



# PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY FUNDING REVIEW

SELKIRK COLLEGE, JUNE 2022





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# Institutional Overview

## *Preliminary submission to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training Funding Formula Review—request from review lead, Don Wright for June 30, 2022.*

Selkirk College is BC's oldest rural community college and was formed after regional taxpayers voted in a 1965 referendum to provide a close-to-home post-secondary opportunity. The doors first opened in Castlegar in 1966 with four programs—University Arts & Sciences, Business Administration, Forest Technology and Electronics—and a total enrolment of 458 students. Over the last five decades, Selkirk College has grown to become a major economic, social and cultural contributor.

Selkirk College creates a significant positive impact on the business community and generates a return on investment to its major stakeholder groups: students, taxpayers and society. The college's importance to the economy of its region is unlikely to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its capacity to train new or displaced workers will be vital as the region moves through and past this crisis.

to \$42.9 million, much of which was spent in the region. The college spent another \$11.2 million on day-to-day expenses related to facilities, supplies and professional services.

In the fiscal year 2018/19, Selkirk College students paid a present value of \$16.4 million into the local economy to cover the cost of tuition, fees and supplies. Of this impact, \$7.2 million is attributable to international students who relocated to the region to attend Selkirk College. In return for their investment, these students will receive a combined \$105.3 million in increased earnings over their working lives. This translates to a return of \$1.40 in higher future earnings for every dollar they invest in their education. The average annual rate of return for students is 9.8%.

Provincial taxpayers provided Selkirk College with \$30.1 million in funding in the fiscal year 2018/19. In return, they will benefit from added tax revenue, stemming from students' higher lifetime earnings and increased business output, which amounts to \$105.1 million. As a social determinant of health, level of education attainment on average results in reduced demand for government-funded health and social services. In the college's region, the impacts of this determinant add another \$2.8 million in benefits to taxpayers. For every dollar of public money invested in Selkirk College, taxpayers will receive \$3.60 in return, over the course of students' working lives. The average annual rate of return for taxpayers is 28.6%.

### IMPACTS CREATED BY SELKIRK IN FY 2018-19



**\$44.6 million**  
Operations Spending Impact



**\$2.7 million**  
Construction Spending Impact



**\$16.4 million**  
Student Spending Impact



**\$353.6 million**  
Alumni Impact



**\$417.4 million**  
TOTAL IMPACT

- OR -

**6,762**  
JOBS SUPPORTED

In terms of demographics, BC Stats reports a projected 4.5% population growth over the next 20 years in the Kootenay-Boundary catchment, with the greatest increases in the seniors (>65) population. Within the local school districts, relatively stable high school enrolments of between 780 and 850 graduates annually are anticipated to 2027.

In 2018/19, Selkirk College undertook an analysis of its economic impact in the region, using data generated by Emsi,<sup>1</sup> a labour market analytics firm. In the fiscal year 2018/19, Selkirk College added \$417.4 million in income to the regional economy, a value approximately equal to 11.3% of the total gross regional product. The college's impact supported 6,762 regional jobs. Selkirk College and its students support one out of every six jobs in the region.

Selkirk College employed 316 full-time equivalent employees in the fiscal year 2020/21. Payroll amounted



<sup>1</sup>Emsi—Labor Market Analytics & Economic Data ([economicmodeling.com](http://economicmodeling.com))

# 1. Making important contributions to the economic, social and environmental health of British Columbia

## AN INSPIRATIONAL AND ACHIEVABLE STRATEGIC PLAN

Selkirk College's [\*Building Remarkable Futures: Strategic Plan 2019–2024\*](#), which aligns with ministry mandates and government priorities, continues to focus on improved enrolment access, excellent student learning opportunities, a memorable and transformative student experience and improved graduate outcomes. In response to labour market data and student and industry demand, Selkirk College has recently developed and implemented new programming offerings in [Office Administration & Technology](#), [Web Development](#) and [Digital Fabrication & Design](#). Selkirk College has also been approved for a Practical Nurse Diploma program, which will commence delivery in 2023 at the [newly acquired](#) Trail Campus. The college is also developing a partnership with Vancouver Island University to collaborate on the delivery of the Pharmacy Technician program in 2023. Selkirk College continues to explore further programming in technology fields to meet the expanding demand for graduates in these areas. The college also continues to deliver and expand short courses, micro-credentials and programs that respond rapidly to meet student access needs and the community's workforce training needs.

