

### **Inequities in Funding for the Regional Post-Secondaries**

The KPU Retirees' Association is glad that the Government of BC is conducting a review of how it funds operations at BC's public post-secondary institutions. Our submission will focus on the funding for our province's regional post-secondary institutions, and particularly on the level of funding for Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

We are very glad that your review will aim to:

“Establish a funding model that fairly and impartially distributes provincial financial resources across the public post-secondary sector.

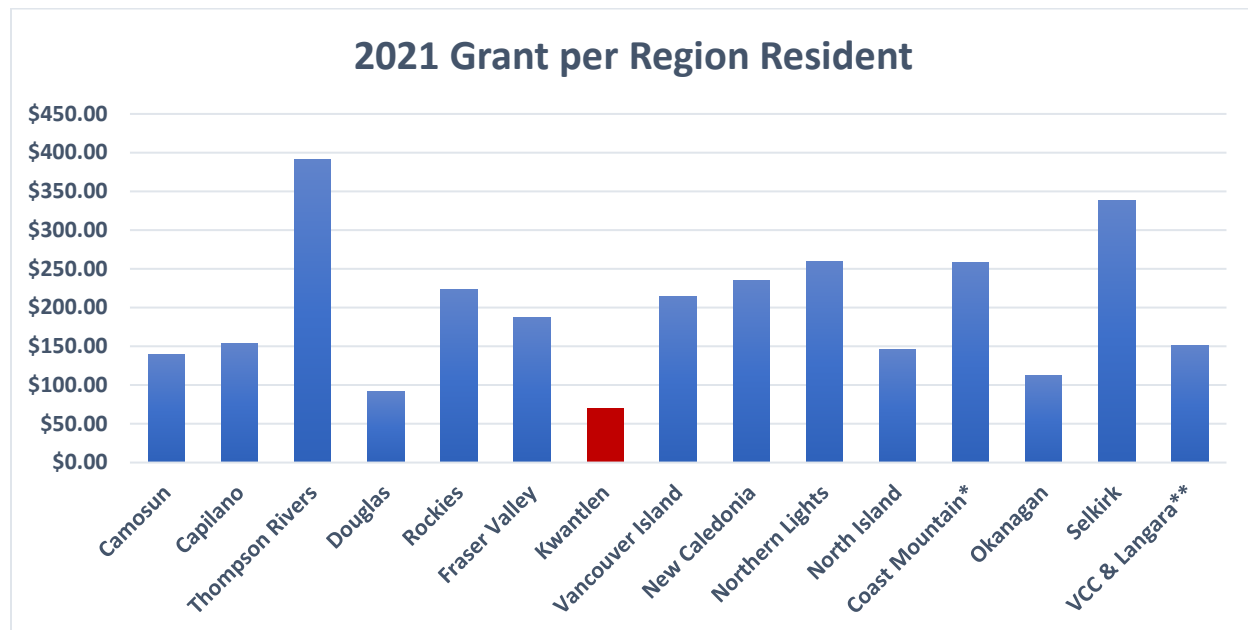
“Align provincial funding with the education and skills training needs of British Columbians and the communities served by the 25 public post secondary institutions.

“Support student success by ensuring access to affordable, high-quality post-secondary education and expanding key student supports.”

### **The Overall Picture**

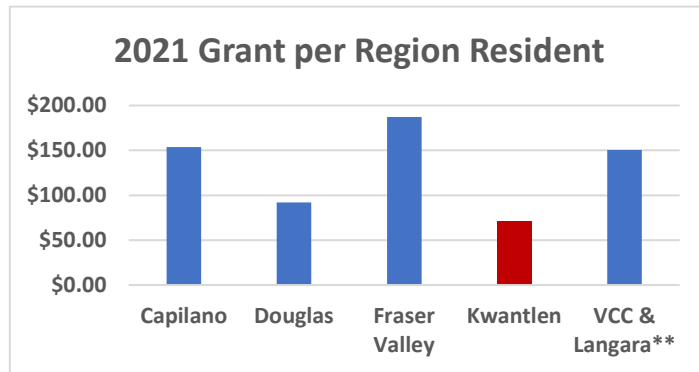
Funding for BC's regional post-secondary institutions has never been distributed fairly and impartially, in our opinion. KPU and its predecessors - Douglas College, Kwantlen College and Kwantlen University College - have always been underfunded, and thus unable to offer adequate access to affordable, high-quality education. KPU and its predecessors have never been able to serve its region as well as the other regional post-secondary institutions in BC serve their regions.

The following graphs illustrate the current level of this inequitable underfunding; although the actual numbers have changed over the years (see Appendix 2 for a graph of this data in 1985), the pattern has not.

