

Funding Review

MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION
AND SKILLS TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

Please accept this submission from Langara College for the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) Funding Review. This submission includes our responses to the Funding Review questions and outlines the College's contributions to British Columbians and the post-secondary sector and innovations in response to the needs of the province. It also includes, the opportunities we see to align funding to the commitments of the College set out in the Ministry Mandate Letter and to advance collaboration and innovation in the sector.

Funding for post-secondary education is an investment in the people and the future of British Columbia. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the future of post-secondary education in British Columbia and appreciate Minister Anne Kang's commitment to examine funding to ensure that colleges and universities can continue to support the people and the economic growth of the province.

We are committed to collaborating with the Ministry of AEST and the sector to continue to adapt and innovate to meet the needs of learners and communities we serve today and in the future.

1 What are the most important contributions your institution makes to the economic, social, and environmental health of British Columbia?

Langara College plays an integral role in supporting the economic, social and environmental health of British Columbia by:

- making post-secondary education accessible for all learners
- offering the knowledge, skills, and training people need to meet the demands of BC's growing labour market
- building inclusive and diverse communities, and
- protecting and enhancing the environment

We make post-secondary education accessible for all learners by providing multiple pathways to education, no matter where learners start on their journey.

The more people in the province who have access to higher education, the more people who will have opportunities to earn higher incomes and experience happy and healthy futures. They will also have the skills needed to fill the more than 1 million jobs BC's labour market will need in the next decade (BC Labour Market Outlook 2021).

Langara College provides accessible pathways for all learners, including those who may face economic and social barriers to education. As a top pathways college with more than 19,000 students, 1,700 courses and 130 programs, we believe that the opportunity to learn and grow should be available to everyone, at any age or stage of their life. Most importantly, we want students to do more than aspire to education—we want them to achieve it.

Whether learners are looking for prerequisites to enter university, to enroll in a university transfer program, get a degree or upgrade their skills through post-degree studies, we have a path for them. Langara offers the most comprehensive selection of university transfer programs in BC, with 50% of our students enrolled in transfer programs ([Langara at a Glance](#)). Last year, we also received more than 1,600 transfer students from other colleges and universities who recognized Langara can help them continue their educational journey.

Langara has also developed a highly-effective program for international student recruitment, retention, and academic success that serves both students, and the College. Our international students contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of our community and are also essential in meeting the demands of BC's labour market that will rely on immigration to fill 35% of jobs in the future. (BC Labour Market Outlook 2021).

We provide learners with the knowledge, skills and hands-on experience they need to prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

In addition to our transfer programs, we offer a range of degree and post-degree programs to equip learners with the skills and training they need to fill BC's skills gaps in health care, social assistance, education and technology. This includes Langara programs in Nursing, Medical Office Administration, Registered Massage Therapy, Health Safety and Environmental Compliance, Early Childhood Education, LEAP (Langara English for Academic Purposes), and Supply Chain Management, and Logistics.

Forty-two percent of our programs include work-integrated learning, i.e. co-op and applied research, that provide learners with the hands-on experience and connections to prepare them to enter the workforce.

It also offers employers access to student resources, prospective employees and experts at the College. For example, Langara's students and faculty are working on a project to cultivate BC hops that would reduce BC microbreweries' dependency on American hops, thereby decreasing financial risks to BC microbreweries.

We are building an inclusive and diverse community.

Our programs appeal to local, international, and continuing studies students, who are drawn by the quality of our offerings and the welcoming acceptance of our learning community.

Langara College's students and employees are among the most diverse including international students who represent more than 100 countries. This diversity is a strong foundation on which to build an equitable and inclusive community.

Through our strategic planning exercises we know that Langara staff and faculty have a strong commitment to social justice and embrace the importance of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). As part of the priorities set out in our 2020 Strategic Plan, we appointed Langara's first Director of EDI to lead the implementation of our Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion framework.

We have also launched an Internationalization Strategy to integrate an intercultural dimension in the way we teach, learn, and serve at the College. This will enhance the educational environment for all students and employees while making a meaningful contribution to the community.

