

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2022

TO

2023



# INTRODUCTION

Over the last year, students have continued to face affordability challenges with the rising costs of living and high tuition fees. While the financial strain of attending post-secondary education is not a new challenge, the struggle for students has been exacerbated by tuition fee increases, the lack of affordable housing options, and increasing costs of goods and services, including groceries and gas, caused by generationally high inflation.

The Federation knows that students are the future of British Columbia and will soon be leading the province, working in communities and filling labour shortages throughout healthcare and the skilled trades among many other key industries. We recognise that there needs to be better supports for students like yourself as you navigate your educational journey, and we are committed to continue to advocate for your best interests along the way. The report that follows provides an overview of steps taken by the Federation over the past year to strengthen the student movement and ensure students' voices are being heard and their needs are being met.

Throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, the Federation has continued to advocate for affordable and accessible education in British Columbia. During the Federation's Lobby Week held in October 2022, we highlighted the need to increase funding to post-secondary institutions, as well as the need for increased funds to be allocated to student financial aid through the BC Access Grant. The Federation also highlighted the need to regulate international student fees to ensure predictability, consistency, and fairness, as well as the need for an apprenticeship completion strategy for trades students.

The provincial government's 2023 budget allocated \$2.5 billion for the operating grants given to public institutions, however this number does not keep up with inflation and is essentially a decrease to the sector. Additionally, the BC Budget also doubled the amount of student loan maximum from \$110 to \$220 per week. We know that the solution to supporting students isn't to increase the amount of debt they can take on, but to ensure institutions are properly funded so that tuition fees can be reduced to alleviate the financial burden on students and their families. This continues to be a priority in the Federation's advocacy efforts.

In November 2022, the Federation welcomed news that the Federal Government would be lifting restrictions on international students' ability to work off-campus. This allowed many students to have the freedom to choose how many hours they can work to support themselves in British Columbia. Although this change is temporary, the Federation recognises how it has helped many students find safer jobs and will advocate for this change to become permanent.

We also celebrated the elimination of interest on federal student loans in November; this is a direct result of years of collective student action through the Federation's Knock Out Interest campaign and a reminder that signing petitions, sending emails to your MLA or MP and getting involved in campaigns can lead to meaningful change.

The Federal Government also increased the budget allocation to the Canada Student Grant program by \$814 million. In August 2023, students that are eligible for the program will have access to up to \$4,200 in non-repayable grants, an increase from the \$3,000 pre-COVID funds available. Over the last year, the Federation advocated for the federal government to maintain pandemic relief levels that saw students able to access \$6,000 through the grant program. While this amount wasn't made permanent, we are glad to see progress and will continue working to increase the amount students are able access through the Canada Student Grant Program.

We also work in other ways to make life easier for our members; collectively we have saved students in BC more than \$34 million since 2012 through continuous advocacy for affordable textbook options on campuses. This work could have not been achieved without the support from members and faculties across the province. The Federation will continue to work closely with BCcampus and Member Locals to promote Open Educational Resources on campuses and advocate for their adoption in courses.

The Federation continues to deliver high value services for member locals and our members. The Deals App has over 350 discount partners across the province and has helped students make their everyday lives more affordable. We also continue to coordinate the BC Health Consortium, which provides members access to affordable health care services like dental care, prescriptions, and numerous paramedical services. Member Locals have returned to ordering handbooks that match pre-pandemic numbers – which means more dayplanners are provided to members at no cost. We are so glad to see increased engagement of members in student union elections and events, and the growth of the student movement now that members have returned to in-person learning.

The future of our campaigns and services is promising. Although there have been obstacles along the way, we will continue to fight for students by advocating for an affordable and accessible education system. This coming year will be full of hard work, passion and achievements – the Federation and Member Locals will continue this momentum, but we know change is only possible when we work together.

We look forward to making the student experience better, with you!



# CAMPAIGNS & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

## 2022-24 ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PLAN

Each year at the Federation's summer general meeting, delegates discuss and vote to adopt a campaigns and government relations plan, which then guides the advocacy work of the Federation and member local unions for the next six to twelve months. At the 82nd Semi-Annual General Meeting, the membership adopted the 2022-24 Advocacy Plan to align with the remaining term of the BC government.

