

A Submission to

Don Wright, Engagement Lead

Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review

Advanced Education and Skills Training

Prepared By

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

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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. CUFA BC has existed for fifty years and works 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 on a variety of issues affecting post-secondary education in BC.

Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation process. We offer our perspective as constructive stakeholders with a vested interest in seeing through the success of BC's post-secondary education system.

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 needs 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 of British Columbians. Our members provide a crucial level of support to Government and the public, driving the recovery, innovation, and transformation of our society.

Coming out of a disrupted few years in which some of the biggest cracks in the system surfaced as a result of the pandemic, we welcome this opportunity to undertake a provincial funding model review. There are meaningful lessons learned that we can use to strengthen the funding model structure that will enhance post-secondary's contributions to the economic, social, and environmental health of BC.

However the funding model evolves throughout this consultation process, we believe that a values-based approach to the funding model review will be the best way to establish a common foundation. CUFA BC has identified five core principles that we believe should take priority during the funding model review process. These principles call for a commitment to [public education](#), [equity of access](#), [knowledge](#), [financial stability \(reciprocal accountability\)](#), and [institutional autonomy](#). Throughout the consultations ahead, we will make specific policy recommendations stemming from these principles.



CUFA BC: A Submission to the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review

Thank you for this opportunity meet with you and to discuss the needs of the post-secondary sector as part of the funding model review process. We appreciate that this will be the first in a series of consultation meetings with you. We want to start the discussion from a perspective of *potential*. One in which we reflect on the values we hold for the future of post-secondary education in BC.

BC's post-secondary education is strong and has a proud history in this province of contributing to the social and economic growth of the population. In large part, this success is testament to the visionary decisions of governments and mature institutions. In addition to these influences, it is crucial to recognize the incredible work that people bring to the success of higher education. Faculty, staff, and students are the backbone of the academic mission, serving as stewards of the knowledge economy. Supporting the human infrastructure of post-secondary institutions will be critical to growing the success of BC's higher education system. Investing in students and research will pay dividends long into the future.

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.

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There are pressing issues facing the post-secondary education sector with respect to demographic, social, and technological shifts. In particular, the demographic shifts in the Canadian workforce anticipates a massive exodus of workers as a significant proportion of the population enters retirement. This shift will affect the faculty and staff complement on campuses, which, in the absence of timely succession planning, could significantly disrupt campuses and compromise program development and delivery. Putting people first at post-secondary institutions means supporting the human infrastructure of our institutions, including the changes to come in the social and demographic shift.



In addition to these anticipated workforce changes, there are myriad shifts in the nature of work on post-secondary campuses that bring potential disruptions to established academic credentials. In time, we might get into the influence of term-limited contract work on the quality of education; the scope creep of non-academic programs like micro-credentials into academic programming, with both welcome and concerning outcomes; and the growing preferential resource allocation toward STEM programs over non-STEM disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts.

The nature of post-secondary education is shifting in student demographics as well. Students experience more complex needs for school participation than ever before, and institutions are concomitantly meeting these needs with wraparound supports. With the growing recognition that access to education is a fundamental right, the need for expanded wraparound supports will only grow in future. Underpinning all of these issues is the very real looming humanitarian crisis from climate change. Post-secondary institutions are well situated to address climate change through a multi-disciplinary lens that brings together community organizations, public and private sectors, and academic expertise to implement solutions to climate change. Institutions themselves have a role to play in modeling sustainable practices by taking a climate-focused approach in future capital projects, retrofitting existing buildings with renewable resources, and other mitigating initiatives.

Providing resources to support teaching and research in all disciplines (including the arts, humanities, and social sciences, as well as STEM) and at all academic levels (including faculty and graduate / undergraduate student research) is critical to developing the skills needed in the British Columbia Labour Market Outlook 2021 report. This support is also crucial for building the province's research strength to compete in the scientific, social scientific, and technical innovations, and for delivering a competitive edge in contemporary economic and social growth.

The post-secondary education system needs to evolve in response to these and other trends. However the funding model evolves throughout this consultation process, we believe that a values-based approach to the funding model review will be the best way to start the discussion. CUFA BC has identified five core principles that we believe should take priority during the funding model review process. These principles, described below, call for a commitment to [public education](#), [equity of access](#), [knowledge](#), [financial stability \(reciprocal accountability\)](#), and [institutional autonomy](#). Throughout the consultations ahead, we will make specific policy recommendations stemming from these principles.



Founding Principles: Shaping the Future of Success in BC's Post-Secondary

Public Education

Public post-secondary institutions must be primarily publicly funded. While there is a place for private funds generated by tuition and public-private-partnerships, the public purposes of post-secondary education can only be ensured when the citizens of British Columbia, through their elected government, maintain a majority interest in the public post-secondary sector.

Equity of Access

All British Columbians should have convenient access to comprehensive, high quality post-secondary education at all levels, including at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as access to in-person, online, and blended learning models. British Columbians in remote and rural communities should have regional access to post-secondary programming to ensure the health and welfare of citizens and communities. This is important in ensuring equity and fairness in access to higher education.

Commitment to Knowledge

Research and teaching are sacred trusts that must be sufficiently resourced and staffed, and must remain independent of outside influences. Research universities play a core role in the intellectual, social, and economic development of British Columbians. Providing resources to support research in all disciplines (including the arts, humanities, and social sciences, as well as STEM) and at all academic levels (including faculty and graduate / undergraduate student research) is critical to developing the skills needed in the British Columbia Labour Market Outlook 2021 report. This support is also crucial for building the province's research strength to compete in the scientific, social scientific, and technical innovations, and for delivering a competitive edge in contemporary economic and social growth. The principles of collegial governance and academic freedom must be protected across all funding decisions.

Financial Stability (Reciprocal Accountability)

Post-secondary institutions are accountable for fulfilling their public mandate, mission, and vision. Governments are accountable for supporting post-secondary institutions in achieving their public purposes by providing sufficient and equitable funding to allow institutions to achieve their mandate with sufficient staffing levels and cover operating costs on a predictable, stable, and ongoing basis.

Institutional Autonomy

Provincial government intervention in academic programming and finances beyond capital and operating grant funding and regulating tuition should defer to the legislative autonomy of the post-secondary institution. Under the University Act and Royal Roads University Act, internal structures already exist that govern financial and academic decision-making through boards of governors and academic senates. This autonomy should be fully realized over decisions of financial spending (including surplus spending), diversifying and tailoring academic programming decisions in all disciplines (including fine arts, humanities, social sciences, and STEM), as well as labour and employment decisions. Free and fair collective bargaining is a core principle of Canadian democratic society, institutional management, and accountability, and must be protected through the existing autonomy rights of post-secondary institutions and within the institutional funding model.



Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation process. We offer our perspective as constructive stakeholders with a vested interest in seeing through the success of BC's post-secondary education system. We look forward to our upcoming consultation session with other labour organizations.

We would welcome further opportunity to elaborate on our contributions in future. You can reach out to our organization any time through Executive Director Annabree Fairweather at executive.director@cufa.bc.ca or at 604-367-5856.

Respectfully submitted,

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