Selkirk College has responded effectively to meeting the mandate requirements of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training by accessing funding and expanding seats in Health Care Assistant, Early Childhood Care & Education and community-based skills training. Selkirk College has also increased seats in Education Assistant & Community Support Worker, hospitality and tourism programming and international student seats in postgraduate business programs to respond to student demand and workforce needs. Other contributions to improved enrolment include a strong vision, a culture and practice in excellent instruction, robust student services and support, high program quality, intentional marketing and high student satisfaction. The college is fully participating in the Future Ready workforce development initiative and the post-secondary funding review led by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training.

The college has adopted work integrated learning (WIL) across a wide range of program areas, adding to the exemplary experiential learning the college is well known for delivering. The college supports students in accessing internships and co-op education opportunities internally with the college and with many community partners. Selkirk College has expanded mental health supports to students and improved support to Indigenous

students. Selkirk College aligns its activities with the priorities in the *BC Restart Plan*, CleanBC and Stronger BC. Selkirk College has been funded to expand student housing, and capital plans outline a continued focus on renewed spaces for learning and students as well as expanded campuses.

## A STRONG COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The college is committed to integrating [sustainability](#) into student learning, services, operations, workforce development and campus culture. The approach to climate action will include measures to adapt to projected climate impacts and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) in recognition of the need to build resilience. Selkirk College will support students and employees to become informed citizens, equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to bring about necessary global transformations.

Selkirk College is a proud member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education and participates in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). STARS is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. Selkirk College achieved a silver STARS rating in both 2016 and 2019. The results of these reports have helped guide progress toward a more sustainable future.

Selkirk College was one of the first post-secondary institution in Canada to sign the [Sustainable Development Goals Accord](#), the university and college sector's collective response to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 goals work within five key areas: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Selkirk College recognizes its central and transformational role in achieving the SDGs and has committed to delivering the goals, reporting on progress and sharing knowledge and learning with others worldwide.

The college submits an annual Climate Change Accountability Report (formerly known as the Carbon Neutral Action Report), which quantifies annual emissions from direct and indirect sources, including buildings, fleet vehicles and paper procurement. All operational greenhouse gas emissions are offset each year. Selkirk College aligns with the provincial public sector on greenhouse gas emission targets.



THE SDGS HAVE BEEN  
ADOPTED BY ALL UNITED  
NATIONS MEMBER STATES.



## 2. Promoting reconciliation with Indigenous communities, First Nations and Métis partners

Selkirk College acknowledges the traditional territories of the First Nations of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions: Sinixt (Lakes), the Syilx (Okanagan), the Ktunaxa and the Secwépemc (Shuswap) Peoples. Selkirk College is honoured to work with an engaged and proud Métis community who make the West Kootenay and Boundary regions their home. The West Kootenay and Boundary regions are home to a diverse population of Indigenous Peoples, families and communities. Selkirk College honours the values, cultures and ways of knowing that all Indigenous learners bring to the college.

While Selkirk College does not receive Aboriginal Service Plan funding, it has continued to build capacity to indigenize curriculum and programming, increase Indigenous faculty and staff, increase student supports and staffing in the Indigenous Services team and expand services for student success. Since its launch in fall 2019, Selkirk College's [\*Our Journey Together: Land, Life, Learning: Indigenization Plan 2019–2024\*](#) has set out priority initiatives.

### GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

Selkirk College has incorporated an institutional statement of principle in its [\*Strategic Plan\*](#) that describes its commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action, the Declaration Act Action Plan and important recommendations in other documents (such as [\*"In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care"\*](#)). The college has an Indigenous Advisory Committee with Terms of Reference and has developed [\*Nation-to-Nation MOUs\*](#) that strengthen relationships with partner Nations. Governance models and strategies have been developed and implemented to indigenize governance processes. A policy audit is being completed to decolonize policies at Selkirk College and implement best practices.





## CURRICULA AND PROGRAMS

Selkirk College offers the course INDG 100: Regional Perspectives on Languages and Culture annually, and an Indigenous Studies program is being developed for the regional context. Community education has been developed and will continue to be developed, including introductory language courses and offerings related to cultural fluency and anti-racism in the workplace.

Partnerships with Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) schools are being strengthened (specifically the En'owkin Centre and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology). Plans include developing joint and mutually significant programming in restorative justice, the arts, traditional ecological knowledge and language.