### CENTRAL CAMPAIGNS

Central campaigns are those that address direct issues of access to post-secondary education: namely funding, fees, and financial aid. The 2022-24 plan contains two central campaigns – one of which focuses on institutional funding provided by the provincial government, and one that targets the federal government by focusing on student financial aid available through the Canada Student Grant program. The focus of these campaigns is to educate the public on the high cost of education and high student debt, as well as solutions to these issues.

### FUND IT, FIX IT

Polling shows that the general public is less aware of the damage to post-secondary education done by funding shortfalls and tuition fee increases than they are of the impacts of skyrocketing student debt. Further, there appears to be a generally poor understanding of the cause and effect relationship between funding cuts and fee increases, and the student debt crisis. The goals of the *Fund It, Fix It* campaign are to increase funding for institutions, secure a progressive funding model that provides stability to the post-secondary education sector and accounts for inflation, and immediately freeze and progressively reduce tuition and other user fees. The intent of the campaign is to bring awareness of the public funding crisis in BC.

One aspect of the campaign is to increase public awareness about the actual cost of education – be it trades training, diplomas, or professional designations. To create an emotional impact on the public, materials for this campaign focus on children's dreams—what they want to be when they grow up—in comparison to the costs of attaining the education necessary for those careers.

It is also of the utmost importance to remember that many other advocacy priorities of the Federation relate to underfunding. International students pay exorbitant fees, sky-rocketing student debt, Indigenous peoples' lack of access to education, and food insecurity, among other issues all relate to the underfunding of our post-secondary system. Hence, work on the Fund It, Fix It campaign is essential.

### Materials

Materials for this campaign include a blank rave card that can be addressed and used to invite guests to attend a local action (like Board of Governors or community meetings) to discuss the campaign, as well as an information rave card, and a poster with a QR Code that directs people to the campaign website; all materials can be ordered by member locals, at no cost, through the Federation's online Campaigns store. Additionally, the Federation has a campaign video hosted on its campaign page along with a variety of digital assets that can be utilised by Locals throughout the year.

## Government Relations

The Federation continues to promote the *Fund It, Fix It* campaign as a cornerstone of its advocacy efforts. Increased funding was a core ask during the Federation's Lobby Week, held in October 2022, and in the Federation and member locals' presentations to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services as part of the B.C. government's 2024 budget consultation. Increased funding for post-secondary and the progressive reduction of fees is a long-term goal of the Federation and consistency is key in terms of achieving our goals. Member locals are encouraged to meet with the MLAs in their community to also talk about the issues of chronic underfunding.



During 41st Annual General Meeting's Campaigns Committee, delegates participated in designing postcards that speak to their direct individual experience of the high cost of education. These postcards were collected and sent to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Selina Robinson. These postcards were also made available to member locals as a tool to collect stories, from members on campuses, about the impacts of the high cost of education.

## Promotion

Building solidarity amongst community partners is crucial to securing a campaign victory and has been a priority of the Executive Committee. The Federation created a Board of Governors toolkit to aid member locals in presenting the issue of underfunding to their institutional Board of Governors and community partners. The Federation encourages each Local to set up presentations to seek campaign endorsements from their Board of Governors and their local unions and community groups.

The Federation purchased physical and digital ads to promote the campaign; the first was an advertising placement in the March edition of *Global Heroes*, an insert in the publication of the *Vancouver Sun*, *The Province*, *Globe and Mail*, and *National Post* papers. The ad placement included a 900-word advertorial, and full-picture pulled from the campaign branding. All versions of the ad campaign directed people to the *Fund It, Fix It* website.

The Federation also ran a digital advertising campaign for *Fund It, Fix It* in April. The campaign included advertisements on Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Ads, and *BC Today*, as well as a publication for government bureaucrats. All placements were strategically targeted to specific audiences, including senior policy advisors, chiefs of staff, and other key people in the BC political ecosystem in both Vancouver and Victoria. At the end of the campaign, the Federation's message reached 4.2 million people and garnered over 13,000 clicks to the campaign website. Key messaging included "Funding is Behind by \$200 Million, Students are Paying the Price", "The Burden of Rising Tuition is Weighing Down Our Students" and "Decades of Underfunding will Catch up with BC".

## GRANTS NOT LOANS

The *Grants Not Loans* campaign was the most recent iteration of Federation campaigns calling for the creation of an up-front, needs-based student grant program, following others such as *Education Shouldn't Be a Debt Sentence*, and *Squash the Squeeze*. In the 2020 provincial budget, the government announced \$41 million in annual funding for the creation of the BC Access Grant, a program the Federation has been calling for since its elimination in 2001. This grant will provide up to \$4,000 a year to a student as a need-based financial assistance.

