve responses to mental health, addictions, and other complex social issues.

With respect to transportation and transit, Committee Members recommend increasing investments in active transportation to improve safety. They also recommend increasing investments in public transportation to address gaps in regional services, decarbonizing BC's bus fleet, increasing accessible transportation options such as handyDART, and addressing the lack of accessible transit in small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. The Committee also supports funding for BC Bus North to expand services and enhance safety. The Committee recommends investing in transportation infrastructure, roads, and highways, to build a sustainable and green transportation network that is climate resilient and that can ensure consistent movement and connection of people and goods in times of emergencies. Other recommendations include support for road maintenance, and funding for wildlife crossings and fencing to make the transportation system safer. Additionally, the Committee recommends the creation of a task force to maintain BC's sustainable aviation fuel leadership and supporting building aviation cargo capacity and reliability.



ADVANCED EDUCATION

Key themes relating to advanced education included the need for increased operational funding and affordability with recognition of the unique circumstances of rural and remote institutions. Specific issues related to tuition fees for international students, mental health supports, and accessibility were also raised throughout the consultation. The Committee further heard that there is a need for additional investments in capital infrastructure, trades, research, and literacy. Many noted that investments in advanced education can help address labour market challenges.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

The Committee heard about the importance of literacy as a tool to reduce poverty and how increased literacy rates improve a community's ability to recover from COVID-19. Chilliwack Learning Society noted that strong literacy skills are connected to being employed, earning higher wages, and safer work environments. Several literacy organizations advocated for increased funding for adult literacy programs, describing the current funding model for adult literacy as inadequate. Further, Greater Victoria Alliance for Literacy stated that adult literacy is currently funded through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Advanced Education. Instead, they recommended the creation of a five-ministry funding model. They also advocated for innovation hubs which would support literacy and the economy through a continuum of services by using existing infrastructure and leveraging the expertise of community organizations working in collaboration with school and college programs.

In relation to digital literacy, Chilliwack Learning Society and Lift Community Services shared that the need for digital literacy has never been greater. They explained that as more programs and services move online, these skills are needed to meet employment expectations, buy and sell goods, access services, and be involved in the community.

CAPITAL FUNDING

Regarding capital funding, CUPE Vancouver Island District Council shared that chronic underfunding of post-secondary institutions has put pressure on all parts of the post-secondary system and that budgetary cuts have disproportionately been applied to campus services and facilities. This has resulted in maintenance issues, a growing number of precarious workers, increased class sizes, lack of funding to support research and innovation, services that cannot meet demand, and waning enrolment among the most vulnerable students. Additionally, the University of British Columbia stated that modern facilities are critical to BC's universities achieving their mission of cultivating research excellence and providing exceptional learning and research opportunities for students. Further, they noted that investments in BC's classroom infrastructure and research infrastructure also help universities address seismic, environmental, and quality issues related to aging infrastructure. The Committee also heard the need to invest in research space.

With respect to student housing, Committee Members heard about the need for increased funding. The University of Victoria noted that stable and affordable housing is a critical component to success, health, and happiness. UBC's Okanagan campus shared that the cost of housing is rapidly rising in the Okanagan, as the area has some of the highest rental rates in Canada and the lowest rental vacancy rate in the country, making it challenging for students to find housing. Similarly, The University of Victoria Students' Society stated that many students have been forced into unsafe or illegal living environments due to the cost of living in Victoria. Several universities and student societies advocated for more funding for affordable, publicly owned residences for students in order to address the housing crisis.

Other universities requested funding for specific capital projects, including the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building at Simon Fraser University's Burnaby campus, the interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation building at

UBC's Okanagan campus and a West Shore Campus at Royal Roads University.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Post-secondary institutions and student organizations described the need to invest in inclusive and accessible education. UBC's Okanagan campus stated that targeted programming is needed to ensure that historically underrepresented groups in post-secondary education, including Indigenous peoples, have access to opportunities and pathways into the economy that post-secondary education can provide. Similarly, the Kwantlen Student Association shared that facing ever-increasing student tuition, coupled with a higher cost of living, has led to a difficult time for students throughout the pandemic. They explained that this is especially the case for students with disabilities, as they are made to pay extra for services and tools they may need to function as every other student does. Further, the University of Victoria Student Society noted that the solely in-person delivery of classes is inequitable and inaccessible not only to students with disabilities, but also to mature students, students who need to work alongside studying, students with dependents and care responsibilities, and those who cannot afford the high cost of living in cities. These organizations supported increased investments to support inclusive and accessible post-secondary learning.

With respect to student accommodations, the Vancouver Island University Faculty Association shared that faculty members do not have sufficient time and resources to support the needs of students requiring disability accommodations. They explained that students and faculty could be more effectively supported by disability and accommodation staff who could be repositories of best practices. They recommended that funding associated with each student with a disability be provided.

The Committee also heard about supports for Indigenous students. Kwantlen Polytechnic University shared that there is no equitable, targeted funding to support Indigenous activities. They further explained that the Aboriginal Service Plan funding, which has supported a few BC post-secondary institutions for many years, needs to be increased, adapted, and extended to all institutions in order to guide the transformation of BC's post-secondary institutions to align with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, UNDRIP recommendations, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

College of the Rockies Faculty Association stated that flexible, accessible learning needs to be supported with the appropriate technology. To address the increased use of online learning, faculty need to work closely with hardware and software specialists, curriculum developers and educational technologists. They recommended more coordination and communication about which learning technologies are adopted and maintained in advanced education.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Many organizations, institutions and individuals highlighted the overreliance on international students for post-secondary revenue. Vancouver Island University Students' Union noted that due to underfunding of colleges and universities, institutions have become reliant on international students to make up funding shortfalls. They explained that COVID-19 showed how risky it is to depend so much on international enrolment. British Columbia Institute of Technology Student Association stated that it is necessary to correct this dependence so that the revenue streams for post-secondary institutions are not as volatile and to give all students the ability to plan by making tuition increases predictable.

The Committee heard that the lack of predictability of tuition fees increases poses a significant barrier for international students in completing their education. BC Federation of Students cited that in 2017 international students made up 20 percent of enrolment, but their fees made up 49 percent of all tuition revenue. Further, BC Federation of Students noted that international students cannot work more than 20 hours per week off campus, the limited work hours coupled with the increased cost of living is making education more difficult for international students to pursue. Many organizations and individuals expressed the need for a more equitable system that regulates the limits for international student tuition fee increases. Capilano Students' Union stated that no laws exist that regulate tuition or campus services for international students while domestic tuition and other required fees are limited to an increase of two percent per year, creating predictability and stability for these students. Some individuals shared that adding stability and predictability to the current system by regulating international tuition fee increases to ensure they are in line with fee increases for domestic students will create a more fair and just system.

Committee Members also heard about the impact of additional fees for MSP paid by international students. One

individual stated that the additional \$74 fee for MSP is unequal and unfair, is prohibitive, and places an undue burden on international students.

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Several organizations and universities advocated for increased operational funding for post-secondary institutions. Research Universities' Council of British Columbia advised that the province lags in the development of advanced talent, produces fewer university graduates per capita than nearly all other provinces, and trails other major provinces in investments of graduate student support, research, development, and innovation. They further explained that communities are faced with tackling complex issues such as climate resilience and adaptation, housing affordability, and social and cultural needs — all issues that benefit from focused, high-capacity approaches and investments. Also, with respect to funding, Thompson Rivers University stated that stable, transparent, and predictable public funding enables post-secondary institutions to plan to meet regional and provincial needs as BC and the Interior face critical talent shortages, particularly for graduates with specialized and professional training at the graduate level. Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC advocated for a stabilization fund which would focus on reduction of institutional budgetary risk caused by an overreliance on international student tuition.

Several universities, faculty, and student organizations advocated for a new funding model that fairly and equitably distributes government funding across all public post-secondary institutions. Douglas Students' Union stated that there has been divestment in public education compared to the support provided to colleges and universities in past decades. They added that the rising cost of tuition combined with new ancillary fees, housing cost inflation, and other living expenses are barriers to people's ability to get re-skilled and re-join the workforce. Also, with respect to the funding formula, Students' Union Okanagan of UBC stated that the province only funds the university for the number of students enrolled with a full-time course schedule; however, thousands of students enroll part-time and funding to support services for these students is not accounted for.

British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities, and the College of the Rockies noted the need for greater financial flexibility and support for post-secondary institutions. British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities stated

that the restrictions and inconsistencies within the existing accounting policy hamper the ability for post-secondary institutions to utilize existing resources; therefore, they are unable to access retained earnings for capital projects or to support economic initiatives. College of the Rockies also explained that greater flexibility in budgeting to address strategic goals would enhance the ability of colleges to be ahead of the curve and to partner more effectively with regional stakeholders. They also noted that BC universities are given the latitude to draw on accumulated savings and reserves to make long-term investments within the scope of their annual budgets whereas colleges are not able to do so.

The Committee also heard concerns about post-secondary faculty and staff wages. Camosun College Faculty Association shared that college and university instructors in BC earn the lowest wages nationally. Additionally, Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC stated that there is an over-reliance on contract faculty who are often paid at a much lower rate and are not able to contribute to the full functioning of the university, which dampens and lessens the experience within the post-secondary sector for all involved. The CUPE Vancouver Island District Council also advocated for increased funding for campus services including support for bringing campus services back in house.

Many individuals and organizations advocated for increased funding for the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. They noted that Emily Carr students have inadequate access to mental health and accessibility supports. Additionally, they highlighted that the institution does not have enough space, staff, or faculty, which is directly affecting the quality of education and the future of the University, its students, and the emerging creative industry of BC. The Emily Carr Students' Union stated that the university also experiences an annual cycle of contentious, community-dividing tuition fee increases that disproportionately affect international students.

Vancouver Community College Faculty Association presented funding requests to the Committee. They noted 25 percent of Vancouver Community College's students are studying in free English as an Additional Language and Adult Basic Education programs. They explained that doing this work means they are not generating the same revenue that many other institutions do. Vancouver Community College explained that to continue to do this work they need government support so it can avoid increasing tuition for other programs.

PROGRAM FUNDING

Several institutions and organizations advocated for funding for new programs. Thompson Rivers University explained that institutes are at the forefront of societal growth and change; therefore, they need new programs, support and services related to areas such as regional economic development, a clean economy, climate adaptation, mental health, sustainability, accessibility, and Indigenous reconciliation. They stated that the costs related to the implementation of such programs and services have grown dramatically, as they often require more staff, faculty advisors, counsellors, and other support professionals but there has been no change to base grants to account for these expenditures. Additionally, it is anticipated that resources needed to support Indigenous learning will increase as institutions work to meet the objectives of truth and reconciliation. Furthermore, College of the Rockies stated that to realize the full potential of the rural college system, further investments in curriculum development, information and support to prospective students, and development of innovations like micro-credentials and hybrid delivery options will be required.

BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association discussed the need for continued funding the Centre of Training Excellence in Mining, which focuses on job preparedness and innovation, through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, WorkBC and the Industry Training Authority.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Committee Members heard about the value of investments in research. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC stated that research supports are one of the best ways to help students, because they are often hired under grants to manage projects where they further develop the skills that feed into innovative developments and public-private start-ups. They also noted that universities require a targeted infusion of resources to support research. Similarly, the Graduate Student Societies of British Columbia explained that the quick mobilization of research programs in response to COVID-19 is a clear example of how early investments in research can result in significant contributions. Therefore, the province needs to ensure that it can retain a talent pool of current graduate students in BC. With respect to funding, the University of British Columbia shared that the BC Knowledge and Development Fund helps leverage federal funding through the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and encouraged the

provincial government to enhance investments in this fund to maximize federal research infrastructure funding to BC.

Further, BC Association of Institutes and Universities explained that research intensive universities and primarily undergraduate universities across Canada have a mandate to engage in all types of research, but there are limitations placed on institutions under the *University Act* and the *College and Institute Act*. Additionally, research is not currently being recognized by faculty collective agreements, and concerns have been raised that by recognizing faculty research activity as work to be compensated, the cost of teaching will increase.

RURAL AND REMOTE INSTITUTIONS

Several post-secondary institutions described the value of such institutions in rural communities and how the current funding formula does not reflect the circumstances of rural universities and colleges. BC Colleges stated that rural colleges are important centres of the communities that they serve and are closely connected and integrated into the community contributing to workforce development. They further explained that underfunding of rural institutions leaves them with inadequate resources for student support and management, which affects quality and sustainability. The College of the Rockies Faculty Association shared that there are unique funding challenges for rural and remote institutions including small class sizes which bring in less revenue and having multiple small campuses which requires them to replicate many services and programs. Furthermore, North Island College Faculty Association shared that rural areas have a smaller population base than areas in the lower mainland and minimum student requirements for program fundings should reflect this. The College of the Rockies noted that several other provinces provide special funding to ensure that rural institutions can provide education at the same standard as urban institutions.

STUDENT SUPPORTS

The Committee heard from student unions and faculty associations regarding the need for increased student supports. Simon Fraser Student Society conducted a COVID-19 mental health survey and results showed that students are not provided adequate mental health services even after facing financial burdens, loss of employment, greater mental health issues involving substance use, and experiencing a general trend of mental health decline. They also noted that

although the government allocates money for mental health support initiatives, there have been no structural or permanent changes made at the advanced education level. Similarly, College of the Rockies Faculty Association cited that staff and students are facing more mental health challenges than ever before especially as current workloads are not manageable or sustainable. Capilano Students' Union also highlighted that Black students, in particular, often experience negative mental health at Canadian post-secondary institutions. To address this issue, they advocated for \$4 million in annual funding to all post-secondary institutions for counsellors and to ensure the hiring of Black student counsellors.

TECHNOLOGY, TRADES, AND SKILLS TRAINING

Several organizations discussed skill training programs. BC Tech shared that in the *BC Labour Market Outlook: 2021*, the BC government projects that technology jobs will be one of the top sources of private sector job growth in BC in the coming decade with 140,700 job openings projected. They noted that every industry needs tech-savvy workers that will enable industries to remain globally competitive. DigiBC shared that the workforce demand for digital media and technology skills has continually outpaced supply. Similarly, Council of Canadian Innovators called for continued funding for apprenticeship and jobs training programs in the tech sector.

Additionally, BC Building Trades stated that the province is facing a massive skilled trades shortage in construction, with the need for over 27,000 workers within the next six years. These organizations advocated for an investment in trades training that aligns with workforce needs. Similarly, Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC emphasized that there are not enough qualified health and safety professionals in the manufacturing sector. They advocated for continued investment in Sector Labour Market Partnership funding initiatives as this funding has been instrumental to collaboratively solve industry challenges.

Additionally, Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada discussed the Skilled Trades Certification system that will bring BC's skilled trades into alignment with other provinces. They stated that the province must create the necessary conditions for successful transition to a Skilled Trades Certification regime by establishing a robust and clearly understandable program of compliance and ensuring a clear

pathway for the addition of new trades, based on market and industry needs.

TUITION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Several student organizations advocated for an increase to financial assistance, specifically the BC Access Grant. Simon Fraser Student Society noted that tuition increases prove to be a barrier to accessing education for marginalized and low-income students, especially those who face obstacles from a young age due to systemic oppression and inequities. Thompson Rivers University Students' Union emphasized that needs-based grants are one of the most effective ways to make education more accessible. Additionally, the British Columbia Institute of Technology Student Association noted that in the last couple of years, federal spending on British Columbia students through student aid has increased by over \$150 million, whereas provincial spending is only up about \$15 million.

Also with respect to financial assistance, Camosun College Faculty Association highlighted the need to expand the successful tuition waiver program for former youth in care to include Indigenous persons and those of other marginalized equity-seeking groups.

Additionally, University of Victoria Students' Society noted that students in essential fields, like nursing, education, or social work, are expected to do an unpaid practicum as part of their degree. They further explained that this places a burden on students who are dealing with a high cost of living in addition to heavy workloads. They stated that these students are critical to the future of care in BC and should be compensated through financial support.

Alma Mater Society informed the Committee that the 2022 Student Aid BC policy manual allocates \$934 to shelter. However, the average Metro Vancouver rent for a one bedroom is \$2,200 or \$1,400 in the Fraser Valley. They explained that this demonstrates a need for the student living allowance to be more nuanced to each individual region. They also advocated for an increase to the maximum amount of the BC Access grant and for an expansion to the income eligibility threshold. They cited that for a full-time student in a program of two or more years the grant cutoff is \$42,606 which is inherently inequitable, as the BC annual salary average is around \$55,000 in 2021.

Graduate Student Societies of British Columbia noted that the BC Graduate Scholarship Fund's funding period extension ends in 2023. They emphasized that graduate students face increased financial pressures due to the greater burden of student debt as a result of their continuing education, since there are currently no needs-based grants for graduate education. By providing more needs-based grants, they explained that the province can help alleviate financial stress on graduate students.

Many organizations and individuals, including Vancouver Island University Students' Union, and BC Federation of Students advocated for a freeze on tuition fees as well as a plan to progressively reduce tuition fees at public institutions to lessen the financial burden on students. Emily Carr Students' Union explained that the removal of tuition fees translates to economic opportunity through a more skilled and educated population, supports public health and reduces the need to continue such excessive spending on healthcare.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

Committee Members heard support for funding of programs that provide work-integrated learning experiences for students. Burnaby Board of Trade stated that one of the biggest challenges facing businesses right now is access to staff and workforce development. Similarly, New Car Dealers of BC noted that the automobile sector faces a critical labour shortage, with industry predicting the need for up to 20,000 workers over the next decade. To address this concern, these organizations, advocated for continued funding for apprenticeship and jobs training programs. Alma Mater Society explained that by increasing and permanently funding co-op and work-integrated learning programs, more work experience will better position students to get jobs directly after graduation, support long-term economic recovery and create a more sustainable workforce.

Further, MOSAIC noted that recent immigrants face higher unemployment rates than those born in Canada, and are more likely to work in jobs that under-utilize their education, skills and experience. The most significant barrier lies in the difficulty in gaining Canadian on-the-job experience, networks, and references. They shared their support for targeted funding and support in this area to allow employers and service organizations to work together to provide newcomers with occupation-specific training for in-demand job sectors, hands-

on workplace experience through internships, orientation to Canadian workplaces and mentoring.

CONCLUSIONS

Committee Members acknowledged the value of literacy and its importance for adapting to new economies. The Committee agreed that investments in this area are important for poverty reduction and recognized the need to properly resource literacy programs. It also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for digital literacy to navigate and access many online services and programs.

With respect to capital funding, the Committee heard the need for affordable and accessible housing options for students. It noted that as seats in post-secondary institutions are increased to address the labour shortage, institutions must have housing and support available for the influx of students. Committee Members also noted that it is important to ensure there is access to housing when recruiting international students to BC. They discussed several options to address this need, including by working with communities and the private sector to address the housing needs of students. The Committee also acknowledged requests from student unions and post-secondary institutions on the need to address aging campus facilities and increase classroom and lab space.

Committee Members acknowledged that post-secondary institutions rely on international student tuition and COVID-19 highlighted the vulnerability of this funding approach. Members discussed how international students enrich communities and affirmed that it is imperative that international students are treated fairly. They also discussed the need for more predictability for tuition. Additionally, the Committee noted that international students could be vital in addressing the current labour market challenges and that students should have the option to work more than 20 hours a week if they so choose.

Reflecting on input from post-secondary institutions, faculty, and students, the Committee noted the need to re-examine the funding formula. Members highlighted that a new funding formula must be reflective of inflationary pressures and local circumstances, particularly for institutions located in rural and remote areas of the province. As post-secondary institutions play a critical role in enhancing critical thinking and addressing labour market challenges, the Committee agreed that these institutions need to be adequately funded to continue to meet the needs of the province. Regarding faculty,

Committee Members discussed the need to recruit and retain the best individuals and address challenges with respect to precarious work in the sector. Members also discussed the need for financial flexibility for colleges to create equity with universities regarding the ability to draw on accumulated savings and reserves.

The Committee acknowledged that many students and student unions emphasized the burden of tuition costs on accessing post-secondary institutions. Members noted that finances should not be an impediment to education. They highlighted the importance of continuing needs-based grants, such as the BC Access Grant, to improve access to education, especially for marginalized communities. The Committee heard that students feel they are bearing more than their share of costs and a pathway to reduce tuition costs should be explored, including through subsidies and grants. Committee Members also discussed the need for accessible education for all, especially for students with disabilities and support needs. Members also heard about a lack of funding to support Indigenous students in accessing post-secondary education. They acknowledged that there is more work to be done in this area and continued

investments in inclusive and accessible education are necessary.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of training to address labour market shortages. They noted that skills training must be accessible across the province and should be available outside of urban areas. Committee Members particularly recognized the value of work-integrated learning and apprenticeship training and their importance to bringing more people into the workforce more quickly. Members highlighted that technology is one of the largest drivers of BC's economy and agreed that students should have the opportunity to gain the skills required to work in this sector. Committee Members also expressed their support for continued investment in research and knowledge creation, especially in areas and sectors critical for economic growth.

Committee Members acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students in an already difficult and stressful time. They discussed the need for wrap around supports for students, especially in the area of mental health. The Committee agreed with the input received from faculty members, that more counselling supports need to be provided to students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Adult Education and Literacy

14. Provide multi-year funding for literacy programs, including programs addressing digital and financial literacy, to meet the needs of communities.