Specific programs within the college are undertaking more focused indigenization and decolonization efforts, including professional development for faculty and significant changes to curriculum. For example, incorporating the TRC Calls to Action, the Declaration Act Action Plan, and the "[In Plain Sight](#)" report into health and human services curriculum. Curriculum development expertise in the Teaching and Learning Centre with respect to indigenization and decolonization has been improved.

Selkirk College has developed pilot community-based training programs in the areas of natural resource management and land guardian technician. [Land-based learning activities](#) are now part of regular student programming and staff professional development in a variety of disciplines.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

A [Truth & Justice Speaker Series](#) and related partnerships with organizations continue to be successful. Programming, including the Elders Program and Cultural Connections, is supported. The Tenth Street Campus Indigenous Gathering Space in Nelson is underway to complement the Gathering Place on the Castlegar Campus, and other culturally safe and welcoming spaces at each campus and site are included in facilities planning.





### 3. Promoting equitable access for people who come from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances

Selkirk College acknowledges its capacity to contribute to resilient and healthy communities, and it strives to create an environment that celebrates diversity, including socio-economic disadvantage and equity-deserving communities. The ramifications of colonialism, racism and injustice include underrepresented voices within the college community, and the college is dedicated to cultivating a culture of inclusion where all students and staff are valued, respected and represented. Realizing this vision of a learning and working environment that is welcoming, accessible and engaging for all requires devoting more resources to expanding equity, diversity and inclusion. The *Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Plan*, to be re-launched this fall, supports the implementation and expansion of practices at Selkirk College that honour all members of the college community. Equity and diversity will be advanced through the development of innovative policies, programs and initiatives alongside accessibility improvements.



The *EDI Plan* has goals and objectives itemized under five key priorities: governance and leadership, education and communication, student experiences, systemic change and community relationships.

In a partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Selkirk College is developing an EDI micro-credential for employers, businesses and the not-for-profit sector. The initial partner is the City of Nelson.

Specific areas of ongoing programs promote equitable access:

1. [Academic upgrading and development](#) courses are offered across the region in online, in-person and hybrid, self-paced formats.
2. Adult education and preparation for employment for adults with special needs are offered through the [SOAR \(Steps to Opportunities and Academic Readiness\) program](#).
3. [Accessibility Services](#) is focused on student accessibility and support, and [Counselling Services](#) offers personal, academic and career counselling.
4. [Indigenous Services](#) includes a designated Indigenous counsellor, a student navigator, a cultural services coordinator and an Elders Program.
5. [Health and wellness](#) are promoted in the workplace. The [Healthy Campus](#) program is geared toward students. The college also offers important [recreation opportunities](#) for student wellness.
6. A comprehensive [financial aid, scholarship and bursary program](#) includes supports for former youth in care.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the community supported Selkirk College students to continue their studies through donations to an [emergency relief fund](#).

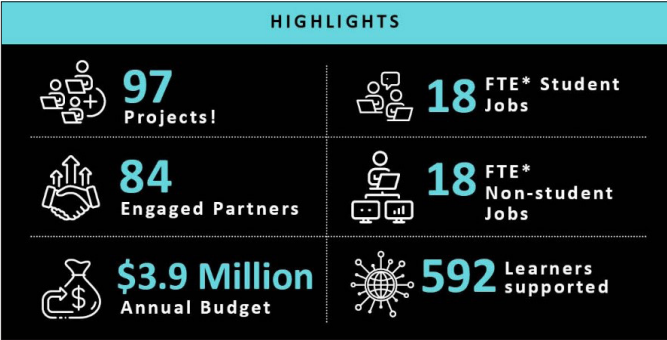
Access is challenging in a large rural region. However, investments that Selkirk College has made in technological infrastructure, connectivity and professional development for faculty have resulted in an innovative and increasingly accessible program delivery and the development of new and relevant courses and programs. For example, the Health Care Assistant, Early Childhood Care & Education, Business, Web Development and Pharmacy Technician programs offer a mix of online learning paired with a community-based practicum or clinical or WIL offerings so that students can complete their programs in their home communities. This has resulted in numerous success stories, including:

- [Pharmacy Technician Program](#)
- [Selkirk College Program Helps Change Lives with Code](#)

# 4. Facing major challenges in enhancing Selkirk College’s contribution to the economic, social and environmental health of British Columbia

Selkirk College graduates more than 1,000 students in over 80 program areas annually, including certificate, diploma, associate degree, advanced diploma, post baccalaureate and bachelor’s degree credentials. Provincial outcomes data from BC Stats indicate high employment and satisfaction levels among graduates. The college is beginning to collect data on how many graduates stay in the region. For example, an average of 70% of Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates stay and work in the healthcare sector in the region each year.

