



simon fraser
student society

PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY FUNDING REVIEW:

SIMON FRASER STUDENT SOCIETY

2022

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Who are we?

INTRODUCTION

The Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) respectfully acknowledges that we are located on the traditional, unceded and ancestral territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the xwməθkwə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Ūxwumixw (Squamish), Selílwitulh (Tsleil' -Waututh), kwikwə́łəm (Kwikwetlem) and ǵícóý (Katzie) Nations.

Unceded means that these territories have never been handed over, sold, or given up by these nations, and we are currently situated on occupied territories.

The Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) is a student-led non-profit organization that represents over 26,000 undergraduate students at Simon Fraser University (SFU). The SFSS represents membership across three SFU campuses of Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver. The SFSS advocates for students, provides services for the membership, and builds upon student power.

We would like to thank the Provincial Government of British Columbia for the opportunity to present our written recommendations for the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review. This is a great opportunity for stakeholders to impact the way funding is provided and further help students in their day-to-day lives.



WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS THE PSE SYSTEM MAKES TO THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF BC?

The Post-Secondary Education system contributions are important for the economic, social and environmental health of BC as these contributions impact student lives.

- **Technological Advances:** The Post-Secondary Education (PSE) System contributes technologically to BC. These advancements include investing into companies through university research. PSE's contribute to B.C through providing access to wifi, other technological resources for students. This access helps students in taking online classes, or exams from home, increasing accessibility.
- **Work Integrated Learning:** Work Integrated Learning(WIL) opportunities are vital for students. WIL helps students become better acquainted with the working world, which in turn helps develop the B.C economy as students then have the skills to go into the workforce and contribute to the community.. Students get hands-on experience while also getting the opportunity to experience different working environments. This can help a student manage what career path they would want to pursue as

well as to network for future job opportunities.

- **Climate Justice:** Universities have begun to take certain action on climate change initiatives. For instance, Universities have committed to divesting from all fossil fuels and we think this is a big stepping stone for the work to be done and how important it is to take action for the current climate emergency we are in. We have seen horrible cases, last year we saw 600 people die during the heat waves last year and these changes are due to climate change, we cannot let this pass and work needs to be done.
- **Student Financial Aid:** Currently, there are scholarships and bursaries which are given to students. These are based on academic merit and do not really encompass students who are marginalized and/or who may not have had the chance to do extra curricular activities.



WHAT COULD THE SYSTEM BE DOING DIFFERENTLY TO ENHANCE ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF BC?

A) Increased Funding for Tuition/Increased Bursaries and scholarships:

Economically, the Post-Secondary Education system could provide further funding for tuition.

Statistics Canada quoted, tuition for domestic students increased by 1.7% and 4.9% for international students in the 2020/2021 year. Although B.C Operating grants have increased, these do not encompass the current need of students. Moreover, international students should not be reeled on to fund post-secondary institutions as it's currently happening, as stated by Statistics Canada.

Instead, better options and opportunities are needed, especially for BIPOC students who face barriers through colonial systems when accessing post-secondary education. Tuition is more than just a fee, tuition affects the lives of students and how they are able to live, eat, sleep, and get their education.

Now, although post-secondary institutions are funded, they are not told how much money they will get every year, or how much the amount they get will fluctuate by.

As such, if funding is increased for post-secondary institutions, how the money should be allocated should be explained so institutions can be held accountable to how they spend their money.

Moreover, increasing funding for tuition, and increasing bursaries and scholarships that are not based on academic merit, provides greater opportunity for folks to get a post-secondary education, especially those most marginalized who face colonial barriers from a young age.

B) Mental Health:

Mental health supports need to be increased. The Simon Fraser Student Society did a Covid-19 mental health survey which presented that students were not provided the mental health support they needed, and there was a general trend of student mental health declining.

There needs to be structural changes in how post-secondary mental health supports are provided, such as investing in preventative measures and not only in supports which help after the student their mental health has been negatively affected.



WHAT COULD THE SYSTEM BE DOING DIFFERENTLY TO ENHANCE ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF BC? (CONT'D)

C) Construction and Infrastructure Investments:

Our student membership experiences an abundance of construction on the SFU campus which hinders how students are able to access campus. There needs to be investments to make the SFU campus environment accessible for students.