Capital Funding

15. Allocate more money for affordable and accessible student housing on campus, and broaden the rental pool in communities.
16. Allocate resources to support post-secondary institutions to modernize infrastructure and address aging facilities to enhance students' physical and mental wellbeing.

Diversity and Inclusion

17. Enable workforce development by committing the necessary learner supports to ensure full post-secondary access and retention for under-represented groups, including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, immigrants, and persons with disabilities.

International Students

18. Create a provincial strategy for international students that includes predictable fees and ensures that international students feel welcomed and are supported.

Operational Funding

19. Create a new funding formula that recognizes inflationary pressures and the needs of institutions as well as the unique circumstances of institutions, especially those in rural and remote areas.
20. Grant colleges the flexibility in their annual budgets to make long-term investments in innovation and program development.
21. Work with post-secondary institutions to retain instructors, including by funding faculty positions in predictable, long-term contracts.
22. Create more program seats in sectors facing a labour shortage such as speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and health care practitioners.

Research and Innovation

23. Increase investment in research with targeted investments in sectors critical for strengthening the province's well-being, that align with the government's key priorities, to retain highly skilled graduate students in BC.
24. Support knowledge creation in BC through increased investment in post-secondary research.

Student Supports

25. Increase mental health supports for students at post-secondary institutions across the province, including by providing funding to hire BIPOC counsellors, and continuing funding for mental health counselling and referral services.

Technology, Trades, and Skills Training

26. Increase core funding to trades training providers and ensure skills training is available and accessible throughout the province.
27. Recognize foreign credentials and encourage innovative skills programs such as micro-credentials.
28. Provide greater access to and investment in work-integrated learning and reskilling programs for transitioning workers.
29. Continue to develop and consider strategies to drive innovation, sustainability, apprenticeships, and trades, working with industry as a trusted partner to drive new programs and initiatives.
30. Invest in training and technology retooling grants for employers and workers with industry partners.
31. Support educational opportunities that connect secondary and post-secondary students with the skills required to work in the broader tech sector.

Tuition and Financial Assistance

32. Continue to provide need-based assistance to students, including by increasing the BC Access Grant and expanding the income eligibility threshold.

33. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by providing grants, scholarships, bursaries, and subsidies for all students, including BIPOC, and migrant students.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Accessibility

1. Create an independent disability protection advocacy office to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities in BC.
2. Broaden the terms and conditions of Workplace Accessibility Grants so that programs and supports can be put into place for small business owners with disabilities including neurodivergent people.
3. Install reader boards for public transportation, including BC Ferries, to improve accessibility for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Systemic Barriers – Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Race

4. Build on existing practices regarding workforce development agreements to make sure that opportunities are provided for equity-seeking groups in skilled trades.
5. Take immediate action to address pay equity for women.
6. Invest in collecting disaggregated data on workers who experience gender-based oppression including non-binary, trans, Two-Spirit, as well as racialized and migrant workers.

Democracy

7. Create a strengthening democracy fund to increase community capacity building; equity, diversity, and inclusion in democracy; and innovations in democratic systems and institutions.

Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

8. Implement the Declaration Act Action Plan, and provide required resources to ensure that First Nations and Indigenous peoples are true partners and leaders in this work.

9. Implement the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
10. Celebrate and protect Indigenous cultures through increased funding and supports for Indigenous cultural infrastructure and projects.
11. Build on progress to ensure clean water for Indigenous peoples across the province.
12. Provide funding to the Métis Nation BC for governance and to ensure that the Métis culture is recognized, respected, and protected in the distinction-based approach.

Digital Connectivity

13. Ensure that rural and remote communities have sufficient access to high-speed internet and cell phone connectivity.

ADVANCED EDUCATION

Adult Education and Literacy

14. Provide multi-year funding for literacy programs, including programs addressing digital and financial literacy, to meet the needs of communities.

Capital Funding

15. Allocate more money for affordable and accessible student housing on campus, and broaden the rental pool in communities.
16. Allocate resources to support post-secondary institutions to modernize infrastructure and address aging facilities to enhance students' physical and mental wellbeing.

Diversity and Inclusion

17. Enable workforce development by committing the necessary learner supports to ensure full post-secondary access and retention for under-represented

groups, including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, immigrants, and persons with disabilities.

International Students

18. Create a provincial strategy for international students that includes predictable fees and ensures that international students feel welcomed and are supported.

Operational Funding

19. Create a new funding formula that recognizes inflationary pressures and the needs of institutions as well as the unique circumstances of institutions, especially those in rural and remote areas.
20. Grant colleges the flexibility in their annual budgets to make long-term investments in innovation and program development.
21. Work with post-secondary institutions to retain instructors, including by funding faculty positions in predictable, long-term contracts.
22. Create more program seats in sectors facing a labour shortage such as speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and health care practitioners.

Research and Innovation

23. Increase investment in research with targeted investments in sectors critical for strengthening the province's well-being, that align with the government's key priorities, to retain highly skilled graduate students in BC.
24. Support knowledge creation in BC through increased investment in post-secondary research.

Student Supports

25. Increase mental health supports for students at post-secondary institutions across the province, including by providing funding to hire BIPOC counsellors, and continuing funding for mental health counselling and referral services.

Technology, Trades, and Skills Training

26. Increase core funding to trades training providers and ensure skills training is available and accessible throughout the province.
27. Recognize foreign credentials and encourage innovative skills programs such as micro-credentials.

28. Provide greater access to and investment in work-integrated learning and reskilling programs for transitioning workers.
29. Continue to develop and consider strategies to drive innovation, sustainability, apprenticeships, and trades, working with industry as a trusted partner to drive new programs and initiatives.
30. Invest in training and technology retooling grants for employers and workers with industry partners.
31. Support educational opportunities that connect secondary and post-secondary students with the skills required to work in the broader tech sector.

Tuition and Financial Assistance

32. Continue to provide need-based assistance to students, including by increasing the BC Access Grant and expanding the income eligibility threshold.
33. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by providing grants, scholarships, bursaries, and subsidies for all students, including BIPOC, and migrant students.

ARTS, LIBRARIES, AND SPORT

Arts and Culture

34. Increase funding for the BC Arts Council and ensure equitable distribution of funds to organizations across the province.
35. Commit to arts infrastructure spending for both large and small projects, particularly cultural spaces.
36. Provide funding for museums in smaller communities and establish repository space throughout the province.
37. Extend the rent and wage subsidy programs for art organizations and artists introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
38. Work with Science World to address necessary infrastructure upgrades and repairs to ensure continued operations.

Digital Media, Music, and Film

39. Provide certainty for the film industry by maintaining the stability of the Film Incentive BC and production services tax credit programs.

40. Support the digital media industry by increasing and extending the interactive digital media tax credit.
41. Engage with the digital media, music, and film industries to review tax credits with a view to increasing diversity, including by exploring equity and reporting requirements on the demographic distribution of funds.
42. Collaborate on workforce development and labour market strategies that embrace the priority to grow a diverse, equitable, and inclusive film industry.

Public Libraries

43. Increase the annual operating grant for public libraries, linked to inflation, and provide targeted financial support for libraries in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities to increase access in these areas.

Sport

44. Invest \$15 million in amateur sport to improve affordability for low-income families and other underserved populations, and ensure that the sector is inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture and Food Security

45. Recognize the importance of agriculture to the economy and food security by ensuring adequate funding is provided to support the sector as well as individual farmers and ranchers in BC.
46. Review an increase to the revenue qualifier for agricultural classification on farm parcels with a view to incentivize agricultural production and make the industry more attractive and supportive for young and new farmers.
47. Conduct a comprehensive review of insurance for crops and farms to ensure farmers are supported.
48. Conduct a comprehensive study with a view to finding incentives to reduce food waste and increase food security.
49. Provide funding for food programs in seniors' centres and in community-based senior-serving organizations.
50. Create more robust risk management programs to support BC wine vineyard resiliency to mitigate systemic short crop

and to ensure BC vineyards are best positioned to support the growth and success of the industry.

Fisheries

51. Continue to invest in sustainable aquaculture and processing in BC, including by working with the federal government on regulatory and protection measures to enhance aquaculture.

Forestry

52. Continue to facilitate Indigenous leadership in determining forest management and engagement in the forest economy and enable forestry-related policies that manage forests in line with the practices and expectations of Indigenous communities.
53. Identify new ideas and opportunities, including by working with local experts on the ground to ensure sustainability through forestry regeneration practices.
54. Incentivize forestry and broom management by companies harvesting feedstock or fiber as biomass to make into biochar.

Labour and Jobs

55. Increase funding to the Employment Standards Branch to increase capacity, staffing, and training, and to expeditiously address wait times.
56. Amend legislation to ensure that workers in the gig economy are properly classified as employees rather than independent contractors and covered by the Employment Standards Act and provide targeted funding to the Employment Standards Branch for compliance teams.
57. Prioritize the implementation of the recommendations made through extensive reviews at WorkSafeBC in British Columbia's worker compensation system.
58. Explore an indigenization strategy to assist Indigenous peoples to secure jobs in the digital economy through government-sponsored online post-secondary and upskill training and to ensure that they have a greater ability to learn, work, and raise their family within their community if that is something that they wish to pursue.
59. Increase programs promoting inclusive leadership for the BC Employer Training Grant to help more small and

medium-sized businesses access the benefits of outside expertise to transform their workplace cultures.

60. Address labour shortages by engaging in partnerships with the private sector, supporting programs that enhance the skilled labour market through education and immigration, and increasing workforce housing.
61. Enhance support to entrepreneurs, including young, diverse, and underserved entrepreneurs.
62. Continue investing in Sector Labour Market Partnership funding initiatives, as they are invaluable to collaboratively solving industry challenges.

Mining and Natural Resource Development

63. Develop, fund, and regularly update BC's critical minerals and metals strategy that includes objectives and actions for advancing BC's critical minerals and metals sector, including steelmaking coal, to treat it as economically and strategically important, in line with other jurisdictions.
64. Create explicit scientific integrity and transparency policies to strengthen oversight of natural resource management.
65. Continue to empower Indigenous peoples to participate in natural resource development, and advance economic reconciliation through revenue-sharing and equity ownership.
66. Enhance capacity to address permitting backlogs and ensure predictable timelines.
67. Ensure that Geoscience BC is well-resourced to attract exploration investment and maintain competitiveness.

Technology and Innovation

68. Support quantum-hybrid technologies by investing in a domestic high-performance computing data centre that is integrated with quantum computing.
69. Support a quantum "sandbox" program and fund opportunities for industry collaboration between quantum companies and academic institutions, including by establishing a government training program.
70. Fund the development and implementation of a provincial intellectual property strategy to incentivize domestic technology companies to create and keep intellectual property within BC, and a provincial data strategy to harness the power of intellectual property and data as

economic assets and promote privacy, transparency, and equity.