We are also embarking on an Indigenous Recruitment Strategy and advancing employment equity. We recently hired an EDI advisor to review all HR policies and procedures to ensure EDI principles and practices are integrated.

We are dedicated to being part of a sustainable society by protecting and enhancing the environment.

As an educational institution, we have a responsibility to lead initiatives that positively contribute to our environment.

In 2021, we decreased greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas by 23% on 2007 baselines. We also decreased emissions from electricity by 51% against the backdrop of a growing campus community. In 2021, the Langara College Foundation board voted to expand its fossil-free investing to reach 50% of its holdings by 2023.

We're also committed to fostering student leadership in sustainability. Our Sustainability Student Ambassador Program is in its second year and provides leadership experience for Langara students interested in engaging the community in sustainable practices.

2

What is your institution doing to promote reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and First Nations?

Langara College is deeply committed to meaningful and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through collaboration with BC's First Nations and support of Indigenous students. At the core of this work is the basic principle that we need to listen to learn from Indigenous Peoples and honour their histories, traditions, and knowledge.

We acknowledge and celebrate our location on the unceded traditional territory of Musqueam. In 2016, we were honoured to receive a name from Musqueam in their language, *snəwəyət̓ lələm̓*, which means house of teachings. It is a name we are dedicated to honouring in everything we do now and in the future.

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we are collaborating and building relationships with Musqueam. In 2020, we named Gail Sparrow, former chief of the Musqueam First Nation, special advisor to the President. We are also developing an Indigenization Strategy in collaboration with Musqueam and other Indigenous communities to define our role and actions in reconciliation.

We have increased supports and opportunities for Indigenous Students to expand learning opportunities. In 2021, five new awards were established for Indigenous students to provide financial support and recognize their academic achievements and community involvement. We also have an Indigenous Gathering Space to support students.

We recently celebrated a new collaboration with Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada (AFOA) and British Columbia to deliver a pilot cohort of AFOA Canada's Indigenous Financial Management Certificate. This unique partnership is the first of its kind for accounting education in BC and will provide a stepping stone for Indigenous learners to become accredited while staying connected to their communities.

Our commitment to reconciliation also guides our student and staff recruitment and retention efforts. We are developing an Indigenous Employment Equity Policy and Indigenous Recruitment Strategy to support equity and Indigeneity at Langara.

We are also exploring ways to refine our Indigenous student recruitment strategies by employing Indigenous students to serve as Langara ambassadors, speak to their lived experiences, and recruit prospective students.

We are equally committed to prioritizing Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, and are now guided through a joint Musqueam/ Langara Education Working Group. In partnership with the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS), we offer a two-semester course called Writing Lives: The Residential School Survivor Memoir Project. This unique and transformative learning experience teaches students a respectful methodology for gathering and sharing the stories of Indigenous Elders who survived the residential school system.

3

What is your institution doing to promote equitable access for people who come from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances?

Langara College believes that learning should be accessible to all, and we have a history of supporting access to education for underserved and under-represented communities through:

- Our multiple pathways and open admission requirements mean that we provide more opportunities for learners who may otherwise face social and economic barriers to accessing post-secondary education.
- All students are supported along their journey at Langara through open admission, our small class sizes (with an average class size of 32), award-winning instructors and Work Integrated Learning.
- We have the second-lowest tuition fees in the province and offer several bursaries, scholarships and awards. In 2021, the Langara College Foundation supported more than 840 students, distributing over \$783,722 in financial aid.
- We are expanding our micro-credential programs to provide more people with opportunities to quickly re-skill or up-skill through programs including Advanced Project Management, in collaboration with the Squamish Nations Training and Trades Centre, and the Advanced Administrative Assistant Certificate and Computer Skills for the Office Certificate programs for Immigrants and Racialized Women.
- In 2022, we launched the Humanitarian Impact Fund to support students who live in war-torn countries, with humanitarian crises, and countries with limited economic support for their citizens. The fund is intended to help those who are seeking a better life and to help them reach their potential through education.