The Federation has continued to advocate for more investments into the BC Access Grant. It is estimated that the program needs an additional investment of \$59 million to allow all those who require funding to receive it.

### Federal Iteration of Grants Not Loans

Following the provincial success of the *Grants Not Loans* campaign, the Federation refocused the campaign asks to target the federal government. In 2020, the Federal government announced a doubling of the Canada Student Grant to a maximum of \$6,000, extended until July 2023 as a pandemic relief measure. As previously reported, the Federation recommended maintaining the doubling of the Canada Student Grant during its Federal Lobby Week held in April 2022. The Federation continued to make this recommendation while meeting with MPs alongside the British Columbia Institute of Technology Students' Association (BCITSA) in December 2022.

In March 2023, the Federation attended the Federal government's 2023 Budget announcement, where it was announced that an \$814 million allocation would be made to the Canada Student Grant program. Beginning August 1, 2023, this funding will allow eligible students to access up to \$4,200 in non-repayable grants – this is an increase from the \$3,000 available to eligible students pre-COVID, but a decrease from the \$6,000 available to eligible students as a pandemic relief measure. While this was welcomed news, the Federation will continue to advocate for additional investments in the grant program.

The Federation has further identified and will advocate for the removal of additional program barriers that need resolving to have maximum impact. To make the program more equitable, the following changes should be made to the formula: eliminate the requirement to include parental financial information for applicants younger than 24; remove the use of previous tax filings to determine need, and update the cost-of-living calculations to reflect actual the cost of living adequately. This campaign, while important, has remained a government relations advocacy point and does not yet have a public-facing component.

## SUPPORTING CAMPAIGNS

Supporting campaigns are those that address other issues which can affect access to post-secondary education. Additionally, in years where elections are expected, a campaign to encourage youth voter engagement is included in this section.

### FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

After 16 years of funding cuts to public colleges and universities, the recruitment of international students, who pay tuition fee rates that produce a profit for the institutions, has become the method used by institutions to directly cover budget shortfalls and more. Additionally, contrary to domestic student fees that are governed by the Tuition Fee Limit Policy that caps tuition fee increases each year, international tuition fees are unregulated, resulting in an inability to understand how much these fees can increase year to year.





The *Fairness for International Students* campaign calls for a provincial regulation of tuition fees for international students, the creation of a new international education strategy for BC, and aims to create awareness of the unfair treatment of international students among domestic students.

*Fairness for International Students* was highlighted extensively during the first weeks of school by the Federation in the media. It is becoming clear to the media, institutions, and the public that international students are disproportionately funding the post-secondary system. The Federation is collecting institutional data on the amount of international fees remitted and how much of those fees make up the institutional revenue to better advocate for a reduction of fees.

Several institutions across the province have passed massive increases in international student fees in the last semester, with little notice and without meaningful consultation of student representatives. These increases far exceed inflation costs and institutions have been clear that these increases are being used to address structural deficits or to continue to grow institutional surpluses. As such, the Federation is assembling every student union in the province to unite behind one central message: to add international tuition fees to the Tuition Fee Limit Policy and invest \$200 million into the post-secondary system to begin the process of reducing tuition fees for both domestic and international students.

## Materials

The Federation previously produced a comprehensive research document, *International Students in British Columbia* which was last updated in Fall 2019. The Federation is editing its latest iteration of a research report on international education in Canada, and its anticipated release is in July. Additions to the research report include a deeper look at the precarity of BC's post-secondary system as it relates to the over-reliance on international student tuition fees as a primary method of funding (as exemplified by the temporary decrease in international enrolment during the COVID-19 pandemic), as well as the ramifications of the lack of support available to international students and allowing international students to be mistreated. The audience for this document is government officials, academics, and

institutional administrators. A one-pager summary will also be circulated with the document to assist member locals with training members and staff engaging with this campaign.

The Federation also hired videographers to interview international and domestic students about the impacts of tuition fee increases at the 41st Annual General Meeting. The Federation is preparing its release alongside the updated international student research document.