71. Explore options to enable cross-government data sharing through technology and opportunities to harness this data to gain real time insights and analysis to inform decision making and policy development.
72. Build a net-zero BC by digitally transforming natural resource and agri-food industries in a responsive, green, and sustainable way, while ensuring scaleups and anchor companies remain globally competitive.
73. Find tools to incentivize innovative technology procurement and made-in-BC solutions.
74. Commit funding to capture better data about BC's technology and innovation sector.

Tourism

75. Protect the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) for its original intended purpose to support tourism projects, programs, and marketing, and obligate all online accommodation providers to collect the MRDT.
76. Collect data to gain insight into the number of hospitality establishments that have been lost in recent years, and work with the hospitality sector to ensure that BC is a destination with sufficient spaces for meetings, conferences, events, and leisure travel, attracting both domestic and international markets.
77. Explore making BC's third-party food delivery fee cap permanent.

Trade

78. Undertake strategic northern BC trade corridor planning to coordinate investments and maximize the potential for future export growth.
79. Encourage cooperation with the federal government to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure adequate transportation linkages between ports and goods and services.

ENVIRONMENT

Buildings

80. Continue to prioritize decarbonizing BC's buildings by incentivizing the widespread adoption of greener

technologies with attention to the unique needs of remote, rural and northern communities.

81. Explore opportunities to incent retrofitting of public buildings in conjunction with planned seismic upgrades.

Clean Energy

82. Further support the transition to cleaner energy by incentivizing all industries and individuals to adopt a lower carbon footprint.
83. Continue to support the BC Hydrogen Strategy goal to accelerate the production and use of green hydrogen, and attract investment and skilled job opportunities to BC, by providing support to bridge the current cost gap between this clean fuel and fossil fuel-based alternatives.
84. Explore the inclusion of geothermal district heating and cooling systems to reduce electricity demand.

Climate Change

85. Provide urgent and substantive investments into climate adaptation, mitigation and prevention strategies with a view to reducing the worst impacts of climate change.
86. Provide research-driven increased supports and infrastructure to mitigate the worst socioeconomic and health impacts of climate change (including reduced air quality, food and water insecurity, extreme heat, extreme cold, flooding, and extreme storms) on low-income groups, specifically including seniors, unhoused people, lone parent families, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, migrant workers, newcomers, people with mental and chronic health conditions, sex workers, and people who use drugs.
87. Increase investment on climate adaptation strategies that are also climate mitigation strategies with respect to bridges, roads, homes and other structures, and work to accelerate international efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
88. Make concrete commitments to reduce all greenhouse gases in the province, with a focus on the highest emitting industries.
89. Invest in a comprehensive, unified provincial air quality strategy to prepare all regions for impending wildfire, wood smoke, and heat dome seasons.

Environmental Protection

90. Increase resourcing to environmental protection, with a view to increasing data collection to more deeply integrate science-based approaches, including local and Indigenous knowledge and practices into conservation, environmental protection and old growth strategy.
91. As required by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, when requested, provide supports to Indigenous communities to better fund their conservation engagement.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Management

92. Allocate funds from hunting license fees and a portion of natural resource profits to conservation.
93. Establish wildlife governance and dedicated funding models to improve wildlife management and habitat conservation by collaborating with stakeholders, including First Nations; ensure that BC manages its wildlife resources to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples and the residents of British Columbia for the future.
94. Establish dedicated funding for a data-based comprehensive predator management strategy.

Invasive Species

95. Significantly increase funding for invasive flora and fauna species prevention, monitoring, regulation, and inspection; including core inspection program funding for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and BC Conservation Service with a budget adjusted to inflation.
96. Implement 24/7 inspection facilities at all major border crossings to inspect vessels for quagga mussels and other invasive aquatic species.

Parks and Recreation

97. Continue to invest in BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC to address gaps in maintenance and staff, including dedicated funding to community-based organizations for trail maintenance and development.
98. Build the capacity of volunteers by establishing discretionary funding to ensure that BC's volunteer trail and park maintenance groups have the resources they need to continue to improve the accessibility of outdoor recreation.

Recycling and Waste

99. Develop a zero-waste provincial strategy to incentivize good behaviours, support made in BC recycling programs, and create a circular economy by using recycled materials from these programs to help secure and stabilize supply chain issues and build BC's fuel capacity.
100. Leverage CleanBC to incentivize municipalities to adopt a province-wide recycling program to ensure that recycling is accessible across the province.
101. Incentivize individuals to reduce, reuse, and recycle, and incentivize manufacturers to avoid planned obsolescence and develop innovative uses for recycled materials.

Water

102. Urgently develop a proactive, well-funded and coordinated water conservation strategy.
103. Provide \$75 million in sustained funding to the BC Watershed Security Fund.

Zero Emission Vehicles

104. Leverage all incentives to increase the accessibility of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), including expanding charging infrastructure, supporting mechanic training programs for servicing ZEVs, developing battery recycling facilities and developing regional and flexible plans that are adaptable both to the unique challenges of small and remote communities and high-density urban areas.

FISCAL AND REGULATORY POLICY

Budgetary and Taxation Policy

105. Recognize the exceptional challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses and their importance to the BC economy by providing supports and incentives to increase productivity and competitiveness, reduce bureaucracy, and increase timeliness of supports.
106. Establish a BC Prosperity and Productivity Commission as an independent agency to ensure that policies and regulatory provisions are viewed through the lens of productivity and prosperity and advise on changes that support scaling up businesses, growing the export sector, and increasing productivity and nurturing real wage growth.

Carbon Tax

107. Explore a graduated carbon taxation system based on greenhouse gas emissions of fuels to incent the shift to new and cleaner alternatives.

Liquor, Cannabis, and Tobacco

108. Explore the viability of implementing an annual fee on the tobacco industry to recover the cost of the Ministry of Health's provincial tobacco control strategy.
109. Implement a retail floor price for all alcohol products of \$10.00/bottle (750 ml) with a corresponding increase to the wholesale price and a sliding scale for larger formats including annual indexing to the Consumer Price Index.

Local Governments

110. Review the Community Charter with a view to modernizing the relationship between municipal and provincial governments with respect to funding and resources in light of the increased pressures and demands facing municipalities relating to climate change, transportation, housing, and public safety.

Property Tax

111. Review split assessments on property taxation with a view to addressing rising costs for small and medium-sized businesses.
112. Increase property transfer tax thresholds for all home buyers including first time home buyers.

Provincial Sales Tax

113. Review the implementation of the online marketplace services PST provisions to ensure that the amendments result in the intended outcome.
114. Remove the PST from the sale of defibrillators.

Specific Taxation Measures

115. Review the luxury tax in view of the rising cost of vehicles.
116. Examine the payroll exemption threshold for the employer health tax in recognition of pressures on small businesses and index the threshold to the Consumer Price Index for annual increases.

Prompt Payment

117. Prioritize the enactment of prompt payment legislation that is inclusive of lien reform and adjudication.

HEALTH

Chronic Diseases and Complex Care

118. Prioritize and fund the development of myalgic encephalomyelitis-specific billing codes for BC clinicians and the development of continuing medical education credits, modules or incentives for BC physicians, medical students, and other medical professionals to attend training about myalgic encephalomyelitis.
119. Provide the Brain Injury Alliance with a secure, annualized, and ongoing funding agreement to offer more stability and opportunities for growth to address emerging issues in the brain injury sector.
120. Explore the listing of Yescarta ® as an eligible treatment on the BC Cancer Drug Benefit list, with access through established provincial referral networks, and investing in cancer care infrastructure to provide Yescarta ® CAR T-cell therapy to qualifying patients.
121. Further develop and implement the ten-year strategic plan to prioritize cancer care and treatment.
122. Commit to implementing a comprehensive diabetes strategy.
123. Ensure timely and affordable access to all multiple sclerosis treatments approved by Health Canada.
124. Provide access to arthritis-specific care, including pain management therapies.

Community Care and Seniors

125. Strike and fund a diverse and inclusive multi-sectoral long-term care advisory forum to assist in the development of an evidence-based action plan to reform long-term care in BC.
126. Improve accountability measures for funding to long-term care home operators.
127. Allocate more funding and supports to help seniors age-in-place and maintain healthy lives at home longer.

Dental

128. Recognize that poor dental care leads to poor health outcomes by providing improved dental coverage for lower income British Columbians with specific attention focused on providing better care for people with disabilities and with diabetes.

Health Human Resources

129. Integrate adequate mental health supports, including counsellors and psychologists, into primary care networks.
130. Alleviate strain on the health system by finding or accrediting alternative practitioners, such as pharmacists, physician assistants, midwives, foreign trained health care professionals, and mental health practitioners.
131. Review mechanisms to improve the recruitment, credentialing, and retention of foreign trained family physicians.
132. Increase supports for health care professionals to encourage retention; this could include on-site child care, reviewing the pay structure and providing improved benefits
133. Provide subsidized access to education and bridging programs to help health care professionals enhance their skillsets to allow them to work to their fullest potential.
134. Standardize the scope of practice for nurses across the province so they are not administratively constrained from providing health care, particularly in remote areas.
135. Examine the payment model and administrative structure for family doctors with a view to identify opportunities to incentivize physicians to work in British Columbia.

Rural and Remote Health Care

136. Build an effective health care system in rural areas complimented by more residencies in northern hospitals.
137. Improve access to health care in rural and remote communities, including by funding digital health care, exploring the use of physician assistants to extend hospital hours, increasing access to midwives, providing incentives to attract health care practitioners to these communities, and increasing seats and loan forgiveness for students.

Hospice and Palliative Care

138. Increase funding and adopt a provincial approach to providing culturally respectful grief and bereavement supports to build capacity for community hospices across the province.
139. Support newborns, children, and youth with life-threatening illnesses by amending the Ministry of Health's Palliative and End-of-Life Care Policy to include those aged 19 and under, who are presently excluded from the policy's scope.

Medical Coverage

140. Implement a funding strategy that covers the cost of modern prosthetics and orthotics, including the costs associated with emergency repairs, and ensure that BC adults with disabilities or physical impairments can access orthotic coverage after their 19th birthday.
141. Add coverage of the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test to the Medical Services Plan for asymptomatic individuals, when ordered by a physician.
142. Review access to the Medical Services Plan for refugees and migrant workers to ensure that the model is available in a timely way and fair to both employees and employers.