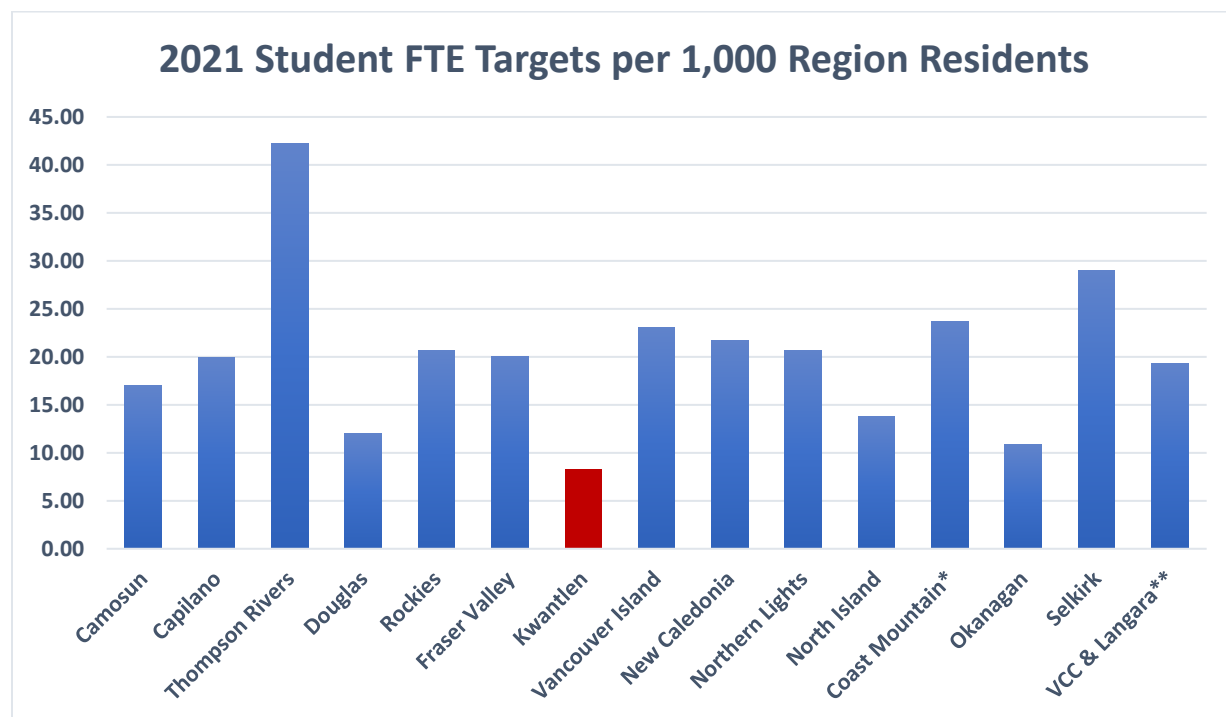


As you can see, relative to the population of the region each of these post-secondary institutions is mandated to serve<sup>1</sup>, KPU receives the lowest level of operating grants<sup>2</sup>. The average 2021 grant per region resident was \$145.90, but KPU received less than half that, only \$70.74, which is 48.5% of the average

We don't suggest that all the regional post-secondaries should get exactly the same level of funding relative to their regions' population – certainly some post-secondary institutions outside of the Lower Mainland and Victoria, such as TRU, Selkirk, Northern Lights and others, have higher costs due to the sizes of their regions. But even if we confine our analysis just to the Lower Mainland, it's still clear that KPU's operating funding is inequitably low: its \$70.74 per resident was only 51.8% of the rest of the Lower Mainland's average operating grant of \$136.62.



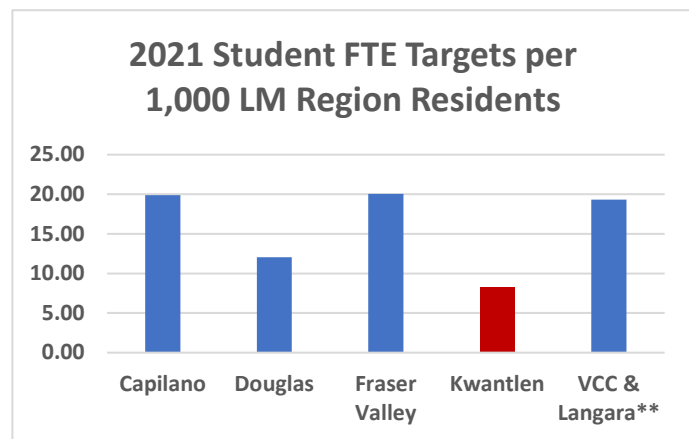
A similar picture emerges if we look at the student enrolment targets. Relative to the size of its region's population, KPU's Student FTE Target for 2021 was only 8.31 FTEs per 1,000 region residents, 50.9% of the provincial average of 16.31:



<sup>1</sup> Since VCC and Langara are both mandated to serve the region of the city of Vancouver, their data is combined here.

<sup>2</sup> The tables of data from which this, the following graphs and other references are derived can be found in Appendix 2 of this submission.

The picture is no better if we just look at the Lower Mainland. KPU's South Fraser region has 35% of the Lower Mainland's population, but it only gets 22% of this area's Operating Grants, and only 21% of the Student FTE Targets. Or, to put it another way, on average, the other Lower Mainland regional post-secondary institutions have a Student FTE Target of 16.99 FTEs per thousand of those regions' residents, while KPU's target is only able to be half of that (48.9%), at 8.31 FTEs per thousand region residents.



A final quantitative way of looking at this funding inequity is with regard to its taxation effects. The total of \$750 million (plus a bit) that the government gave in 2021 to the regional post-secondary institutions for their operating grants meant that each of our 5.1 million BC residents, on average, paid the \$145.90 in taxes for this. For its 2021 Operating Grant, KPU received about \$78.5 million dollars; if that had been taken directly from the 1.1 million residents of KPU's South Fraser region, each would have only had to pay \$70.74. In other words, while KPU is only receiving half of the funding, and able to provide only half the access, that their region needs, each resident of its region is paying \$75.16 towards the Operating Grants of the province's other regional post-secondary institutions.

## **The Effects of this Inequitable Funding**

### ***The Economic Impact***

From a broader point of view, this underfunding has a very negative impact on the economy of KPU's South Fraser region.

The underfunding means that fewer adults in the region will be able to train or retrain for more productive employment. Fewer high school graduates will be able to get specific trades or career training. Fewer of those who didn't finish high school will be able to achieve a grade 12 equivalency and go on to further training for a job. Fewer laid-off workers will be able to get retraining for the work that is available now and in the future. Fewer people on income assistance will be able to get the education they need to become self-supporting. And fewer people in the South Fraser region will be able to access a university education, especially one with the lower class sizes and student-centered instructional modes that KPU and the other regional post-secondary institutions offer, and that increase student success levels.

This underfunding also makes it less likely that new industry will choose to locate in this region. For professional and managerial people who start new businesses, the quality and accessibility of the educational infrastructure is very important. If KPU were properly funded, it would make its region a much stronger attraction to such new business and industry.

There is also a very crass economic effect. The dollars the government spends on a post-secondary institution are spent again by the employees of that institution - spent at the local hardware store, the supermarket, and so on. The funding allocated to KPU becomes, through that multiplier effect, an addition of double that amount to the cash flow of the regions. But if KPU received the average per capita funding of \$145.90 per person, KPU would be allocated

almost \$162 million dollars. The multiplier effect would mean that over \$324 million would be added to the cash flow of the region. Thus, as a result of this underfunding, the Kwantlen region is more than \$160 million poorer.

### ***The Social Impact***

The social impact of this ongoing underfunding means that the promise of the regional post-secondary institutions - to provide equal access to the benefits of post-secondary education – has not been and cannot yet be fulfilled by KPU.