Existing materials for this campaign include postcards that can be used to lobby the Board of Governors; informational handouts, stickers, and posters. In addition, the Federation created a number of digital assets for social media promotion. The Federation also has a campaign page on its website with a story collection tool. This tool is used to collect international students' experiences (anonymously if they wish) to better personalize and inform the work of the Federation.

## OPEN TEXTBOOKS NOW!

Open Education Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain and permit free use and re-purposing by others. These resources commonly include textbooks and open-access journals but can also be modules, tests, videos, and study guides. The cost of textbooks and course materials has long been a financial challenge for students. Constantly changing versions of textbooks and skyrocketing prices have put many textbooks beyond the reach of students. These unchecked increases in cost add another financial barrier to low- and middle-income students. Further, the funds paid by students for these materials frequently end up in the pockets of major publishing houses and do not flow back to the creators of the academic materials. This system is the product of a copyright law regime that benefits knowledge owners to the detriment of creators and users.

The *Open Textbooks Now!* campaign aims to better connect knowledge users and creators through a well-funded system of OER that is free to students and instructors in BC. The campaign goals include increased provincial funding to support the creation and adaption of OERs and increased on-campus adoption of OER by faculty. To achieve these goals, the Federation works with member locals and BCcampus, the mandated provincial coordinator of open education resources, on issues regarding OER.

The Federation worked with BCcampus on the creation and distribution, to member locals, of new OER awareness materials, including stickers and posters. The Federation also partnered with BCcampus to facilitate a giveaway for Open Education Week; the giveaway was aimed at bringing awareness to the barriers created by high costs of textbooks, OER options available to students, and the \$34 million in student savings as a result of the B.C. Open Collection. Additionally, the giveaway raised awareness about the *Open Textbooks Now!* campaign and ways students can get involved in advocacy efforts. The five winners each received Federation and BCcampus swag.

## TRADES WORK FOR ALL OF US

Whether it be building infrastructure, getting goods from point a to point b, manufacturing essential products, or providing important services, the trades and trades workers are an essential part of BC's economic and social tapestry. To successfully meet the challenges posed by a post-pandemic world, trades education, and trades workers should not only be supported, but also encouraged. These important jobs require skilled tradespeople who go through training, many at public post-secondary institutions.

The goal of this campaign is twofold: to advocate to the government for more support for trades students and to build awareness of the Federation and member locals to trades students. As such, the Federation's most recent provincial lobby document contains a

recommendation that the government develop an apprenticeship completion strategy which includes provisions for returning apprenticeship counsellors back to campuses.

The Federation also created an online survey to support member locals with outreach to trades students, as a means of better understanding the needs trades members, particularly the barriers they face throughout their education. Additionally, at the request of member locals, the Federation has added trades student-specific materials, such as carpenter pencils and four colour pens, available through its bulk purchase service further to support member locals' outreach to trades students and will continue to explore additional items that can be added in the future.

The Federation continues to work alongside coalition partners including the Construction Maintenance and Allied Workers (CMAW) and the BC Building Trades when opportunities for collaboration arise.

## YOUR CITY, YOUR VOTE - MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The Federation redeployed its *Your City, Your Vote* municipal election campaign to assist locals in demonstrating what municipal governments do and the importance of voting during the local elections.

In advance of the municipal election, the Federation updated the campaign materials, which included three versions of posters, one large info card and seven smaller info cards that each highlight different areas city councils have an influence. Materials were delivered to member locals in August 2022. Throughout the campaign period, the Federation assisted member locals with on-campus membership outreach and awareness.

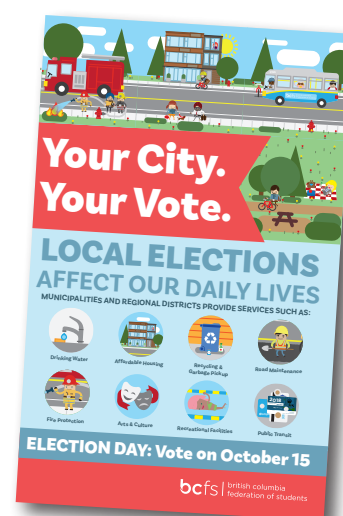
## COALITION CAMPAIGNS

The Federation is an expert in the student experience but acknowledges that there are many other issues our members care about in which they want to be more involved. Coalition campaigns are those that are run by other organisations and in which members have decided to endorse and actively participate. While the Federation plays a role in assisting with the on-campus activities, these are not campaigns created by the Federation.