Mental Health and Addictions

143. Increase access to long-term counselling for children and youth who experience all types of abuse-induced trauma.
144. Develop targeted measured outcomes in mental health; and a plan to improve mental health and address addictions, the plan can include education to increase awareness, reduce barriers and stigma while also increasing access to counselling and treatment.
145. Identify and fund programming for identity-based counselling and mental health support services that are intersectional, culturally safe and LGBTQ2SAI+focused.

Primary Care

146. Conduct an immediate review of primary care (including walk-in clinics, urgent and primary care centres, family doctors, and community care centres) to determine how the existing system can more effectively serve the community, increase access to longitudinal care, identify and resolve issues, and identify opportunities to improve navigation for the public.

Biomedical Sciences

147. Support more BC-based medical research to identify solutions for tomorrow.
148. Establish a comprehensive and coordinated BC life sciences and biomanufacturing strategy to build BC's biomanufacturing and vaccine supply chain.
149. Encourage the federal government to accelerate its efforts in making various antiviral therapies available to fight COVID-19.

HOUSING

Affordable and Social Housing

150. Incentivize the private sector to be innovative and creative in addressing the low housing stock.
151. Increase resources for the Residential Tenancy Branch to ensure that people who are in danger of losing their housing are experiencing an equitable, just, consistent, and timely process that is fair for both tenants and landlords.
152. Support the role of BC Housing in funding and building public non-market housing.
153. Develop and fund an Indigenous housing strategy.

Complex Care

154. Accelerate the construction of complex care housing sites across the province and ensure full supports are provided for those who need them and adequate support is provided for surrounding neighbourhoods.

Homelessness

155. Prioritize investments and programs for those experiencing homelessness to help reduce their risk of being evicted and increase access to stabilized housing.
156. Provide funding to ensure that young people leaving foster care have access to affordable housing.
157. Provide more financial support to overnight and daytime drop-in centres for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Strata

158. Explore options to improve financial stability, risk management, and insurance pricing for strata councils.

K-12 EDUCATION

Capital Funding

- 159. Re-examine capital funding with a view to being proactive and responsive to anticipated growth and local needs as well as recognizing the increased maintenance costs as schools age.
- 160. Review policies regarding portables, recognizing the challenges created by the fact that portables are funded from operating budgets.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development

- 161. Increase the Childcare Operating Fund daily rate per child to recognize inflationary pressures.
- 162. Ensure child care is accessible for those who do not hold regular working hours.
- 163. Act urgently to recruit and retain early childhood educators in BC's child care system, including by allowing equivalency credits and providing paid practicums and tuition subsidies for early childhood educators, and by funding more child care spaces.

Operational Funding

- 164. Increase funding for K-12 education in recognition of increased operational costs and unique regional needs.
- 165. Improve funding and resources for new curriculum initiatives.
- 166. Consider factors that affect equity of opportunity for students in school districts that serve rural and remote communities, especially as it relates to transportation, operations, recruitment, and retention.

Recruitment and Retention

- 167. Explore measures to recruit and retain teachers, including by providing incentives, especially for teachers in rural and remote communities.

Students with Support Needs

- 168. Increase funding and supports for students with unique learning and development needs with earmarked funding for early identification and intervention.

- 169. Conduct an audit of the education of K-12 students with support needs to find ways to better support students and optimize resources.
- 170. Make pre-kindergarten wellness checks all-encompassing, including by integrating checklists to inform parents of further screening needs.
- 171. Utilize education assistants to help address the challenges of providing before and after school care.

Vulnerable Students

- 172. Collect data on current school food programs to inform a coordinated strategy, share best practices, and identify the greatest need.
- 173. Support the expansion of school meal programs to provide healthy, local, and culturally sensitive food to students.
- 174. Increase funding for mental health supports in K-12 schools.
- 175. Provide additional funding to support the significant educational needs of refugee and newcomer students.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Access to Justice and Legal Aid

- 176. Increase ongoing annual funding for legal aid services and access to justice, including for family law and child protection matters, and examine the income thresholds for eligibility.
- 177. Provide stable and adequate funding and supports to child and youth advocacy centres across the province.

Correctional Services

- 178. Ensure proper resourcing and supports to deal with prolific offenders challenges.

Cannabis and Tobacco

- 179. Fund additional resources and enforcement to address the distribution of contraband tobacco and illicit cannabis.

Court Services

- 180. Increase funding to improve access to the courts and justice system, including by identifying opportunities to improve efficiencies; to enhance the skills and knowledge

of court staff in all communities to support a modernized court administration system; and to complete the digital transformation and modernization of the court system.

181. Establish robust data collection and disclosure infrastructure within the justice system, including Court Services, BC Corrections, and administrative tribunals.

Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Assault

182. Provide funding and support, including mental health supports, for survivors of brain injury resulting from intimate partner violence.
183. Conduct a system-wide audit of how the province is dealing with gender-based violence and sexual assault to ensure supports are appropriate and adequate.
184. Create a provincial sexual assault policy, working with data and insights obtained from police and hospitals, to ensure appropriate response in all sexual assault cases across BC.
185. Develop and fund intersectional and culturally sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs in K-12 schools.
186. Develop and fund intersectional and culturally-sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs, as well as response and support services in post-secondary institutions.
187. Partner with community organizations to develop and fund intersectional and culturally sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs.
188. Provide funding for transition housing and expand the Homelessness Prevention Program to all eligible transitional housing programs across the province to prevent homelessness and increase safety for women and children leaving violence, with emphasis on paying attention to child care needs.

Ground Disturbance

189. Create a cross-ministerial task force to examine the beneficial impacts of prescribing a ground disturbance program for all underground disturbance in British Columbia.

Natural Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

190. Invest in and upgrade Emergency Management BC, including necessary technical upgrades.
191. Provide more resources for responding to natural disasters and emergencies, and create a modern strategy that includes public education, investments in climate change resiliency, and proactive response.
192. Commit new funding for flood and wildfire risk mapping, improving land-use planning and community resilience, and building back better following a disaster
193. Include animals, particularly livestock, in emergency planning and response.

Emergency Response and Communications

194. Provide funding for the leasing of a dedicated rescue helicopter to Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society and funding for staffing and capacity of the Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society for year-round rescue services.
195. Implement a provincial wireless call-answer levy, similar to those that exist in other provinces, to ensure equitable funding for 911 dispatch services in the province and create a taskforce inclusive of all emergency services providers to determine how to best integrate mental health supports into emergency response through a fourth option for 911.

Restorative Justice

196. Recognize restorative justice as an essential service by providing adequate and stable funding, and by increasing system-wide awareness.

Sex Work

197. Provide increased funding for frontline organizations across BC that deliver peer-led and person-centered programming for sex workers.
198. Provide funding toward the provincial bad date and aggressor reporting system, which is being developed.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Children and Youth in Care

199. Improve and increase supports for children and youth in care, including by facilitating the jurisdictional transition

of child welfare to Indigenous communities, and improving supports to kinship caregivers.

Children and Youth with Support Needs

- 200. Ensure any changes to services for children and youth with support needs are fully funded to provide appropriate resources and eliminate waitlists.
- 201. Address recruitment challenges for occupations that support early intervention, such as speech language pathologists and occupational therapists, by increasing seats in these areas at post-secondary institutions.

Community Social Services, Not for Profit Sector, and Social Policy

- 202. Provide increased, predictable, multi-year funding to the community social services sector, including administrative funding and supports to address compensation challenges.
- 203. Expand social service delivery and the continuum of care to improve response to mental health, addictions, and other complex social issues.
- 204. Provide funding for community-based seniors' centres and senior serving organizations.

Income and Disability Assistance

- 205. Review the eligibility and administration of income and disability assistance, including earning exemptions policies and thresholds, with a view to reducing barriers to work, providing flexibility, and ensuring that the most vulnerable have access to all necessary supports and medical needs.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Active Transportation

- 206. Increase investments in active transportation and safe active transportation infrastructure in partnership with municipal governments and community-based organizations, with particular attention to the distinct needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.
- 207. Enhance oversight of active transportation infrastructure with a view to improving safety for British Columbians.

Transportation Infrastructure

- 208. Take a whole-of-system look at BC transportation to build a sustainable and green transportation network that is reinforced to be climate resilient.
- 209. Ensure BC's infrastructure is flexible, safe, and includes appropriate redundancies to ensure that people and goods can remain connected even in times of emergency.

Aviation Industry

- 210. Maintain BC's sustainable aviation fuel leadership by creating a multi-agency task force that mirrors the complexity of this emerging market and that represents aviation, clean fuel, innovation, and investment expertise.
- 211. Support building aviation cargo capacity and reliability.

Public Transportation

- 212. Fund BC Bus North and expand service frequency on all four BC Bus North routes; couple this expanded service with enhanced safety features such as well-lit and safe bus-stops and a requirement that BC Bus North provide a free, safe ride to every woman and girl walking or hitchhiking on the Highway of Tears.
- 213. Increase investments in a province-wide public transit plan to ensure accessible, affordable public transportation options are available across the province, with a view to addressing gaps in regional services, and enhancing support for high traffic corridors like the Okanagan and North Shore.
- 214. Invest in decarbonizing BC's fleet, increasing accessible transportation options such as handyDART, and addressing the needs of small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Roads and Highways

- 215. Empower local area managers in rural BC with the financial resources they need to prioritize road maintenance.
- 216. Increase funding for wildlife connectivity through highway crossings and fencing to make the transportation system safer for wildlife and humans alike.



APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION 1

The cost of living is rising nationally as a result of global challenges linked to Russia's attack on Ukraine and the continuing impacts of COVID-19. What further actions do you think the province should take to support people facing challenges from the rising cost of living? The Committee heard from 816 survey respondents, who provided over 1400 recommendations to address the rising cost of living.

Fiscal and Regulatory Policy

More than 400 survey responses highlighted the need to change fiscal and tax policy to address the rising costs of living. Within this theme, the call for a reduction or elimination of taxes on gasoline was the most prominent suggestion with respondents emphasizing the impact of the additional cost incurred by these taxes. Many respondents suggested reducing or stabilizing prices on essential consumer goods through regulation and price controls. Respondents also supported changes to the taxation system through increased taxation on corporations and wealthy individuals and reduced taxes for those with lower incomes. Finally, a few respondents suggested an increase in the minimum wage to support the rising cost of living.

Housing

Housing was the second most common theme, appearing in 285 responses. Survey respondents spoke to the need for an increase in the supply and availability of affordable housing options. Suggested actions to achieve this ranged from increasing the affordable housing stock to the subsidization of housing. Some respondents also recommended changes to rental regulations to improve rental housing costs, advocating for the implementation of rental price caps and controls, rental rebates, and reinstating a temporary rental payment suspension. Survey participants spoke to the development and rezoning processes to allow for more housing development and suggested various ownership restrictions to reduce the commodification of housing.