In KPU's region, those with less income have even less access to post-secondary education than people with a similarly-low income in other regions. Therefore this underfunding causes a greater waste of human resources in the South Fraser region than elsewhere in BC.

In fact, residents of the South Fraser region are poorer both by that missing \$160 million and the lack of educational opportunities that KPU should be and could be providing. The people of the South Fraser region are truly being shortchanged.

During the previous provincial election, one of our members wrote to candidates about this issue, and received a reply from Nicola Lemmer, the Assistant Deputy Minister for AEST at the time, in which she said: "Government is committed to making life more affordable for British Columbians and to delivering the services that people count on. Access to quality post-secondary education helps ensure people from every background have the opportunity to reach their full potential and acquire good-paying jobs."

The BC Chamber of Commerce made a similar statement last year in their *2020-2021 Policy & Positions Manual* (page 21 & 22; see <https://bcchamber.org/bc-chamber-policy>):

"Post-Secondary education is crucial to economic development. Educated people can more easily adapt to the changing nature of work and can better apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts. ... It is imperative that the level of access to post-secondary education – whether in Surrey/the South Fraser region or the Kootenays or the Island – be brought up to the provincial average. Such an increase is crucial for the regional and provincial development."

The Chamber went on to resolve (p22) that the Provincial Government should

"Provide per capita funding throughout the province to increase the number of post-secondary seats and trades training opportunities – increasing the overall numbers and efficacy of British Columbia's future workforce and those looking to upgrade skills."

We hope that the result of this review will be to ensure that people in the South Fraser region will soon have equitable access to the post-secondary education that Ms. Lemmer describes and which the BC Chamber urges the government to provide, through their regional post-secondary institution, Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

### **What Modifications to the Funding Formula do we Therefore Recommend?**

As the above makes clear, KPU very much needs a more equitable level of funding to serve its region properly. Therefore, the KPU Retirees' Association urges the Funding Review team to recommend the following funding model that will fairly and impartially distribute provincial financial resources to B.C.'s regional public post-secondary institutions:

- That funding for each of B.C.'s regional post-secondaries be strongly related to the size of the population of the post-secondary's region, with a similar rate of per capita funding for all regional post-secondary institutions,
- That such per capita funding be the basis of each institution's overall funding, with such minor amendments as may be necessary for each institution because of the special characteristics of the region it serves, and
- That implementation of this funding framework be implemented over a three- or four-year period, to allow the institutions to make the necessary adjustments and improvements to their buildings and to other aspects of their organizations.

## APPENDICES

### 1) Other Notes

### 2) 1985 College Funding per Region Resident

### 3) BC's 2020 College Region Populations and 2021 Operating Grants and Student FTE Targets

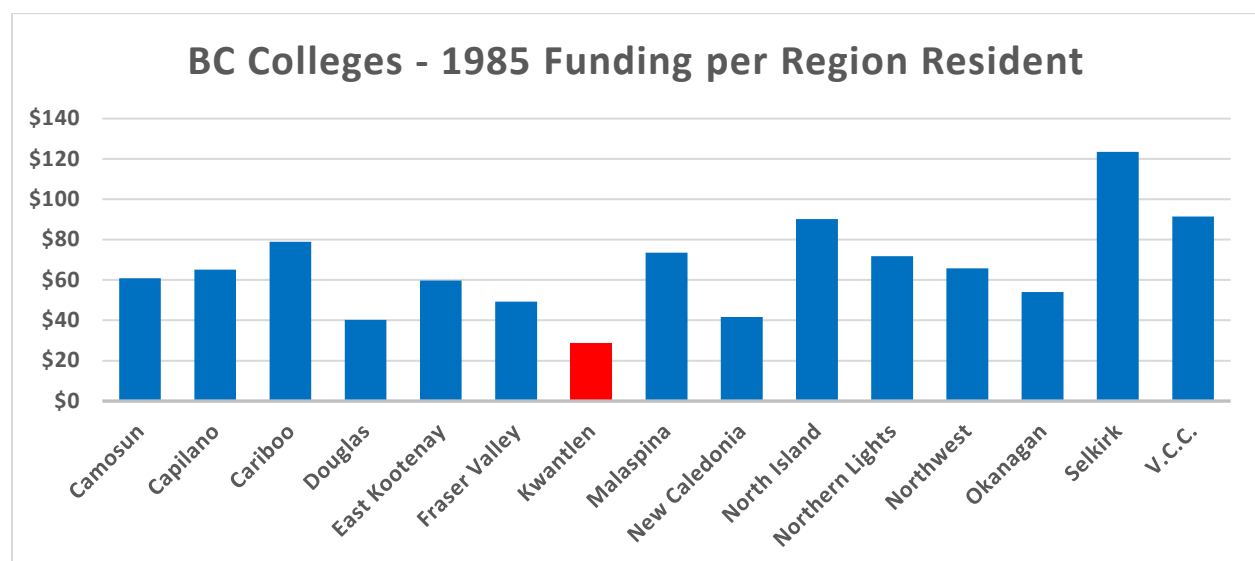
### 4) The Surrey Board of Trade CEO Anita Huberman's Presentation to the KPURA AGM, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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### 1) Other Notes

- a) Partly as a result of its need to offer 3<sup>rd</sup>- and 4<sup>th</sup>-year courses while receiving funding for only about half the number of student FTEs per resident of its region for which the rest of BC's regional post-secondary institutions are funded, KPU has been able offer only one-third the number of trades training seats and less than a quarter of the number of ABE, ASE and ELT seats relative to the number of people in the region who need those programs. We understand that while the current Post-Secondary Funding Review, in focussing on Block Funding, may not be able to look into the funding provided specifically to these programs, they are still crucial to the economic and social development and well-being of this region and its communities, and are a significant part of efforts to "Align provincial funding with the education and skills training needs of British Columbians ..."
- b) Other sources: For a historical perspective on this issue, please see the "Shortchanged" document which Geoff Dean, one of our members and the current chair of KPURA's Board, emailed to Don Wright several weeks ago, as one of four attachments to his short message about this issue.