D) Affordable Student Housing:

Rent rates have increased immensely in the last decades and students are not able to keep up with these rising costs due to inflation, rising cost of living and just being a student. When students rent on or off campus, around **30-50 percent of their income goes into housing costs alone**. Housing costs don't only affect that part of student life, but it also affects the amount of debt that students are put in. We can see the statistics where in when rent was cheaper in 2005, student debt was at 13,000, and it has now almost doubled to \$26000.

30-50%
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WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE KEY ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS THAT WILL IMPACT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BC THE NEXT 30 YEARS?

A) Economic Trends:

As we adjust to a new way of living beyond the post-pandemic world, students are becoming increasingly eager to enter the workforce. This is due to keeping up with an ever increasing and expensive cost of living within the Province of British Columbia. Students amongst our membership have disclosed to our student Society that the COVID-19 pandemic had either laid off students from work due to employers and their companies' inability to budget payroll for their work, or students have had to defer their degrees to further focus on earning and saving their income throughout the pandemic. As a result of this, students have grown more willing to gain meaningful work experience and stable income while completing their university degrees.

Moreover, there is an increase of students entering university to obtain post-secondary credentials. Certainly, the increase of students entering university is in response to securing future employment where completing a post-secondary education is a minimum requirement.

According to BC's Labour Market Outlook (LMO), about 80% of jobs created within the next decade will require a post-secondary education.

B) Demographic Trends:

The Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) predicts that the 30 years will bring an increase of students, both internationally and locally, to either settle or spend greater lengths of time across all three of our campuses.

For instance, housing areas in the northernmost end of SFU's Burnaby campus, known as "UniverCity", have an expanding community of homebuyers due to the construction sites of multiple condos and apartment buildings. With that said, we predict that the area will attract new homebuyers to purchase these properties and subsequently rent them out to students. This will increase the amount of students living on or near campus, and further put significant pressure on our student Society to further accommodate their needs.



WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE KEY ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS THAT WILL IMPACT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BC THE NEXT 30 YEARS? (CONT'D)

We also expect SFU's recently approved Burnaby Gondola Mountain Project to attract a greater set of students commuting to attend SFU's Burnaby campus. With that said, the shifting increase in our student demographic requires a need from our governments to step in and support their needs.

C) Technological Trends:

The COVID-19 has shifted our way of learning, and making niche-industry connections at the post-secondary educational level. Learning is no longer seen as the conventional in-person and classroom-based lecturing. Instead, the past two years have pushed us to expand our technological horizons by creating flexible avenues for learning anywhere and at any time. With that said, we can expect in the next thirty years that post-secondary institutions will invest in upgrading its technology in lecture halls and classrooms to further support flexible learning accommodations.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE PSE SYSTEM NEEDS TO EVOLVE IN RESPONSE TO THOSE TRENDS?

- The PSE system must create new job opportunities, internship openings or new avenues for work integrated learning where students can earn a stable income while gaining post-secondary experience in their respective niche-industry. Doing so will help students increase their chances to obtain employment post-graduation.
- The PSE system must curate and amplify financial models that disburse financial grants and rental subsidies that support students struggling against BC's profoundly high cost of living.
- The PSE system must provide post-secondary institutions financial resources that are specific to upgrading technological learning structures in university. Doing so will better equip universities to teach students at a remote-capacity, creating more accessible and flexible models of learning.



*How to move forward
with our
recommendations?*

CONCLUSION

The Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) would like to thank Don Wright for the opportunity to provide our input in the post-secondary funding formula review.

Please review the following recommendations below on what the BC PSE can do to financially accommodate post-secondary students and their needs.

WHAT MODIFICATIONS TO THE FUNDING FORMULA WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?

1. A reduction in tuition costs.
2. Establishing a 2% cap on international students health fees and annual tuition increase.
3. Investments in Open Educational Resources.
4. Investments in post-secondary infrastructure.
5. An increase in co-ops opportunities and student financial aid.
6. Non-colonial modes of security protecting IBPOC communities on campus.
7. Investing in Affordable Student Housing.
8. Investment in Sexual Violence Prevention and Survivor Supports.

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