4

What are your major challenges in enhancing the contribution your institution makes to the economic, social, and environmental health of British Columbia?

Langara College faces two primary challenges in our ability to enhance contributions to the province:

1. The Provincial funding we receive has not kept pace with the needs of students and our commitments to the communities we serve because:
 - The Provincial Grant only accounts for 35% of our annual revenue which is not enough to cover our growing commitments to learners, reconciliation and to create inclusive communities.
 - We are underfunded per credit hour for domestic students when compared to our peers. For 2020/21, our AEST operating grant per FTE was lowest in the Province at \$6,987.
- We are required to subsidize priority programs that we only receive one-time funding for including Early Childhood Education, Health Care Assistants and Indigenization programs.
- The funding we receive for student supports is based on domestic FTEs, but supports are provided to all students and the funding we receive is not enough to cover the growing needs of students for mental health and wellness, career counselling, and academic guidance—especially now with the additional struggles brought on by the pandemic.

As a result of these challenges, we have become more reliant on unpredictable sources of revenue such as one-time funding, tuition fees for international students and ancillary services. This revenue now accounts for 65% of the College's total annual revenue, which is not sustainable in the long-term.

2. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain employees because of the impacts of the pandemic, the rise of inflation, and costs to live in the Lower Mainland. Salaries in the sector have also not kept pace with the market and vary widely across the sector. As a result, we are experiencing several vacancies in key roles, including 14 vacancies in our Strategic Transformation Office and 17 vacancies in IT, which are creating significant delays in strategic projects.

5 What are the most significant contributions your institution makes in collaboration with other parts of BC's PSE system?

Langara College is grateful to be part of a post-secondary system that shares an unwavering dedication to helping learners succeed, contributing to the communities we serve and the health of the province. The most significant contributions we make to the sector include:

- Indigenous transfer agreements with the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) to support Indigenous students in continuing their university studies. We have worked closely with both partners and Indigenous communities to deliver programs that celebrate and amplify Indigenous knowledge and histories.
- Our leadership role in the governance and maintenance of BC's transfer system, which is recognized as the best in the country. This transfer system is essential to Langara and other BC colleges' ability to provide diverse learners with access to higher education in a way that meets their unique goals, challenges and priorities.
- We have also engaged with BC Campus and 18 partners across the sector to develop a curriculum decolonization guide for all colleges, to deliver a more inclusive experience for all learners.
- People and Culture working groups including the EDI Community of Practice, Indigenous Working Group, Mental Health for Faculty, and the Hybrid Work Pilot Program.

6 What stands in the way of you collaborating more with the rest of BC's PSE system?

We value the opportunity we have to collaborate with our peers in the sector but have experienced challenges that can stand in the way of effective collaboration that include:

- Different organizational structures, collective agreements, programs and student demographics across the sector can make it challenging to collaborate and find shared solutions.
- Lack of financial incentives to collaborate on recruitment and joint programming that could improve student experience and capture efficiencies across the sector.
- As with many of our colleagues, we struggle to do more with less and there is increasing pressure for senior leadership teams to be represented at all provincial tables, which isn't always possible. With so many discussions happening at the same time, it would help to have more guidance from the Ministry on priorities so that we can assign the right resources for effective decision-making.

7 What are the key economic, demographic, social and technological trends that will unfold over the next 30 years that will impact British Columbia's PSE system?

All post-secondary institutions are experiencing unprecedented change driven by shifts in society, climate change and advancements in technology. Many of these changes have been accelerated by the pandemic. The key trends we see unfolding for post-secondary institutions over the next 30 years include:

- The value of a college education will increase as inflation and the costs of living rise because students will seek more affordable and flexible ways to gain the skills they need to enter the job market as soon as they can after graduation.
- Technology will continue to change the ways we connect and learn, as well as open new possibilities for teaching. The rise in education technologies and remote learning have given students more choices than ever before in where and how to get their education. This will require institutions to be flexible in how they deliver knowledge, skills and training. It will also necessitate a continued investment in both technology and the skilled experts who know how to leverage it effectively.
- The expectations for post-secondary institutions to be community organizations and serve as agents for positive social change to build inclusive, equitable and sustainable communities, will continue to grow.