### 2) 1985 College Funding per Region Resident



### 3) College Region Populations, 2020, and 2021 Grants and Student FTE Targets

from *British Columbia - Population Estimates & Projections*,

[bcstats.shinyapps.io/popApp](http://bcstats.shinyapps.io/popApp)

and from *Budget Letters*, [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/budget-letters](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/budget-letters)

pages 2-9: **BC Data Tables: Operating Grants, Student FTE Targets, Per Cent of BC's Total, Developmental Ed Student FTE Targets, Tax Benefits or Losses**

pages 10-11: **Lower Mainland Data Tables: Operating Grants, Student FTE Targets, Per Cent of LM Total, Developmental Ed Student FTE Targets**

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### BC Data Tables: Operating Grants, Student FTE Targets, Per Cent of BC's Total, Developmental Ed Student FTE Targets, Tax Benefits or Losses

#### **Operating Grants:**

	College Region	2020 Population	Operating Grant	Grant per Population	% of Prov Average
1	Camosun	425,504	\$59,533,205	\$139.91	95.9%
2	Capilano	279,507	\$42,956,898	\$153.69	105.3%
3	Thompson Rivers	192,654	\$75,301,984	\$390.87	267.9%
4	Douglas	708,130	\$65,042,564	\$91.85	63.0%
5	Rockies	86,766	\$19,370,880	\$223.25	153.0%
6	Fraser Valley	334,988	\$62,655,562	\$187.04	128.2%
7	Kwantlen	1,109,264	\$78,468,635	\$70.74	<b>48.5%</b>
8	Vancouver Island	283,990	\$60,947,315	\$214.61	147.1%
9	New Caledonia	151,764	\$35,693,756	\$235.19	161.2%
10	Northern Lights	74,048	\$19,239,232	\$259.82	178.1%
11	North Island	172,178	\$25,178,767	\$146.24	100.2%
12	Coast Mountain*	74,690	\$19,272,913	\$258.04	176.9%
13	Okanagan	454,174	\$51,118,486	\$112.55	77.1%
14	Selkirk	83,986	\$28,384,295	\$337.96	231.6%
15	VCC & Langara**	716,069	\$107,875,483	\$150.65	103.3%
	<b>BC Total</b>	<b>5,147,712</b>	<b>\$751,039,975</b>	<b>\$145.90</b>	<b>100%</b>
	total, BC except Kw	4,038,448	\$672,571,340	\$166.54	<b>42.5%</b>

(\* was Northwest Community College)

(\*\* both serving Vancouver)

(\*\*\*Capilano, Douglas, UFV, VCC & Langara)

***Student FTE Targets:***

	<b>College Region</b>	<b>Total Student FTE Targets</b>	<b>Total FTEs per 1,000</b>	<b>% of Prov Average</b>
1	Camosun	7,255	17.05	104.5%
2	Capilano	5,563	19.90	122.0%
3	Thompson Rivers	8,136	42.23	258.9%
4	Douglas	8,522	12.03	73.8%
5	Rockies	1,795	20.69	126.8%
6	Fraser Valley	6,716	20.05	122.9%
7	Kwantlen	9,213	8.31	<b>50.9%</b>
8	Vancouver Island	6,558	23.09	141.6%
9	New Caledonia	3,295	21.71	133.1%
10	Northern Lights	1,533	20.70	126.9%
11	North Island	2,381	13.83	84.8%
12	Coast Mountain*	1,768	23.67	145.1%
13	Okanagan	4,956	10.91	66.9%
14	Selkirk	2,436	29.00	177.8%
15	VCC & Langara**	13,841	19.33	118.5%
	<b>BC Total</b>	<b>83,968</b>	<b>16.31</b>	<b>100%</b>
	Kw's % of rest of BC's avg	74,755	18.51	<b>44.9%</b>

***Per Cent of BC's Total:***

	<b>College Region</b>	<b>2020 Population</b>	<b>Operating Grant</b>	<b>Total Student FTE Targets</b>
1	Camosun	8.27%	7.93%	8.64%
2	Capilano	5.43%	5.72%	6.63%
3	Thompson Rivers	3.74%	10.03%	9.69%
4	Douglas	13.76%	8.66%	10.15%
5	Rockies	1.69%	2.58%	2.14%
6	Fraser Valley	6.51%	8.34%	8.00%
7	Kwantlen	21.55%	10.45%	10.97%
8	Vancouver Island	5.52%	8.12%	7.81%
9	New Caledonia	2.95%	4.75%	3.92%
10	Northern Lights	1.44%	2.56%	1.83%
11	North Island	3.34%	3.35%	2.84%
12	Coast Mountain*	1.45%	2.57%	2.11%
13	Okanagan	8.82%	6.81%	5.90%
14	Selkirk	1.63%	3.78%	2.90%
15	VCC & Langara**	13.91%	14.36%	16.48%
	<b>BC Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	total, BC except Kw***	78.45%	89.55%	89.03%



***Developmental Ed Student FTE Targets:***

	College Region	Dev Ed FTE Targets	Dev Ed FTEs per 1,000	% of Prov Average	% of BC's Dev Ed FTE Targets
1	Camosun	1,030	2.42	196.6%	16.25%
2	Capilano	270	0.97	78.5%	4.26%
3	Thompson Rivers	250	1.30	105.4%	3.95%
4	Douglas	154	0.22	17.7%	2.43%
5	Rockies	152	1.75	142.3%	2.40%
6	Fraser Valley	325	0.97	78.8%	5.13%
7	Kwantlen	350	0.32	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>5.52%</b>
8	Vancouver Island	613	2.16	175.3%	9.67%
9	New Caledonia	168	1.11	89.9%	2.65%
10	Northern Lights	132	1.78	144.8%	2.08%
11	North Island	300	1.74	141.5%	4.73%
12	Coast Mountain*	235	3.15	255.6%	3.71%
13	Okanagan	820	1.81	146.7%	12.94%
14	Selkirk	322	3.83	311.4%	5.08%
15	VCC & Langara**	1,216	1.70	137.9%	19.19%
<b>BC Total</b>		<b>6,337</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
total, BC except Kw***		5,987	1.48	120.4%	94.48%