## ACCESS BC

The goal of the *AccessBC* campaign is to have cost-free contraceptives for everyone. *AccessBC* is a coalition of people from around British Columbia who want to remove the barriers to accessing prescription contraception. Research shows that one in five Canadian women had an unintended pregnancy in 2016, which has remained the same since 2006 because the cost of more effective birth control is prohibitive. *AccessBC* advocates for the government to make these more effective forms of birth control, like pills, shots, and intra-uterine devices (IUDs), universally provided for all who need them free of charge.

The Federation endorsed the *AccessBC* campaign at the 82nd Semi-Annual General Meeting and developed an info card to be used on campuses, along with social media posts to be shared online,



to raise awareness of the campaign goals among members. The Federation also sent a letter of endorsement and support of the AccessBC campaign to the Minister of Health, Adrian Dix, and encouraged member locals to do so as well.

As part of the 2023 BC budget, it was announced that \$119 million would be invested over three years to provide prescription contraception (including pills, subdermal implants, and hormonal and copper IUDs) and over-the-counter medications, such as Plan B, for free for all BC residents as of April 1, 2023. Notably, to aid in delivering this program, pharmacists can now prescribe birth control without needing a doctor.

The Federation encourages member locals to celebrate the victory and recognise the hard work of the organisers behind the

AccessBC campaign in their social media posts and on-campus celebrations. Additionally, the Federation encourages all member locals to ensure this change is represented in their extended health and dental plan renewals.

## MOOSE HIDE CAMPAIGN

The *Moose Hide Campaign* is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys standing up against violence against women and children. Wearing a moose hide patch signifies a commitment to honour, respect, and protect the women and children in your life and to work together to end violence against women and children.

The Moose Hide Campaign Day – a day of ceremony where all Canadians are called to join together to take a stand against violence towards women and children and to take practical steps for our collective journey of reconciliation – took place on May 11, where over half a million Canadians joined together to participate online and in community events such as the Walk to End Violence, as well as fast, and fast-breaking ceremonies. The Federation and member locals shared campaign information and social media posts to support the campaign's day of action.

## PERIOD PROMISE

*Period Promise* is a campaign led by the United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM) to raise awareness of period poverty and advocate for greater access to menstrual products in public bathrooms. The Ministry of Education committed to providing free menstrual products in all public elementary and secondary schools, and the goal of this partnership is to see a similar outcome for the public post-secondary sector.

The Federation collaborated with the UWLM to develop an on-campus campaign toolkit; the toolkit—including an information guide, information leaflets, a fact sheet for administrators and a petition—is available to member locals via Dropbox.





Previously reported successes include the lobbying efforts of Local 5 at Thompson Rivers University, Local 6 at Douglas College, and Local 13 at Vancouver Island University – each that resulted in the successful provision, by the institution, of free menstrual products at each of the respective institutions. Local 20 and the Northern Undergraduate Student Society also successfully lobbied for the University of Northern British Columbia to launch a pilot project involving the provision of free menstrual products on the Prince George campus.

## Successes

The following Locals have successfully secured period products on their campuses in the last year:

Local 10 – Emily Carr Students' Union

Local 15 – North Island Students' Union

Local 16 – Students' Union Vancouver Community College

Local 17 – Camosun College Student Society

Local 21 – Justice Institute Students' Union

The provision of free menstrual products as part of the institution's annual budgets and as a responsibility to students on campus is becoming more commonplace amongst post-secondary institutions in the province. These victories are the result of Locals working hard and not giving up on their advocacy with their institutions. The Federation encourages member locals to take advantage of these victories to lobby campus administrators while we continue to put pressure on the provincial government to mandate the provision of free menstrual products in all public buildings in the province.

## EQUITY EXCHANGE

Federations and member locals have a long history of creating various materials like buttons, stickers, leaflets, banners and postcards to promote different issues surrounding social equity. The materials are meant to be used as tools on-campus to raise awareness of equity issues and spark education and awareness conversations with members at events throughout the year.

The Equity Exchange is an online storefront where member locals can order specialized items at no cost. The Federation recognises that due to the nature of Locals being spread throughout the province, different issues arise within different communities. The store has stickers and buttons focused on supporting conversations around building consent culture, being anti-racist, anti-ableist, and anti-transphobic, showing support for the queer community, promoting workers' rights, destigmatizing mental health, and raising issues of affordability and climate change. New materials will be available for member locals ahead of the 2023-24 academic year and the Federation also encourages member locals to share any ideas that could be added to the store throughout the year.