For the past 15 years, Selkirk College has been building capacity for additional relevant services to socio-economic development and environmental sustainability with regional partners. The Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre, the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute—including the Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development—and the Selkirk Technology Access Centre are now combined into the [Selkirk Innovates](#) consortium.



Selkirk Innovates is making a significant contribution to economic diversification, innovation and workforce development while supporting small businesses, not-for-profits and local government.

In addition, Selkirk College supports a number of Indigenous partnership development initiatives for community-based programming in the areas of natural resource management and land guardianship.

## CHANGING EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS OF STUDENTS

The need for enhanced student supports is a growing trend and an important one, as the BC post-secondary education (PSE) system (and colleges in particular) continues to evolve from an exclusive achievement and progression model to an inclusive student success-focused model. While overall student outcomes are improving, the per-student costs of supporting students toward success are increasing.

## MAJOR CHALLENGES

Region-specific expectations of regional colleges by the communities they serve to provide additional services and programs are commonplace. Currently, there is little recognition of this aspect of the mandate. The limited financial support made available to colleges to expand and develop areas such as applied research, innovation, workplace training and climate change community adaptation continues to limit the college’s capacity to sustain relevance at the local level.



## 5. Making significant contributions in collaboration with other parts of BC's PSE system

### ACADEMIC AND CAREER PROGRAMMING

Selkirk College is a full participant in the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer's [system](#) in BC. Selkirk College is part of several hundred program and course articulation, transfer and laddering partnerships.

The majority of the certificates, diplomas and advanced diplomas and all of the associate degrees offered at Selkirk College are transferable into degree opportunities at receiving institutions in BC. These include programs in health, human services, rural pre-medicine, natural resources, engineering, business, hospitality and digital arts.

For example, two of this year's [University of British Columbia Okanagan Southern Medical Program](#) are graduates of the Rural Pre-Medicine program at Selkirk College. They were able to enrol in the medical program directly after graduating from Selkirk College's Rural Pre-Medicine program.

### APPLIED RESEARCH

Selkirk College is a leading contributor to the [BC Applied Research and Innovation Network](#), development, student internships and WIL.

### TRADES TRAINING

Selkirk College is part of the provincial training plan, is a member of [Trades Training BC](#) and works closely with [Skilled Trades BC](#).

### SHARED SERVICES

Selkirk College is a partner in the [Administrative Services Collaborative](#), [BCNET](#) and [BCcampus](#).

Important impacts of these collaborations include shared/bulk procurement strategies, discounts on licence agreements for software and systems procurement, collaborative faculty development and curriculum development, and open education resources development and joint procurement.



## 6. Facing barriers to collaborating more with the rest of BC's PSE system

Current incentives and targeted funding for collaborations in the system have worked very well for Selkirk College. For example, the [Health Career Access Program](#)—a partnership with Interior Health and other parts of the BC post-secondary system—has provided very effective and efficient avenues to recruit and train workers for in-demand health careers.

Further opportunities to contribute to these initiatives would be welcomed. As programs are developed, it will be important for the funding review to fully account for the costs and capacity required for rural institutions to respond to and participate in these initiatives.



## 7. Key economic, demographic, social and technological trends that will unfold over the next 30 years and impact British Columbia's PSE system

### A STRONG TRACK RECORD ON INNOVATION AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Through Selkirk Innovates and in partnership with the Columbia Basin Trust, the annual [State of the Basin Report](#) looks at some of the indicators of rural socio-economic health. This information helps local government and the business, industry and not-for-profit sectors make data-informed decisions. Specific areas of interest to Selkirk College during a funding review include:

#### LABOUR MARKET

The growing demand for workers across all sectors will continue to challenge economic growth and rural socio-economic stability and sustainability. Rural colleges will continue to be challenged to meet the needs of the local workforce and economic diversification efforts. Ever-increasing demand for just-in-time training and job retraining/upskilling will need support and improved capacity from all levels of government to effectively support the rural post-secondary system.

#### TECHNOLOGY

Connectivity and the effectiveness and accessibility of emerging technologies is on-stream at a rapid pace. Rural colleges need the resources to participate in educational technological innovation as it relates to the mandate for more accessible offerings, efficiencies and operational savings.