***Tax Benefits or Losses:***

	College Region	2020 Population	Operating Grant	Taxes paid by Residents	Grant per Resident	gained or lost per resident
1	Camosun	425,504	\$59,533,205	\$62,080,107	\$139.91	-\$5.99
2	Capilano	279,507	\$42,956,898	\$40,779,463	\$153.69	\$7.79
3	Thompson Rivers	192,654	\$75,301,984	\$28,107,799	\$390.87	\$244.97
4	Douglas	708,130	\$65,042,564	\$103,314,626	\$91.85	-\$54.05
5	Rockies	86,766	\$19,370,880	\$12,658,971	\$223.25	\$77.36
6	Fraser Valley	334,988	\$62,655,562	\$48,874,020	\$187.04	\$41.14
7	Kwantlen	1,109,264	\$78,468,635	\$161,839,203	\$70.74	-\$75.16
8	Vancouver Island	283,990	\$60,947,315	\$41,433,523	\$214.61	\$68.71
9	New Caledonia	151,764	\$35,693,756	\$22,142,037	\$235.19	\$89.29
10	Northern Lights	74,048	\$19,239,232	\$10,803,442	\$259.82	\$113.92
11	North Island	172,178	\$25,178,767	\$25,120,395	\$146.24	\$0.34
12	Coast Mountain*	74,690	\$19,272,913	\$10,897,108	\$258.04	\$112.14
13	Okanagan	454,174	\$51,118,486	\$66,262,998	\$112.55	-\$33.35
14	Selkirk	83,986	\$28,384,295	\$12,253,375	\$337.96	\$192.07
15	VCC & Langara**	716,069	\$107,875,483	\$104,472,908	\$150.65	\$4.75
<b>BC Total</b>		<b>5,147,712</b>	<b>\$751,039,975</b>	<b>\$751,039,975</b>	<b>\$145.90</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
total, BC except Kw***		4,038,448	\$672,571,340	\$589,200,772	\$166.54	\$20.64

**Lower Mainland Data Tables: *Operating Grants, Student FTE Targets,*  
Per Cent of LM Total, Developmental Ed Student FTE Targets**

***Operating Grants:***

	<b>College Region</b>	<b>2020 Population</b>	<b>Operating Grant</b>	<b>Grant per Population</b>	<b>% of LM Average</b>
2	Capilano	279,507	\$42,956,898	\$153.69	135.5%
4	Douglas	708,130	\$65,042,564	\$91.85	81.0%
6	Fraser Valley	334,988	\$62,655,562	\$187.04	164.9%
7	Kwantlen	1,109,264	\$78,468,635	\$70.74	<b>62.4%</b>
15	VCC & Langara**	716,069	\$107,875,483	\$150.65	132.8%
	<b>LM Total</b>	<b>3,147,958</b>	<b>\$356,999,142</b>	<b>\$113.41</b>	<i>100%</i>
	total, LM except Kw	2,038,694	\$278,530,507	\$136.62	<b>51.8%</b>

***Student FTE Targets:***

	<b>College Region</b>	<b>2020 Population</b>	<b>Total Student FTE Targets</b>	<b>Total FTEs per 1,000</b>	<b>% of LM Average</b>
2	Capilano	279,507	5,563	19.90	142.9%
4	Douglas	708,130	8,522	12.03	86.4%
6	Fraser Valley	334,988	6,716	20.05	143.9%
7	Kwantlen	1,109,264	9,213	8.31	<b>59.6%</b>
15	VCC & Langara**	716,069	13,841	19.33	138.7%
	<b>LM Total</b>	<b>3,147,958</b>	<b>43,855</b>	<b>13.93</b>	<i>100%</i>
	total, LM except Kw	2,038,694	34,642	16.99	<b>48.9%</b>

***Per Cent of LM Total***

	<b>College Region</b>	<b>2020 Population</b>	<b>Operating Grant</b>	<b>Total Student FTE Targets</b>
2	Capilano	8.88%	12.03%	12.68%
4	Douglas	22.49%	18.22%	19.43%
6	Fraser Valley	10.64%	17.55%	15.31%
7	Kwantlen	35.24%	21.98%	21.01%
15	VCC & Langara**	22.75%	30.22%	31.56%
	<b>LM Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	total, LM except Kw	64.76%	78.02%	78.99%

***Developmental Ed Student  
FTE Targets:***

	<b>College Region</b>	<b>Dev Ed FTE Targets</b>	<b>Dev Ed FTEs per 1,000</b>	<b>% of LM Average</b>	<b>% of LM's Dev Ed FTE Targets</b>
2	Capilano	270	0.97	131.4%	11.66%
4	Douglas	154	0.22	29.6%	6.65%
6	Fraser Valley	325	0.97	131.9%	14.04%
7	Kwantlen	350	0.32	<b>42.9%</b>	15.12%
15	VCC & Langara**	1,216	1.70	230.9%	52.53%
	<b><i>LM Total</i></b>	<b>2,315</b>	0.74	<i>100%</i>	100.00%
	total, LM except Kw	1,965	0.96	<b>32.7%</b>	84.88%

#### 4) Anita Huberman's Presentation to the KPURA AGM, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### The Economic Necessity: Education

**Introduction** by Geoff Dean: I met Anita over ten years ago at a Surrey Board of Trade meeting where I came to ask what we could do about Kwantlen's underfunding, and she's carried that forward in so many ways. Anita is such a supportive and visionary leader. She's been a trustee of the National Film Board, she's on the Premier's economic recovery taskforce, and she's been CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade for 15 years, leading it in all sorts of ways that will continue to help Surrey and the Lower Mainland and BC be healthier economically and socially in many ways. I've been so privileged to have the acquaintance I've had with her, to have her support on this issue in many different ways. Now I'm looking forward to hearing what she has to tell us about the future. Anita, thank you very much for being here; over to you.

**Anita:** Thank you so much, Geoff. You know we [the Surrey Board of Trade] are Surrey's city-building organization. Our whole mandate is to support business and bring business into the city. We've been in Surrey for over 100 years.

I'm coming to you this morning from the ceded territory of the Tswassen First Nations and the unceded territory of our Coast Salish people specifically the Kwantlen, Katzie and Semiahmoo First Nations.