8 How do you think the PSE system needs to evolve in response to those trends?

We must continue to be flexible and adaptable to the current and future needs of learners, the economy and our communities by:

1. Expanding collaboration across the sector to support the communities we serve and enhance the student experience to:
 - build stronger relationships with First Nations
 - support international students to streamline processes for immigration and recruitment
 - expand holistic partnership agreements with universities that would offer transfer students clear pathways to accepting institutions, and
 - offer student supports, similar to the model of BCNET
2. Providing more incentives for post-secondary institutions to establish innovative programs and modes of education delivery to support key priorities including student access and success, reconciliation, EDI, and climate action.
3. Expanding response and investment in climate action through innovative programs to cultivate the climate leaders of tomorrow and operations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, investments in fossil fuel, consumption, and waste.
4. Building strong relationships with industry so that colleges can offer micro-credentials, post-degree and continuing studies programs that support the needs of the labour market, and workers who want to up-skill or re-skill to compete for in-demand, high-paying jobs.

9

How does your institution need to evolve in response to those trends?

Guided by our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and 2025 Academic Plan, Langara College is responding to the needs of learners, the communities we serve and all British Columbians through initiatives outlined in previous responses and additional goals to advance:

- Building on the successes of our Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and co-op programs so that approximately 50% of our programs include work integrated learning and triple the number of students and community partners engaged in college-led, applied research projects.
- Increasing the diversity of the programs we offer to meet the rapidly evolving needs of students and the BC's labour market. We have recently approved several new micro-credential programs including Modern Digital Publishing.
- In collaboration with the Langara community, we are exploring flexible education opportunities including online and mixed-mode programming.
- Working with government and industry partners to explore options for student housing on or off campus.
- We are collaborating with First Nations to prioritize Indigenous ways of knowing and learning through a joint Musqueam/ Langara Education Working Group. We are also developing a decolonized curriculum in partnership with BC Colleges.
- Our new 25-year Campus Master Plan, creates more flexible space for our growing community, to recognize and support Indigeneity, enhance learning environments and achieve our sustainability objectives.
- We are growing intercultural competency among students and staff. Our goal is to more than double the number of employees who participate in an intercultural engagement program or course each year and a nearly tenfold increase in students who participate by 2025.
- Our goal is to eliminate greenhouse gas by 50% on campus by 2030. This summer, we will begin construction of a new geothermal heating plant that will create a 25% fuel savings on our current fuel usage. We are also working on a roadmap to achieve gold status under the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) after achieving silver in 2021.
- We are implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning platform to leverage technology and insights to plan resources more effectively.
- By increasing the number of employees who participate in personal professional development from 75% to 90% by 2025 and implementing Workday talent management.

Considering the above, what modifications to the funding formula would you recommend?

1. We recommend greater transparency and equity across the sector to ensure stable and predictable funding that allows institutions to plan effectively over the long-term including:
 - advance notice of the amount of funding we receive that would allow us to plan ahead for a minimum of three years.
 - flexibility to align salaries in the sector and in how we manage funds, for example, changes to amortization rules that would provide more access to cash reserves as we see in K-12.
 - Block Funding that reflects the full scope of our mandate.
2. Strategic initiative funding that recognizes the need for innovation in program design and delivery.
3. Funding that supports Applied Research partnerships with business, industry, and community.
4. Funding incentives for collaboration in the sector to find innovative solutions to solve common issues across the sector including recruitment, procurement, student supports, and university transfer arrangements.

CLOSING REMARKS

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experiences, observations and insights as part of the engagement around possible changes to the post-secondary funding in British Columbia. We appreciate the chance to be part of this process and welcome any questions.

As this process moves ahead, we look forward to being involved in discussions on how the funding formula can adapt to meet the evolving needs of learners and British Columbians.