Child Care and Social Services

Recommendations related to social services were present in nearly 200 responses. With rising costs, calls to increase the income and disability assistance rates for those on fixed incomes were prominent. Respondents also endorsed various forms of income supplements to address living expenses, most commonly the implementation of a universal basic income. Improving the cost of childcare was another common request, with many references to increasing the availability of the \$10-a-day childcare program.

Economic Development

Economic development, particularly agriculture and food security, was the next most common theme, appearing in over 100 responses. In the face of potential supply shortages and supply chain disruptions, respondents highlighted the importance of local agriculture and food security to combat rising food costs. Respondents proposed additional support for local farmers and BC's agriculture industry to reduce reliance on imports and lower costs. Respondents also advocated for increased awareness and opportunities for small scale urban farming and personal or community gardening to strengthen food security. Many individuals also recommended supporting local businesses and economies to help address rising costs.

Environment

Suggestions related to the environment appeared in nearly as many responses as economic development with respondents focused on two related areas. They advocated for the redirecting of subsidies for fossil fuel industries to government services to

address the rising cost of living. Similarly, respondents recommended an accelerated transition from fossil fuels toward renewable energies and economies. Individuals also called for the protection of old growth forests from logging.

Transportation

Just under 100 suggestions were made related to transportation. Transportation orientated respondents identified two main actions to improve public transit—the elimination or reduction of fees and the expansion of transit routes, hours, and modes. Some individuals suggested rebates to promote active transportation alongside recommended improvements to active transportation infrastructure.

QUESTION 2

What actions do you think the province should take to improve your and your family's quality of life? The Committee heard from 828 respondents, who provided over 1,748 recommendations to improve the quality of life of British Columbians.

Health

More than 400 recommendations were made to improve the health care system. Respondents spoke to the issue of health care access, with almost two thirds of all health care related survey responses citing calls to increase health care spending to recruit and retain more medical professionals to reduce wait times. Many of those calls referred to the need for more family doctors and walk-in clinic availability.

Respondents also spoke of the need to improve mental health services along with improved services and treatment for those struggling with addiction. Many referenced the ongoing opioid crisis and called for more treatment facilities and rehabilitation services.

Environment

Responses related to the environment were nearly as common as healthcare with over 400 recommendations. Many respondents suggested investment to support and increase environmental protection. Over 100 respondents recommended stopping all old growth logging in the province and protecting ancient forest areas. Respondents also suggested replacing old growth logging practices with sustainable logging practices and/or retraining workers.

Within this theme, the second most popular response was for stronger action against climate change, with many recommendations to stop support for the fossil fuel industry, end oil and gas subsidies, and invest in clean and renewable energy.

Fiscal and Regulatory Policy

Fiscal and regulatory policy was the third most cited topic to improve British Columbians' quality of life, appearing in nearly 200 responses. Half of the responses citing this topic were related to budgetary and taxation policy with broad support for lowering the tax burden on lower income individuals, while increasing taxes on corporations and the wealthy. A small portion of respondents made calls to reduce government spending and improve the efficiency of public spending.

Many respondents referred to the increasing cost of living and inflation rate, with many identifying food and gas prices as significant burdens and recommended eliminating carbon and fuel taxes to decrease prices. Other suggestions included increasing wages and creating high paying jobs. A small group of respondents advocated for a universal basic income.

Housing

Housing was the fourth most common area of focus with over 150 recommendations. One third of housing related responses called for action to address the lack of affordable housing. Suggestions to achieve this included rent controls, freezes, or caps. Many respondents recommended increased development and relaxing or changing zoning bylaws to accelerate development of affordable housing units. A similar number of responses suggested increasing ownership restrictions by limiting the number of homes an individual or family is allowed to own and banning both foreign and corporate real estate ownership of homes.

Support for rental housing was the second most common topic amongst housing related responses with individuals highlighting rapidly rising and unaffordable rental prices and recommending price controls.

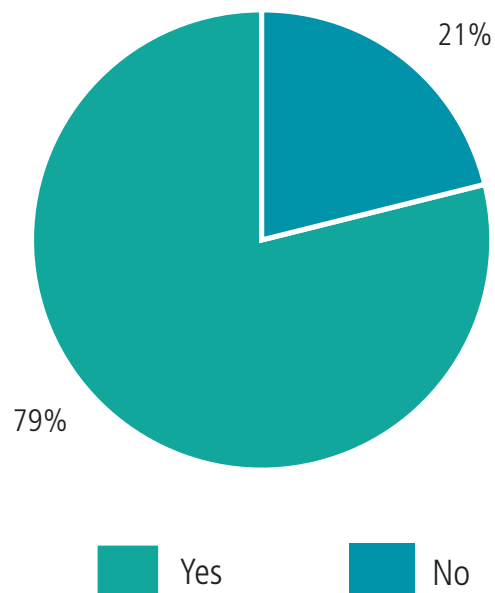
Child Care and Social Services

Another common theme featured in approximately 100 responses was social services, with many respondents expressing support for the \$10-a-day child care program and calling for accelerating and expanding the program to increase access across the province and decrease waitlists. A significant number of responses focused on autism funding, with discontent for the new hub model of service being implemented for children with support needs. Respondents expressed overwhelming support for individualized funding for children with autism compared to the new support system.

Many respondents discussed the need to increase persons with disability funding to better match the current cost and standard of living. Similar calls were made by a smaller portion of respondents to increase financial support for seniors. Investments were suggested to supplement those on fixed incomes and to invest in social and community services to support seniors to stay in their homes and communities.

QUESTION 3

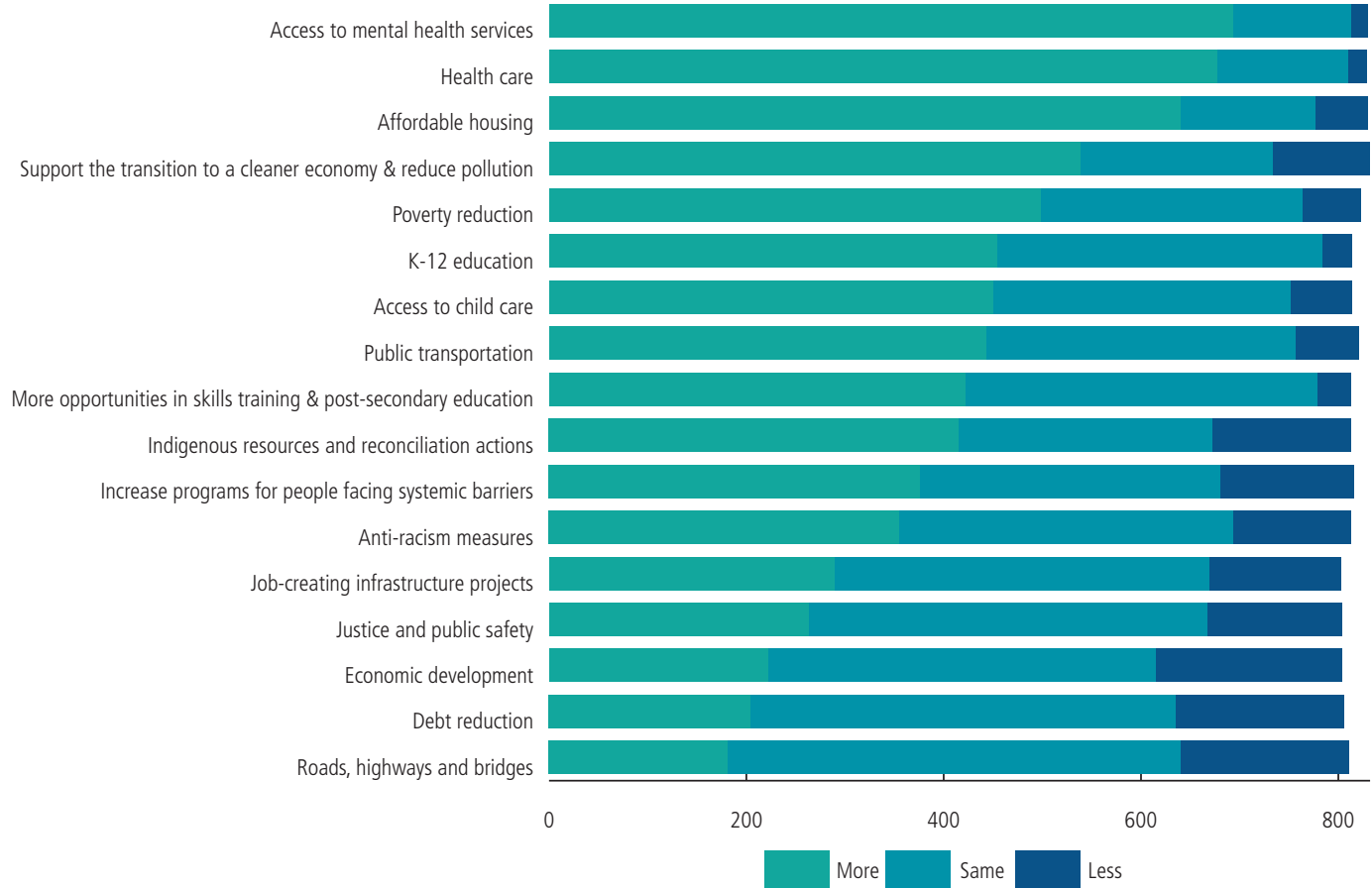
Would you be interested in seeing more funding for actions that address climate change and help proactively prevent climate disasters? (846 responses)



QUESTION 4

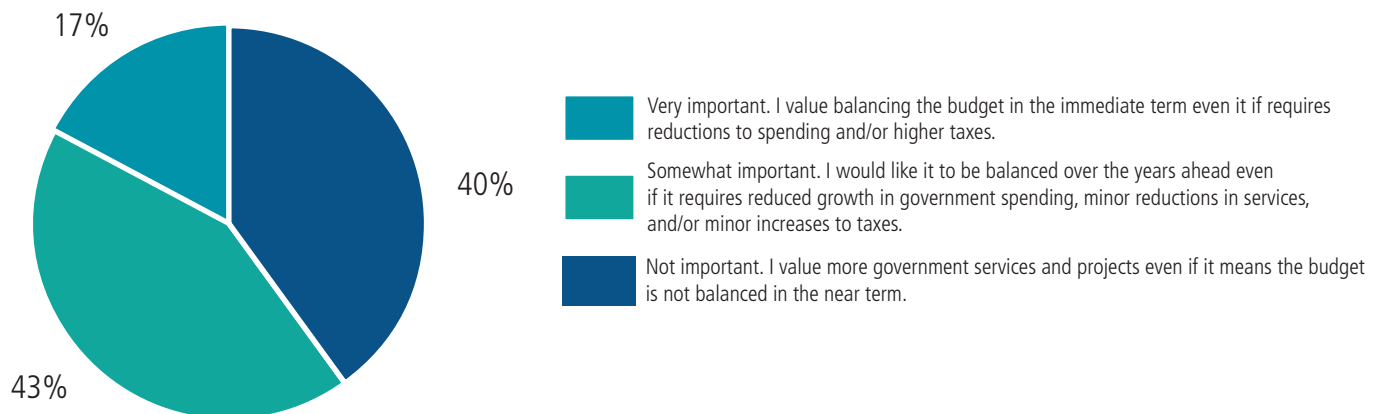
Which areas do you think should receive more, the same or less funding? (833 responses)

282 respondents wrote in other categories for this question. They advocated for more environmental protection specifically for old growth forests, with a smaller number requesting more climate change mitigation. Other respondents called for more support for neurodivergent individuals, those with disabilities, and seniors. Less frequent responses included improvements to healthcare and called for a halt to the Royal BC Museum renovation.