Just a little bit about Surrey: Surrey is going to be the largest city in British Columbia by 2030. We're growing by 1,200 to 1,400 people a month. We have 104 different languages that are spoken in our city – very multicultural – and that is actually an advantage to our business attraction activity because of human capital needs, as we're not only a domestic nation, we're also a global nation as well, as we trade goods and services. Thirty percent of our lands are agricultural, and we actually work very closely with Kwantlen University in terms of their agrotech programming on agro-innovation, really developing that for the jobs of today and tomorrow especially. We've seen the importance of that during the pandemic. A third of our population still is under the age of 19 right here in Surrey and that's so important as we're bringing business into our city and in the South Fraser economic region, which is from Surrey to Abbotsford. I also wanted to say that we have the most industrial land inventory within Metro Vancouver – yes, even more than Vancouver, so whereas Vancouver is building up, we still have land here in Surrey, and of course Langley is next in terms of their land availability and of course all the way to Abbotsford. We – the Surrey Board of Trade – are also a board director on the Abbotsford International Airport, because not only the Vancouver airport is of importance in terms of trading goods and services, but so is Abbotsford, and as we're bringing in international students and we're still going to continue to do that even beyond the pandemic, both airports are absolutely integral when it comes to the education recipe.

Now when I started 15 years ago as CEO (I've been with the organization for over 28 years), it was so uncommon for a business organization – a Board of Trade or Chamber of Commerce – to really focus on social issues or what was known as social issues. So what I immediately did, and you're going to hear about this shortly, is I immediately started a Social Policy and Workforce team or committee, and that means we focused on issues such as education, childcare, poverty reduction and the like from an economic lens. So when I started as CEO very quickly I revitalized our strategic and action plan and I said the two economic foundations of our city are education and transportation, and everything else flows from that. And so today I'm speaking to you about education.

Malcolm X said<sup>3</sup> that “Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today”, and I'm here to tell you that even during the pandemic, beyond the pandemic, education is the foundation of our economy. Even though we're going through innovation, revitalization and how education is received, you saw some of the information, some of the foretelling from Sandy Vanderburgh [KPU's VP-Academic, in his preceding presentation] that needs to be considered from a strategic advantage perspective by institutions such as Kwantlen Polytechnic University and by our provincial and federal governments on how education is delivered and how we're developing global partnerships to ensure that we have the skills, the training, the reskilling for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

So I wanted to first of all speak to you about why education matters for economic development. I don't want to go through a whole bunch of data and stats because I want to really articulate the emotional and factual need for why education is needed for economic development. You know, overall, education pays: another year of schooling raises earnings by 10% a year. This is typically more than any other investment an individual could make. The value of human capital - our staff, our workforce, our students - we are all an asset, and that really is the transitional shift of thinking by the business community. So the value in human capital, the share in human capital in total wealth is 62%. That's four times the value of produce capital and 15 times the value of natural capital. Globally, governments, private sector, families, individuals – we spend more than \$5.6 trillion a year on education and training, and so even our international trade centre (and we're part of the world chamber network through the International Chamber of Commerce) we're really looking at how education plays a fundamental role not only in our developed nations but also in our underdeveloped nations because we're all working together. Countries spend 5% of GDP on education or 20% of their national budget. Education employs about 5% of the labour force.

Skills demanded by the labour market are changing, and we're seeing that during the pandemic as well. One of the reasons for the change in the returns pattern is the race between technology and education as labour markets adjust to automation. And so this is yet another shift that we're facing in the economic cycle, and we faced these shifts even before. And in this new world the ability of workers to compete is handicapped by the poor performance of many education systems in developing nations. Tech change, global competition demand the mastery of competencies and the acquisition of new skills for many. So it's how to tie industry needs to skills training, and that really is the reality for all educational institutions. It is a partnership with the business community. It is to ensure that institutions like Kwantlen Polytechnic University are driving the engine of economic development and that all levels of government – local, regional, provincial, federal – understand the essential partnership between universities, colleges and the business community. They can no longer work in silence.

The third item is again around countries can compete and succeed. To really promote success in today's labour market, one really needs to invest early and then invest in relevant skills. All countries need to invest smartly by promoting attention to the 3A's – and the 3A's are autonomy, accountability and assessment. They need to pay attention to the teachers, early childhood development, and culture. And that's why we have been leaders in the Surrey Board of Trade even in 2008 by producing advocacy related to early childhood education and child care investments from an economic lens. So many said to us in 2008, even our provincial government leaders at the time, why is a board of trade or chamber of commerce focused on child care? That's a social issue. Why are they focussed on K-12 education? That's a social

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<sup>3</sup> from Malcolm X's speech at the founding rally of The Organization Of Afro-American Unity, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1964

issue. Why are they focussed on adding spaces and focussed on post-secondary needs, and tying industry needs to training development? That's a social issue. And so I think from our perspective and from many we broke barriers in that regard. We had to fight it – you know Surrey always has to fight for infrastructure investment, in health care investments, and even education investments because even though we're going to be the largest city in British Columbia, we still have this brand called Vancouver that still tends to get a lot of the share of provincial, federal, metro government funding coffer.

I want to also talk about why it's important to focus on results and why KPU – and I believe President Davis has done a really good job on this, as has the Executive Director of External Affairs with her outreach to the community. On a variety of levels they really speak about the results of the university and the outreach of the students and their results. Education systems that do well early on were formed continuously, and so we need to innovate continuously. They use information for improvement and accountability and so we need to ensure that whatever training that KPU is providing that it's focused on results, it's focused on jobs, it's focused on industry creation, it's focused on industries of tomorrow. And despite the political will of the day, they need to drive forward, so even if the political will of the day is we're not going to focus on education, or if an innovation investment agenda is put to the side, you need to drive forward and innovate and make sure that everyone understands the results of our education curriculum.