#### RECONCILIATION AND CO-MANAGEMENT

Ongoing shifts in policy, the implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan, co-management and Indigenous resource management agreements with First Nations and Métis governments and development corporations and communities will influence the labour market and expectations for rural colleges to respond, partner and provide local community-based education and training.

#### EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION: IN THE COMMUNITY, IN THE WORKPLACE, AND IN COLLEGES

As a major employer and an educational institution, Selkirk College is leading the region in organizational development, facilitating social change, and partnering with other organizations to promote and educate about anti-racism, decolonization, inclusion, accessibility, poverty reduction and mental health and wellness. The scope and demand for these services and the degree of leadership required, however, is outstripping the resources available.

#### EXPANDING AND STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO RURAL COLLEGES AND IMMIGRATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

The current BC PSE system output is not able to meet current and immediate future workforce needs. BC and the PSE system need to develop a solution as well as local strategies for collaboration between all stakeholders with an interest in improving international student and immigration processes.



**CLIMATE CHANGE, CLEAN TECHNOLOGIES AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

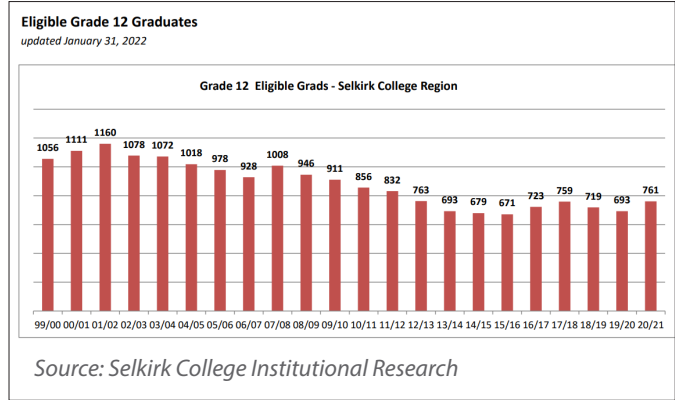
The impacts of climate change will have a significant impact on the workforce—changing many sectors and bringing about economic and social change. The CleanBC initiative will continue to provide strategic direction. Environmental restoration, green technologies and new trades and technical training in fields such as water management and wildfire mitigation will be needed.

**NEW INDUSTRIES EMERGE FROM ESTABLISHED ONES: GREEN FORESTRY AND WOOD CONSTRUCTION**

In communities where the forest industry is a major employer, as is the case in the West Kootenay and Boundary regions, there will be a sustained move toward secondary and tertiary wood and wood product manufacturing, for example, in the mass timber manufacturing sector.

**SUSTAINED DECREASE IN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION NUMBERS IN RURAL BC**

The last 10-year trend has shown a decrease in high school enrolments, indicating a shrinking domestic student demographic to draw from (source: Selkirk College Institutional Research).



**GROWING INCOME AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES IN RURAL BC**

Socio-economic pressures and disparities and affordability are expected to continue throughout BC. Regional colleges will continue to evolve their accessibility mandate to support poverty reduction efforts in local communities. However, this trend and the responses to it are expected to continue to place budgetary pressures on colleges.

**INCREASING COMPETITION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Competing for international student enrolments in the post-COVID-19 era and in a global recession will very likely present difficulties for rural colleges when it comes to obtaining enrolment targets, meeting diversity and inclusion aspirations and achieving revenue goals.



## 8. The PSE system needs to evolve in response to those trends

There are a number of additional ways that the BC PSE system can continue to collaborate and evolve collective responses to the trends:

1. Allocate public funding to rural colleges in innovative ways to acknowledge their unique role in BC workforce development, socio-economic challenges and sustainability.
2. Increase collaborative dialogue within the BC PSE system and with the ministry and key stakeholders to explore further collaboration and innovations (including IAHLA schools, Indigenous partner organizations, other ministries, the not-for-profit sector, industry/sector associations, etc.).
3. Work together to advance the shift and transition to the green economy and a well-prepared workforce.
4. Reduce the systemic discrimination and stratification of students. For example, international and domestic students currently receive differing levels of service and support.
5. Fund improvements to micro-credential programming in digital literacy, equity, cultural safety, reconciliation and anti-racism.
6. Introduce incentives to work more closely with school districts in rural regions to collaborate on curriculum, programming, technology and infrastructure.

## 9. Selkirk College will continue to evolve

Selkirk College will continue to focus on ways to be a leader in accessible and inclusive post-secondary education through the use of technology, innovative teaching delivery, innovative pathways and transfer opportunities, workforce readiness programming and partnership development.