## RELATIONS WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AGENCIES

### RELATIONS WITH THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT - LOBBY WEEK 2022

The Federation held its annual Lobby Week on October 26 to 27. Federation representatives met with 44 Members of the Legislative Assembly and Cabinet Ministers, including 35 BC NDP Members; 9 BC Liberal Members, and the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Anne Kang. The Federation invited the British Columbia Institute of Technology Student Association (BCITSA) and the UFV Student Union Society (UFVSUS). Representatives from Locals 1, 4, 6, 10, 13, 15, 16 and 20 participated, along with representatives from the BCITSA and UFVSUS.

The Federation brought forward recommendations that highlight accessible education as a critical tool, not only to stimulate economic recovery and equip British Columbians with the skills needed to fill labour market demands, but to simultaneously uplift individuals and families struggling with increased costs of living and negative minimum wage growth. The full list of meetings is included in Appendix II of this report.

### LOBBY DOCUMENT

A lobby document was created for the meetings based on the Campaigns and Government Relations Plan adopted at the 82nd Semi-Annual General Meeting.

The Federation's Lobby Week asks included:

<b>Student Financial Assistance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase funding to the BC Access Grant to provide at least \$100 million in non-repayable financial aid annually to increase access to post-secondary education and skills training.</li></ul>
<b>Institutional Funding and Fees</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete the post-secondary funding review and determine gaps in government funding, in particular for regional colleges and universities. Then provide an infusion of \$200 million annually.</li><li>• Freeze tuition fees and develop a plan to progressively reduce tuition fees at public colleges, institutes, and universities to lessen the financial burden on students and their families.</li><li>• Strengthen the Tuition Fee Limit Policy to ensure that institutions are not increasing fees beyond the prescribed limits in the form of new ancillary fees.</li></ul>
<b>Fairness for International Students</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amend the Tuition Fee Limit Policy to include regulation of fees for international students to ensure fairness, consistency, and predictability of international student tuition fees.</li><li>• Release a new BC international education strategy that will provide sufficient support for international students to assist in their cultural, social, and academic integration.</li></ul>
<b>Trades Training</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop an apprenticeship completion strategy which includes provisions for returning apprenticeship counsellors to campuses.</li></ul>

## CHANGES TO THE B.C. GOVERNMENT'S CABINET MEMBERS

On December 7, 2023, Premier David Eby appointed a new cabinet and provided a new direction to cabinet members. Among the many changes, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training was renamed to the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and Selina Robinson was appointed Minister. Minister Robinson previously served as the Minister of Finance.

Other notable changes include the appointment of Katrine Conroy as the Minister of Finance, Nikki Sharma as the Attorney General, Ravi Kahlon as the Minister of Housing, and Brenda Bailey as the Minister of Jobs, Economic Development, and Innovation. Additionally, one new ministry was created, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, and Bowin Ma was appointed Minister.

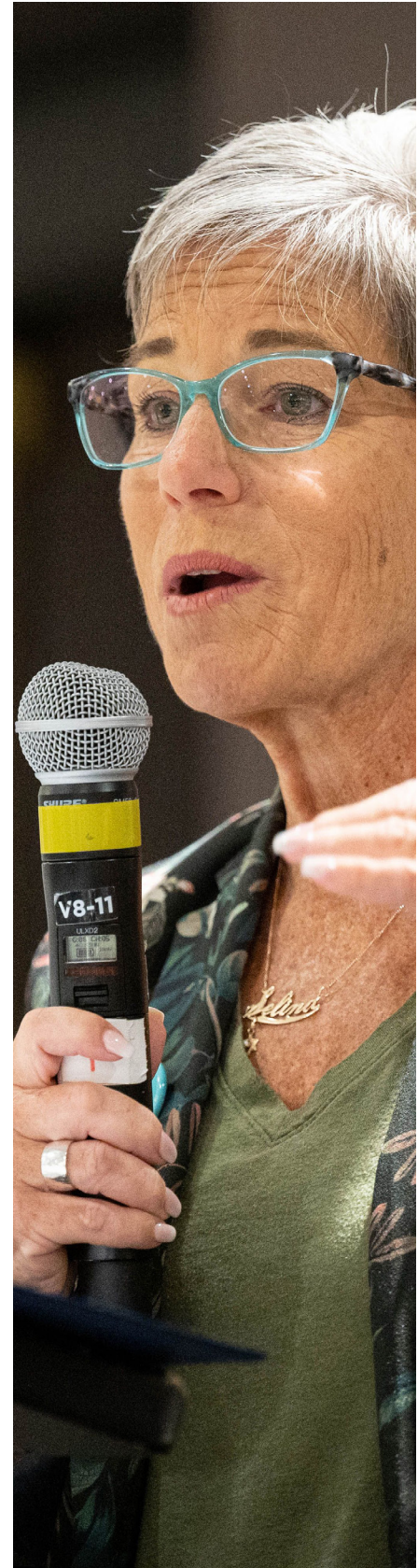
Premier Eby has instructed cabinet members to focus on tackling issues like the cost of living, health care, safety, climate change, housing, and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