And then finally I want to talk about expanding opportunities but paying attention to equity. I said 104 different languages are spoken in Surrey, most newcomers who come to British Columbia move to Surrey, and we're going to see even more of that because we have 1.5 million people who are going to be moving into the metro Vancouver area by 2050, and many of them will live, learn, work and play in Surrey and the South Fraser. So what does that mean? And not only about newcomers, but also for gender equity, to ensure that we're also paying attention to our indigenous first nation groups because we have the highest population of urban indigenous groups in British Columbia right here in Surrey – but that we're also focussed on the LBGQT2 communities as well and creating great productive economic and career and entrepreneurial pathways for them as well. The countries and institutions in partnership with the private sector need to improve quality, they need to strive for excellence and expand opportunities, and education is truly one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality. It sets the foundation for sustained economic growth. Unbelievably, BC has the highest child poverty rate within Canada. Unbelievable! I always say that even during the pandemic that BC is doing very well from an economic perspective, from a jobs perspective, in comparison to other provinces and territories. I always say that we're the Hawaii of Canada, given our weather, and everyone wants to live, learn, work and play here. But having the highest child poverty rate and then not having access to education, and even higher education, is just not acceptable, and so we all need to ensure that we're expanding opportunities, paying attention to equity. Education is a source of hope and the most profitable investment for tomorrow and simply meaning a better future for all. Education is not a luxury, but a basic need for competency. It's a human right. And yes, we're all going to perceive the different levels of education, whatever that may be, but the benefit of education not only affects individuals but spills over into society. That's why I always say that the Surrey Board of Trade is a city-building business organization. Yes, we focus on industry creation; yes, we focus on jobs. but we also need to focus on the livability of our city as well.

So about the Surrey Board of Trade: we've been leaders in terms of what we've done in relation to our support for more funding spaces and seat spaces for English language training at

KPU, but also for K-12. So we did write early on in 2008/2009 and another reiteration in 2011/2012 and a more recent policy to the provincial government in 2019. And it's all prefaced under the concept "Education Today, Productivity Tomorrow"<sup>4</sup>. It was about provincial advocacy for KPU and with that were events; with that was education for our Social Policy and Workforce Development team. We also released in October 2019, in partnership with the BC government, the first Surrey Workforce Strategy. We released during the pandemic, every other month, Surrey Labour Market Intelligence Reports, to really underscore the need, the on-the-ground need and the on-the-ground snapshot of what was happening during the pandemic. And really it is our youth that have been compromised in terms of career access and supports and their future in relation to the pandemic. But first let's talk about our paper, "Education Today, Productivity Tomorrow".

► To bring our region's level of access up to the provincial average, Kwantlen's funding needs to increase from its current \$65,000,000 per year to \$125,000,000 per year.

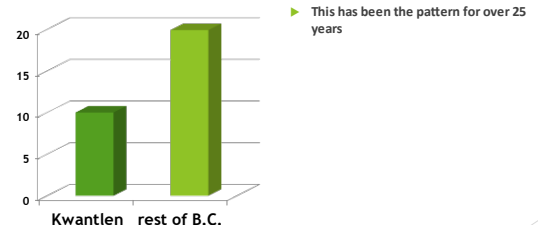
► But people in the Kwantlen / south Fraser region already pay \$125,000,000 per year to the province in taxes to support B.C.'s regional post-secondary institutions.

► We just need to ensure that it's spent in our region rather than elsewhere

The full-time-equivalent student seats per 1,000 region residents between Kwantlen and the rest of BC has been abysmal. And even though our population continues to increase, and we still have a thousand or twelve hundred new students that actually come into the K-12 sector every September, and we want these students when they graduate grade 12 to progress into postsecondary learning, whatever that may be within their own community, because we know that if they are educated in their own community they are more likely to live, learn, work and play, start businesses, and pursue their careers within their own community, and we want that community to be in Surrey. This pattern that you see on screen [and here] has been so evident for the past 25 years and so I'm going to talk about this a little bit more but the advocacy that we have been focused on is to bring our region level of access up to the provincial average. Kwantlen's funding – and this may even have increased; President Davis and Geoff have been keeping a close eye on this – but Kwantlen's funding really needs to increase from the provincial government to that amount that you see on screen [and here]. People in Kwantlen, in the South Fraser region, they already pay into post-secondary coffers via the provincial government, but a lot of the money, ladies and gentlemen, goes elsewhere, and if it doesn't stay in Surrey, it doesn't stay in the South Fraser economic region, and that's completely unacceptable. So we've said to the BC government on repeated and repeated ways in different ways in our provincial budget pre-budget submission. The provincial budget is coming out again on April the 20th and we're going to be part of the BC budget lock-up.

You know education investments need to be focused in Surrey; they need to be focused in the South Fraser economic region. This continued abysmal approach really needs to change. BC's labour market report a couple of years ago said there's going to be 1.3 million jobs that need to be filled. Of course we're going to need newcomers to fill some of those jobs, but we also need to ensure that we're tying industry needs to curriculum development that we're supporting in very

**FTE Student Seats per 1,000 region residents**



<sup>4</sup> for a copy of this paper, see <https://businessinsurrey.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Post-Secondary-Education-Paper.pdf>

transient ways the curriculum that needs to be delivered by Kwantlen Polytechnic University whether it's a manufacturing space, construction development, health and technology. We have a vibrant health tech sector right here in Surrey, a vibrant construction development sector; we have the most number of manufacturers in British Columbia right here in Surrey. We're part of the Cascadia innovation corridor with Washington state and Oregon, and of course British Columbia and Alberta are part of that as well. So we need increased access to postsecondary education; it's an absolute must. We need literacy and English language programming, because as I mentioned we have so many newcomers coming. Employers need to ensure also that they are able to communicate to their workforce, and if English is a second or third language, which in many cases it can be, and that's reality that we live in especially here in Surrey, we need access to ESL training even more than what we have through KPU today. The trades programs that KPU offers are essential for economic vitality of our region and as we move beyond the pandemic, ladies and gentlemen, we need to ensure that we're focused more on trades training. And with the new hospital coming into the Cloverdale area of Surrey, being a part of our added asset inventory of our health and tech district, we need to ensure that we have that partnership between the health and tech private sector and our educational institution. And we need to ensure we have vibrant research and professional programs. We can't have all the research done at UBC; it just is not acceptable. So we need to ensure that we have the private sector investing in research programs, that we're leading edge in agrotech, in manufacturing, in innovation, in automation, in labour market capability, because we are going to be the largest city in British Columbia and we need to have the investments and we need to ensure that our education sector and the private sector are acting like we're going to be the largest city in British Columbia – that we're delivering results. And we need to make sure the city of Surrey is also at that table to be a vibrant and active player as part of their economic development strategy. No longer can we work in silos; that is just completely unacceptable.