The college will continue to leverage close working relationships with First Nations and Métis communities to develop programs and projects in community-based learning with Indigenous partners.

The college will continue to prioritize learning quality and move toward an excellent student and learning experience with a flexible, applied, HyFlex, authentic model that fully prepares people for work and transfer. There is a need to rethink what support and retention mean.

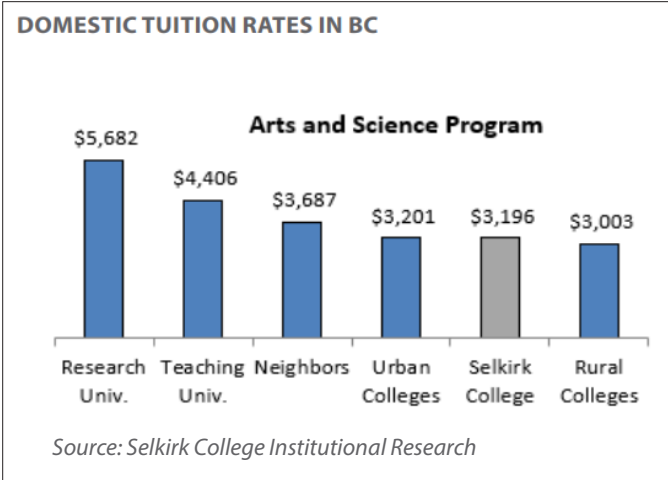
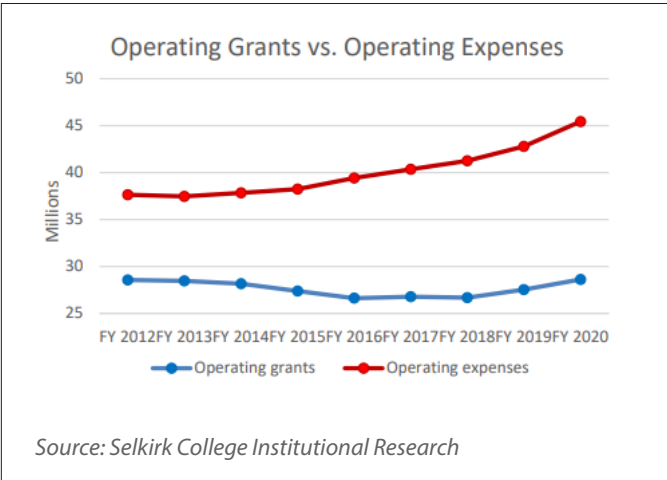
The college will continue to provide and expand opportunities by continuing to work toward seamless and effective transition pathways from secondary to post-secondary education through dual credit and workforce development partnerships.





# 10. Modifications to the funding formula

Selkirk College annually tracks the increasing gap between Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training operating grants and essential operating costs.



Considerations for the funding formula review should include:

1. The relative stasis of the base grant over the last decade while fixed costs, wages and expenses have increased annually has meant a shrinking proportion of operational budgets are funded by government. This overall impact has been a gradual loss of capacity of Selkirk College to be responsive and innovative, to meet local needs and to fully support today's students to be successful. The pressure to make up shortfalls in operating budgets through alternative revenue streams has placed additional financial uncertainty and risk on the public system.
2. The impact of a sustained domestic tuition increase limit policy, especially where it is typically less than the consumer price index. The additional impact of a growing gap between the allowable increases of institutions who had higher tuition at the beginning of the tuition and fee limit policy and those who had lower tuition has meant that the rate of increase of domestic tuition at different BC institutions offering the same courses differs widely. For example, the graph below shows the disparity between university-level courses in arts and sciences (source: Institutional Research at Selkirk College).
3. A recognition of rural challenges, such as operating in a large region with large distances between sites and a range of connectivity strength.
4. A focus on student housing, transit and access to healthcare and social services. While immense strides have been taken in terms of student housing support and improvements to transit and transportation services, rural regions in BC face very similar, yet worsening, amenity challenges as urban institutions.
5. A focus on mental health. As in many sectors, mental health challenges for employees as well as students are increasing, requiring innovative supports and solutions that, in turn, require resources.
6. A recognition of the college system's accessibility mission. Community colleges are committed to providing access for students from the broadest range of educational, socio-economic and demographic backgrounds. This means that students may require additional supports—such as upgrading, specialized student services and academic accommodations. These supports help to address the equity issues and life barriers that many students face, providing a more robust foundation for their success.

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