QUESTION 5

How important is it to you to have a balanced budget? (848 responses)



A Submission to the
2023 Pre-Budget Consultations of the
Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Prepared By
the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC)

June 2022



The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia

The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) supports high-quality post-secondary education and research in BC. We represent over 5,500 faculty members including professors, lecturers, instructors, academic librarians, and other academic staff at five research-intensive universities in British Columbia. These are: the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the University of Northern British Columbia, Royal Roads University, and the University of Victoria. The Confederation has been in existence for fifty years and works closely with the unionized Faculty Associations at each institution.

Our Submission

The pandemic has demonstrated the need to do things differently in the 2022 provincial budget and to take this opportunity to rebalance our economic and social systems. Public universities have been instrumental to the Government of British Columbia's priorities in putting people first with a vision for an economic future that supports the knowledge and talent economy for the job skills of tomorrow. Public universities continue to build on lasting and meaningful reconciliation; address equity and racism; create a better future through addressing climate change; and contribute to a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone. BC's public universities have long been recognized as vital to ensuring the social and economic well-being of the province and British Columbians. Our members provide a crucial level of support to Government and the public, driving the recovery, innovation, and transformation of our society.

We bring to you a proposal for consideration that builds on the momentum of last year's budget. One that will see through the collective vision of an economic future that is inclusive, sustainable, and innovative, and situates BC's research universities within this vision.



Summary of Recommendations

The research universities and the faculty who work within them are an incredible powerhouse of economic growth and opportunity in this province as employers, as contributors to the research and understanding of our geopolitical times, and as skilled educators leading the way in comprehensive skills training to the population. And in recent years, they have been asked to play a bigger role in the ‘just recovery’ as we continue educate the population for the jobs of tomorrow, and support British Columbians in making life better for everyone. Our recommendations offer a pathway to an economic and policy environment that will continue building a strong, educated future for British Columbians. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) makes the following recommendations that affirm the value of public education and strategically invests in BC’s future.

I. Support People at BC’s Research Universities

1. **Strategically Reinvest:** Government has the opportunity to strategically reinvest in BC’s research universities at a time when they will best contribute to the economy and a *just recovery* for all.
2. **Restructure the Funding Model:** Restructure the funding model to focus on people, assert the primacy of public funding to universities by reducing overreliance on precarious employment and international student tuition.
3. **Stability:** Create a stabilization fund offset the huge impacts of inflation and subsequent consequences on the currency exchange that impacts teaching and research materials:
 - a. support the human infrastructure of post-secondary institutions by expanding faculty personnel.
 - b. support better health plans and comprehensive mental health initiatives for all campus community members, including faculty.
 - c. address institutions’ risk exposure caused by expanded reliance on international student tuition by freezing international student tuition, implementing seat caps, and providing funding to offset the loss of income until the system stabilizes.
 - d. provide institutions with supports for essential US-based resources and supplies affected by fluctuating currency exchange rates, such as online textbooks, journals, software, and other licenses, as well as lab supplies and reagents for research and teaching needs.

II. Support Research

4. **Provincial Transitional Research Grant:** Create a broad-based provincial research grant open to all disciplines, STEM and non-STEM, to support researchers negatively impacted by the pandemic and rising inflation. Jumpstarting research programmes is necessary. It requires a targeted infusion of resources to support research until grant monies and inflation levels return to normal, personnel are re-hired and trained, labs are fully restored, and research collaborations can be rejuvenated.

III. Support Truth and Reconciliation, Equity, and Inclusiveness

5. **Internet Access As Essential Service:** More than ever, internet access is an essential service, especially for those living in rural and remote communities. Through the lenses of Truth and Reconciliation as well as equity and inclusion, continue investing in province-wide internet access, connectivity, and infrastructure. We must ensure Indigenous communities, as well as all rural and remote communities, have access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet.



6. **Truth and Reconciliation:** Implement the Calls to Action for the post-secondary education made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is an ethical imperative that Government provide ongoing funding to support BC universities and colleges in creating degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages (**Call to Action #16**), hiring Indigenous faculty into permanent positions, and financing research programmes aimed at dismantling systems of racism, discriminations, the criminalization of poverty, and state-sanctioned brutality. Further, work with the federal government and your provincial colleagues to implement the following:
 - a. **Call to Action #11:** We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
 - b. **Call to Action #62(ii):** We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
 - c. **Call to Action #63:** We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including developing learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
 - d. **Call to Action #65:** We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.



I. Putting People First at Post-Secondary Institutions

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strategically Reinvest:** Government has the opportunity to strategically reinvest in BC's research universities at a time when they will best contribute to the economy and a *just recovery* for all.
2. **Restructure the Funding Model:** Restructure the funding model to focus on people, assert the primacy of the public funding to universities by reducing overreliance on precarious employment and international student tuition.
3. **Stability:** Create a stabilization fund offset the huge impacts of inflation and subsequent consequences on the currency exchange that impacts teaching and research materials:
 - a. support the human infrastructure of post-secondary institutions by expanding faculty personnel.
 - b. support better health plans and comprehensive mental health initiatives for all campus community members, including faculty.
 - c. address institution's risk exposure caused by expanded reliance on international student tuition by freezing international student tuition, implementing seat caps, and providing funding to offset the loss of income until the system stabilizes.
 - d. provide institutions with supports for essential US-based resources and supplies affected by fluctuating currency exchange rates and inflation, such as online textbooks, journals, software, and other licenses, as well as lab supplies and reagents for research and teaching needs.

One of the great strengths of this government to date has been its commitment to stable and predictable funding in the post-secondary sector. We need to continue these efforts and focus on the role research and doctoral universities will serve as catalysts for building a strong, sustainable economy; fostering cultural and social innovation; and embodying the commitment to truth and reconciliation, equity, and inclusivity. This is an opportunity to [strategically reinvest](#) in BC's research universities, enhancing their ability to contribute to the resiliency of our communities and our province.

There are 72,000 workers in BC's public post-secondary institutions; 39,000 of which are at the institutions of CUFA BC's member faculty associations. The research universities and the faculty who work within them are an incredible powerhouse of economic growth and opportunity in this province as employers, as contributors to the research and understanding of our geopolitical times, and as skilled educators leading the way in comprehensive skills training to the population. And in recent years, they have been asked to play a bigger role in the 'just recovery' as we continue to educate the population for the jobs of tomorrow, and support British Columbians in making life better for everyone.

As the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training undertakes a review of the post-secondary funding model, we ask Government to commit to long-term sector stability by [restructuring the funding model](#) to prioritize public funding to universities and to concomitantly reduce the overreliance on precarious employment and international student tuition.

In addition to strategically investing in post-secondary education, we also ask that Government [create a stabilization fund](#) to offset the huge impacts of inflation and the subsequent consequences on the



currency exchange that impacts teaching and research materials. Money doesn't stretch as far as it did even compared to last year. The reality of inflation is that institutions and individuals are falling behind as purchasing power erodes. We need to focus on recovery and expansion of faculty personnel in order to meet the needs of growing enrolment targets established by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. There is also substantial demand for strengthening health plans and comprehensive mental health initiatives for all campus community members, including faculty. It would help offset fluctuating currency exchange rates, which can substantially increase university costs for resources priced in US dollars, including textbooks, journals, software and other licenses, and lab supplies and reagents for research as well as curriculum resources for teaching needs. ***Putting people first at post-secondary institutions means supporting the human infrastructure of our institutions.***

A stabilization fund would also focus on reduction of institutional budgetary risk caused by an over-reliance on international student tuition revenue, while also supporting international students who are important members of our communities. The global pandemic has brought into sharp relief the unsustainability of the current funding model for post-secondary education. Institutional reliance on private fees has left universities exposed to this massive market and labour disruption that will have long-term implications for the institutions and an entire generation of students. International students now comprise more than 20% of total enrolments (this varies by institution and discipline) but their tuition revenue is significantly higher than this proportional minority. International students are more important than just the revenues they bring to BC's universities, they also increase the social and cultural diversity on campuses. International students are important citizens within their host communities, often contributing to the local economy and Canada's workforce even after graduation. We call on government and institutions to freeze international student tuition, ensure that current tuition is set at cost recovery and not predatory levels, implement seat caps, and provide funding to offset the loss of income until the system stabilizes.

II. Support Research

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. **Provincial Transitional Research Grant:** Create a broad-based provincial research grant open to all disciplines, STEM and non-STEM, to support researchers negatively impacted by the pandemic and rising inflation. Jumpstarting research programmes is necessary. It requires a targeted infusion of resources to support research until grant monies and inflation levels return to normal, personnel are re-hired and trained, labs are fully restored, and research collaborations can be rejuvenated.

The research that takes place at BC's universities address the most pressing social, economic, cultural, and environmental challenges facing British Columbians. Faculty need transitional financial support to jumpstart research programmes after more than two years of disruption. With more climate-related disasters like those we experienced last year, as well as the ongoing Covid pandemic response and the huge impact of income inequality, highlight just how important university research—in STEM and social sciences and humanities—is a tool to address the core problems society faces.

We recommend creating a **broad-based provincial transitional research grant** open to all disciplines, STEM and non-STEM, to support researchers negatively impacted by the pandemic and rising inflation. The fund could be administered by the Knowledge Development Fund (KDF) or by individual research institutions, or in another manner added to existing structures in the university.



For some faculty, the effects of pandemic disruptions in research programs persist. Some people were able to pivot their research focus to pandemic-related issues, like developing vaccines, studying pandemic immunology and modelling, as well as trends in labour disruptions, mental health, and public policy effects on people and communities. For others, entire research programmes were put on hold due to inaccessible laboratories on closed campuses, the inability to conduct in-person and community-based research, and the collapse of international systems of research around the globe. In some cases, entire research careers were lost as longitudinal socio-psychological studies were interrupted, and even decades-long biological studies involving generational cell lines were lost.