## BC BUDGET 2023 CONSULTATIONS: PRESENTATION TO THE SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

In June 2022, the BC Legislature's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services held a budget consultation process to hear priorities and feedback from the public regarding the 2023 provincial budget.

The Committee released the report from the consultations on August 11, 2022. The following recommendations were included in the final budget report:

- Allocate more money for affordable and accessible student housing on campus, and broaden the rental pool in communities.
- Enable workforce development by committing the necessary learner support to ensure full post-secondary access and retention for under-represented groups, including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, immigrants, and persons with disabilities.
- Create a provincial strategy for international students that includes predictable fees and ensures that international students feel welcomed and supported.
- Create a new funding formula that recognizes inflationary pressures and the needs of institutions, as well as the unique circumstances of institutions, especially those in rural and remote areas.
- Work with post-secondary institutions to retain instructors, including by funding faculty positions in predictable, long-term contracts.



- Increase mental health support for students at post-secondary institutions across the province, including providing funding to hire BIPOC counsellors and continuing funding for mental health counselling and referral services.
- Increase core funding to trades training providers and ensure skills training is available and accessible throughout the province.
- Provide greater access to and investment in work-integrated learning and reskilling programs for transitioning workers.
- Continue to develop and consider strategies to drive innovation, sustainability, apprenticeships, and trades, working with the industry as a trusted partner to drive new programs and initiatives.
- Support educational opportunities that connect secondary and post-secondary students with the skills required to work in the broader tech sector.
- Continue to provide need-based assistance to students, including increasing the BC Access Grant and expanding the income eligibility threshold.
- Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by providing grants, scholarships, bursaries, and subsidies for all students, including BIPOC, and migrant students.

## BC BUDGET 2023

Each year, the Minister of Finance produces a budget for the government of British Columbia. This budget is provided to legislators who review the makeup of the government's financial expectations for the coming year, then vote on the proposal. The process begins with consultations in the previous year, then a launch day for the budget, followed by legislative review by the Ministry, and final adoption.

BC Budget 2023 was released on February 28, 2023. Organiser Davies participated in the budget "lock-up", where media and stakeholders were given an advanced budget presentation and a brief question and answer period.

This year's Budget is projecting a \$4.2 billion deficit. Although significant spending is happening in areas like health care, the Federation is concerned about the lack of non-repayable financial aid and funding for post-secondary education.

The following is a brief list of announcements that relate most directly to post-secondary education and the student experience:

- Operational Funding: Budget 2023 allots \$2.518 billion dollars for the operating grant given to institutions, an increase of roughly 5%; notably, this does not keep up with the annual inflation this year of 7%.
- Financial Aid: Budget 2023 doubled the student loan maximums from \$110 to \$220 per week, bringing BC more in line with other provinces in the country beginning June 2023. The budget also changed the student loan repayment program to match its federal counterpart so anyone making under \$40,000 does not have to repay their student loan until their income increases. Additionally, the affordable payment amount will reduce from 20 per cent of annual family income to 10 per cent. These two initiatives will come into effect August 1, 2023. The Budget does not however provide any additional funding for the BC Access Grant program.
- Future Ready Plan: On May 2, the provincial government released its long-awaited Future Ready Plan, which included a \$480 million investment over three years. Though much of the plan is good, the Federation is concerned that it lacks a real plan to increase funding and decrease the reliance on tuition fees throughout the sector.



