

## **B.C. Budget 2026 Puts Province's Universities — and Economic Future — at Risk**

(For immediate release – Victoria, BC, 17 February 2026) – The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) warns that the Province's [2026 "Securing BC's Future" Budget](#) underinvests in BC's public universities, placing institutions on an increasingly precarious financial footing, threatening access to education, undermining research and innovation, and weakening the province's long-term economic resilience.

The 2026 Budget includes \$98.8 billion expenses of which post-secondary education will receive only \$3.58 billion and shared among 25 public post-secondary institutions. Meanwhile, these institutions anticipate expenses rising to \$9.5 billion. In a budget framed as preparing British Columbia for "securing BC's future," the Province has instead signaled a future defined by contraction and short-term thinking.

"British Columbia's universities are essential engines of economic recovery, innovation, and social and economic progress, but they face serious financial instability," says Acting President of CUFA BC, Kenneth Christie. "This budget fails to provide the long-term operational funding universities need to continue educating the next generation, advancing research, and supporting communities across the province."

Universities throughout British Columbia are already grappling with structural financial pressures driven by stagnant provincial operating grants, rising costs, and the federal government's restrictions on international student permits. Without strategic investment by government, institutions are being forced to make damaging cuts that will limit educational opportunities and further weaken the province's economic competitiveness.

"Faculty are deeply concerned with the direction of this budget," said Annabree Fairweather, Executive Director. "The Province's underinvestment risks intensifying university deficits. The consequences will be fewer programs, reduced access for students, and the erosion of British Columbia's global leadership in research and innovation."

CUFA BC cautions that continued underinvestment risks narrowing universities' focus to short-term labour market needs at the expense of their essential contributions to society, the economy and critical innovation. Beyond their role in workforce preparation, universities serve a broader public mission: advancing knowledge, fostering critical thinking, and strengthening democratic society.

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

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