Professors at CUFA BC's member institutions are committed to conducting research, which constitutes approximately 40% of their workload. Many are struggling to meet their research obligations in the new environment, particularly given that prolonged absences from travel limited conducting the research itself and communicating its results. The creation of a broad-based provincial research grant would provide a lifeline until grant monies return to normal, personnel are re-hired and trained like lab techs and student researchers, labs fully restored, and research collaborations can be rejuvenated. Funding shortfalls hit entire research programmes and even graduate students, who are often supported from faculty grants. Research supports are one of the best ways to help undergraduate and graduate students because they are often hired under these grants to manage projects, and through these projects, students further develop the skills that feed into innovative developments and public-private start-ups companies, or other meaningful employment after graduation.

III. Supporting Truth and Reconciliation, Equity, and Inclusiveness

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. **Internet Access As Essential Service:** More than ever, internet access is an essential service, especially for those living in rural and remote communities. Through the lenses of Truth and Reconciliation as well as equity and inclusion, continue investing in province-wide internet access, connectivity, and infrastructure. We must ensure Indigenous communities, as well as all rural and remote communities, have access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet.
6. **Truth and Reconciliation:** Implement the Calls to Action for the post-secondary education made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (specifically calls #11, 16, 62(ii), 63, and 65). It is an ethical imperative that Government provide ongoing funding to support BC universities in creating degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages, hiring Indigenous faculty into permanent positions, and financing research programmes aimed at dismantling systems of racism, discrimination, the criminalization of poverty, and state-sanctioned brutality.

Based on what the pandemic has demonstrated, broadband connectivity has become an essential service for everyone. This is also true for post-secondary education as faculty and students engaged in remote teaching and learning in which internet and mobile wireless access were often the only means of communication. Access to affordable technology and internet services in BC lags behind other Canadian jurisdictions. These challenges are particularly acute for those living in rural and remote communities where access to these services is inconsistent, inequitable, exclusive, and unaffordable.



It is an ethical imperative that Government to [invest in province-wide internet access, connectivity, and infrastructure](#) to ensure [accessibility](#) and [equitable](#) access for all communities, particularly for members of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and equity-deserving communities. We encourage Government to find resources to reduce costs and accelerate the expansion of connectivity in rural BC.

There is a greater obligation on institutions of higher education to actively work toward meaningful [truth and reconciliation](#) through decolonizing and indigenizing the academy. Racism exists on campuses, it results in the underrepresentation of Indigenous people within positions of leadership in our community and on our campuses, and an overrepresentation in precarious employment and experiences of discrimination. We must actively reject racism and work toward true [reconciliation](#) and [inclusiveness](#).

We call on Government and post-secondary institutions to immediately [implement the Calls to Action for the post-secondary education](#) made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Implementing these will require ongoing funding to support BC universities and colleges in creating degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages ([Call to Action #16](#)), [hiring Indigenous faculty](#) into permanent positions, and [financing research](#) programmes aimed at promoting Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and dismantling systems of racism, discriminations, the criminalization of poverty, and state-sanctioned brutality.

Government will also need to work with the federal government and provincial colleagues to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking post-secondary education ([Call to Action #11](#)). Funding to post-secondary institutions is necessary to educate faculty on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms ([Call to Action #62\(ii\)](#)). The Government must lead the country by setting the priority for provincial Ministers of Education and Advanced Education as delegates to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including developing learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools ([Call to Action #63](#)). Finally, we call on the provincial government to work with the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation ([Call to Action #65](#)).

Meaningful [truth and reconciliation](#) across the province and in post-secondary institutions must be prioritized by Government and supported through the Ministry of Finance. Government and institutions, including faculty, must commit to including Indigenous people and resources in higher education, fighting colonial systems of oppression and inequality, and taking a strong role in being allies of change.



Summary

The 2022 provincial budget brings with it the opportunity to do things differently to rebalance our economic and social systems. The quality of education for our fellow citizens is just as important to the development of our society as it is to the economic success of the British Columbia and the people who live in this province. The advanced education sector needs strategic reinvestment and financial **stability** that puts people first at post-secondary institutions.

The research that takes place at universities contributes to the betterment of British Columbia and its citizens by driving **innovation, recovery**, and transformation of our society. Supporting research directly through a broad-based provincial research grant will ensure research programs can continue to address the most pressing social, economic, cultural, and environmental issues facing British Columbians today. Finally, supporting **truth and reconciliation**, equity, and **inclusiveness** in higher education requires the investment in province-wide internet access, connectivity, and infrastructure. Meaningful **reconciliation** further necessitates the immediate implementation of the Calls to Action for post-secondary education made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We have seen universities and colleges across Canada, and especially leaders within BC, stepping up and supporting their communities over the course of the pandemic. With the right investment, universities can continue to play a critical role in the financial and social economy of this province. Investing in students and research will pay dividends long into the future.

Our strategic priorities address Government's core goals of the 2023 budget by catalyzing **innovation, sustainability**, and **inclusiveness**. The Government of British Columbia has an opportunity to shape a forward-thinking agenda economic opportunity in which we believe post-secondary education can play an important role. Now is the time to make investments in post-secondary to help universities continue to fulfill their public mission as generators of high-quality research and education that the public and private sectors on which this province rely. These investments will meet the needs of a large student body that depends on university education to help them become productive and creative citizens in a diversified and complex knowledge economy.

We thank the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for meeting with us and hearing our needs for the post-secondary sector from the next budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Daniel Laitsch
President
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC

Budget 2023 Consultation

Written Submission Template

As participation in the budget consultation continues to increase each year, the Committee has looked at ways to simplify and standardize the consultation process to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate effectively. This includes the creation of a form for written input and information in support of a presentation. Please note that the preferred method to provide the Committee with a submission is through our online submission form, available through a link on our [website](#).

The Committee thanks all British Columbians for their continued participation in the annual budget consultation.

Instructions:

Please provide your comments by filling out this submission form.

You may provide up to three recommendations (maximum 50 words each) along with your explanation for each recommendation (maximum 300 words each). Should you submit more than three recommendations, additional recommendations will not be considered part of your formal submission and may only be reviewed for informational purposes.

Please note, the order of recommendations does not reflect priority.

Please ensure that your recommendations and explanation are captured within the body of the submission. Information provided through links will not be considered to form part of the submission and may only be reviewed for further interest.

If you require assistance or support to make a submission, please contact the Parliamentary Committees Office at 250-356-2933 or 1-877-428-8337 (toll-free in BC).

Submission Form

Introduction (100-word limit)

Indicate who the submission is from, i.e., whether from you in a personal capacity or sent on behalf of an organization, and any relevant background information.

Dr. Daniel Laitsch is President of the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC). CUFA BC represents more than 5,500 faculty members, including professors, academic librarians, instructors, sessional instructors, and lecturers through the unionized faculty associations at BC's research universities: SFU, UBC, UNBC, UVic, and Royal Roads.

Recommendation 1 (50-word limit)

Strategically reinvest in the human infrastructure at research universities by expanding faculty personnel, strengthening health plans and comprehensive mental health; restructuring the funding model; and creating a stabilization fund to offset the impacts of overreliance on international student tuition, inflation, and rising costs on research and teaching

Recommendation 1 Explanation (300-word limit)

BC's research universities and faculty are an incredible powerhouse of economic growth and opportunity as employers, contributors to research and the understanding of our geopolitical times, and as skilled educators in comprehensive skills training. They have been asked to play a bigger role in the 'just recovery' with resources stretched thin, continuing to educate students for the jobs of tomorrow. We need to focus on the recovery and expansion of faculty personnel in order to meet the needs of growing student enrolments; restructuring the funding model to reduce overreliance on precarious employment and international student tuition; and create a stabilization fund to offset impacts of inflation and rising costs on teaching and research (such as currency exchange rate fluctuations for textbooks, journals, and software and other licenses and lab supplies). A stabilization fund would also focus on reduction of institutional budgetary risk caused by an over-reliance on international student tuition revenue, while also supporting international students who are important members of our communities. Geopolitical insecurity could disrupt international student enrolment. As international student numbers comprise ~20% of enrolments (this varies by institution/discipline), the tuition revenue they generate is disproportionately higher than this. The limited revenue diversity from relying on international students could be financially devastating as enrolments hit saturation limits or suddenly change, as we saw in the early days of the pandemic and now with geopolitical conflict with Russia, Ukraine, and China (large sources of student recruitment centres). Freeze international student tuition, implement seat caps, offset the loss of income until the system stabilizes.

Recommendation 2 (50-word limit)

Create a broad-based provincial transitional research grant open to all disciplines to support researchers negatively impacted by the pandemic and rising inflation

Recommendation 2 Explanation (300-word limit)

Universities require a targeted infusion of resources to support research until grant monies and inflation levels return to normal, personnel are re-hired and trained, labs are fully restored, and research collaborations are rejuvenated. The pandemic caused the single greatest disruption in research in the history of BC's research universities, including the collapse of granting programs and delayed timelines to complete research. Last year's record climate disasters, the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic response, and the huge impact of income inequality highlight just how important university research—in STEM and the humanities and social sciences—is as a tool to address the core problems society faces. Research supports are one of the best ways to help undergraduate and graduate students because they are often hired under these grants to manage projects, and through these projects, students further develop the skills that feed into innovative developments and public-private start-ups companies, or other meaningful employment after graduation.

Recommendation 3 (50-word limit)

Support Truth and Reconciliation, Equity, and Inclusiveness by continuing to invest in province-wide internet access, connectivity, and infrastructure and implement the TRC calls to action for post-secondary education

Recommendation 3 Explanation (300-word limit)

More than ever, internet access is an essential service, especially for those living in rural and remote communities. Through the lenses of Truth and Reconciliation as well as equity and inclusion, continue investing in province-wide internet access, connectivity, and infrastructure. We must ensure Indigenous communities, as well as all rural and remote communities, have access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet. Implement the Calls to Action for the post-secondary education made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (specifically calls #11, 16, 62(ii), 63, and 65). It is an ethical imperative that Government provide ongoing funding to support BC universities in creating degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages, hiring Indigenous faculty into permanent positions, and financing research programmes aimed at dismantling systems of racism, discrimination, the criminalization of poverty, and state-sanctioned brutality.

In order to process your completed submission, this form should be emailed to: financecommittee@leg.bc.ca with your name, organization (if submitting on behalf of an organization); mailing address and phone number.

As well, we require your acknowledgement that you have read our [privacy policy](#) (required in order to formally receive your submission). We also seek your permission to post your submission on the Committee's website following the release of the Budget 2023 Consultation Report (please note that we only post submissions where consent has been received).

- I have read and agreed to the Privacy Policy of the Parliamentary Committees Office.
- I consent to having my submission posted on the Legislative Assembly website.