The benefits for the business community are far and wide – as I mentioned in my first slide, post-secondary education is crucial to economic development. Educated people can more easily adapt to the changing nature of work, and they can better apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts. But I need to underscore that education is only one element. They also need to have experience; that is what employers are looking for and so that's why we partner so actively with KPU, with their School of Business where Stephanie Howes is currently there to ensure that we have co-op partnerships, to ensure that they're being recognized through our Top 25 Under 25 event program, through their projects and entrepreneurial programs, because recognition matters to you. We have a youth committee as well to focus on ensuring that investments in youth at the federal, provincial, local and regional level are first and foremost. We're also ensuring that youth, starting at the age of 16 or 17, one of our forthcoming advocacy initiatives, can participate in the voting process so that they can also educate our politicians of today who really don't understand the voice of youth, the perspective of youth, because they do think differently than us gen-Xers, they think differently than the millennials, and the gen-Zers that are coming up – and who knows what the next classification is going to be after that. So, ladies and gentlemen, the Surrey Board of Trade recognizes the current challenges of funding; we recognize the current challenges of the pandemic to KPU and to the education sector in general in light of significant fiscal restraint measures, and we're going to hear about that of course in next week's federal budget, next week's provincial budget, and of course we're urging, still, regardless of all of that, that the provincial government invest in a tripling of the number of post-secondary student spaces, per resident, in the South Fraser region, including Surrey, from this year all the way to 2030. We just can't be left behind anymore. I now welcome your questions; thank you.



**Carol Barnett:** Great talk! We agree with all of that! My question is, again looking at the future, where do you see the greatest post-secondary opportunities? You mentioned health care, that's obvious, more trades, automation, but is there another specific area that Surrey is pursuing from an industry point of view that KPU could support in the future? I'm talking about not just the next year, but the next few years.

**Anita:** I think there needs to be a serious dialogue moving forward because the pandemic has really changed a lot of things for industry, and I think the whole economic development strategy for Surrey needs to be revitalized, it needs to be reworked. And the academic institutions need to be a thriving part of that. We're part of a regional economic development agency, through metro Vancouver, called the Regional Prosperity Initiative, which is more about global business attraction for the agrotech sector, for clean tech, for other global industry partnerships. A part of that is around human capital needs, to serve those burgeoning industries. And I really don't think there has been a cohesive discussion, Carol, around human capital needs in light of the pandemic. And so yes, there's a lot of work going on, it's being done in silos, but I just think it needs to be re-invigorated in terms of a holistic pathway and strategy, and it's a journey as well.

**Geoff:** Anita, you mentioned, and coming now out of my background at KPU, you mentioned literacy levels briefly, but in terms of what businesses and employers need, it's pretty clear they need people to be able to speak well, to read and write well, and do a little bit of arithmetic now and then. And yet something like 45% of our adult population has skills that are really lower than high school would require; even tho' they might have graduated from high school, their skills aren't all that great. And of course the English as an additional language training is crucial. So in terms of let's cross our fingers and hope that KPU does get to grow in terms of the amount of funding it gets, what's your take – should we be doing more of what I just spoke about, or more of some other programs, or a bit of both? What's the balance you see there? More adult education, more trades, more graduate work?

**Anita:** I think first of all there needs to be a partnership (and I know there is) between KPU and the Surrey School District around literacy, and a common voice to the BC government about how absolutely important it is to the future workforce and for economic recovery to implement solutions around increasing our results around literacy levels and to ensure that we're also engaging with the private sector on their needs. It needs to be easy for employers when they're hiring someone who has the skills but they don't have the literacy levels, for them to say OK well I'm gonna send you to KPU for a three month training program, and that's going to help my bottom line in my business because of the skills that you're going to be able to learn and to harness and to implement within the workplace. So those type of discussions need to happen and they need to be consistent; it needs to be done through social media; it needs to be done with youth. And I don't have this solution in terms of balance related to literacy and trades and all of that because there are so many competing needs; we have a diverse industry based within our members, our 6,000 members in so many different industries and so many different needs they're expecting from education, from the education sector, so it's challenging for me to respond in a succinct way to that question.

**Geoff:** If I may, I have another quick question for you. Lobbying, getting the provincial government to change its mind, for 25-30 years it's been saying no no no we're not going to change the level of funding for the South Fraser region. You're stuck with what you've got, and there's enough going on elsewhere in the province, don't worry about it. And that's the kind of response we've gotten most recently from our Retirees' Association lobbying letters that we've sent. The provincial government doesn't want to bother doing anything about. What advice do you have on how we can get them to change their minds? You're doing great work about it; got

the BC Chamber of Commerce to push for this, but still the government seems to not want to bother doing anything about this.

**Anita:** Well, first of all, this government has invested in Surrey more than any other government on a variety of levels. And I think they have invested to some extent in post-secondary education, including at KPU. And correct me if I'm wrong, President Davis, but I've seen recent investments, pre-pandemic. But it's not enough. And certainly the pandemic has really deterred advocacy, because we're seeing and we're going to see a significant deficit on Tuesday's budget on April 20<sup>th</sup>. But the messaging has to be from all of us, to say that Surrey matters. It's just like what I said: if you don't invest in education, you're not investing in economic development, you're not investing in economic recovery. I believe the province – Minister Kahlon, Premier Horgan, Minister Robinson, they all recognize how important Surrey is, but they are facing competing interests, so we have to keep the messaging on and we have to say that if you don't invest in Surrey, you're going to lose this many jobs, you're going to lose this many students, you're going to lose this much vibrancy to live, learn, work and play. So it's this tack that really matters. Even yesterday, as an example, one of our advocacy items was disconnected to Surrey, but related: there was a recent federal government decision regarding the salmon farming industry that could result in over 370 job losses – 370 job losses in Surrey, mind you. Minister Kahlon, he said OK well that's a huge concern we don't want that many job losses. So it's talking about the statistics, Geoff, in very succinct ways because of these competing interests, and I think, in the end, it's a journey that will make a difference.

**Roger Elmes:** Part of that working together may well be with Surrey School District; we've worked with them in the past and I'm sure we are currently. But they are facing, as of yesterday's news, a \$40 million deficit. So while they have to solve that, Kwantlen has challenges to solve too, and the question you've already raised of where do their students go after high school, KPU is certainly one of the places they can go. So it's all kind of rolled in together in a package which does require more working together, pushing forward and never stopping the push.

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**Carol:** Thank you again, Anita, on behalf of the Board members and our audience.