- Budget 2023 also includes the following investments:
  - \$119 million over three years for free prescription contraception and Plan B for all residents of BC starting April 1, 2023.
  - A new income-tested Renter's Tax Credit
  - Many ongoing capital projects, including the Health Sciences Centre at BCIT and student housing at Okanagan College, North Island College, and the University of Fraser Valley, have increased their budget due to higher financing costs.
  - \$1.1 billion has been allocated to implement a new payment model for family doctors to help protect, support, and strengthen the primary healthcare system, providing more equitable pay.

## **BC BUDGET 2024 CONSULTATIONS: PRESENTATION TO THE SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

The BC Legislature Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services held a budget consultation to receive public feedback informing the 2024 provincial budget. The Federation presented to the committee on May 30, 2023; Secretary-Treasurer Niikoi emphasized concerns about the funding shortfalls experienced by BC's public post-secondary institutions. Recommendations included amending the Tuition Fee Limit policy to introduce a cap on international students' tuition fee increases and infusing \$200 million annually into institutional operations grants.

## **PROVINCIAL FUNDING REVIEW**

As previously reported, on March 31, 2022, the provincial government launched a review of public post-secondary funding through a sector-wide consultation process. The process is led by Don Wright, previous president of the British Columbia Institute of Technology and who held various roles in public service until 2020. This review will help the government develop "an updated, modern funding model" as it focuses on three areas:

1. Establish a funding model that fairly and impartially distributes provincial financial resources across the public post-secondary sector.
2. Align provincial funding with the education and skills training needs of British Columbians and the communities served by the 25 public post-secondary institutions.
3. Support student success by ensuring access to affordable, high-quality post-secondary education and expanding key student supports.

The Federation has been named one of the stakeholders to be included in the consultation. Federation Organiser Davies met with Rachel Franklin, Executive Director of the funding review, to discuss an in-person consultation with members of the Federation. As a result, the Federation hosted an in-person consultation on June 11, 2022, where Wright and Franklin were in attendance. The Federation also invited representatives from the UFVSUS and BCITSA to attend and participate.

Each member local and the Federation were given the opportunity to submit a written submission; Locals 5, 6, 10, 13, 15, 16, 21 and the BCITSA provided submissions. The government plans to release Wright's summary and recommendations this summer. The report has not yet been released, but the Federation will continue to push for its release.

## **RELATIONS WITH MINISTRY OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FUTURE SKILLS**

### **MINISTER ROBINSON'S MANDATE LETTER**

As reported under Relations with the Provincial Government, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training was renamed the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. Former Minister Anne Kang became the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Former Minister of Finance, Selina Robinson, was appointed to Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.

When a cabinet is appointed, the Premier provides each Minister with a mandate letter requesting certain focus areas be prioritised moving forward. As such, Minister Robinson was provided a mandate letter (included as Appendix III) and some of the most relevant priorities include:

- Deliver StrongerBC's Future Ready Skills plan with clear actions to continue expanding access to affordable, accessible, and relevant training
- Advance the work to launch the second medical school in British Columbia
- Meet or exceed the target of 8,000 new student housing units
- Help more people choose a job in the trades by continuing the implementation of Skilled Trades Certifications
- Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by continuing to work on expanding the BC Access Grant by increasing eligibility
- Support career paths for skilled immigrants and refugees

The Federation was alarmed to see mention of the funding review was not included in Minister Robinson's mandate letter. Though various government members have assured the Federation that the funding review process was still underway, its removal marks a sharp departure from the previous direction set by Premier Horgan. Also missing from the mandate letter was Minister Kang's previous mandate to strengthen the Tuition Fee Limit Policy.

### **FEDERATION MEETINGS**

Minister Anne Kang attended the 82nd Semi Annual General Meeting to bring greetings and to speak with delegates about the work she and her government have done to improve post-secondary education and trades training in the province. Minister Robinson also attended the 41st Annual General Meeting to bring greetings and to speak with delegates about her new role as Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.

On May 24, the Federation met with Premier David Eby and the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Selina Robinson. Chairperson Chirino and Director-Operations Patigdas discussed issues caused by the lack of adequate funding to post-secondary institutions and the lack of support for international students in BC.

### **RELATIONS WITH THE OPPOSITION**

On February 1, the Federation met with Critic for Advanced Education and Skills Training, Coralee Oakes, and BC United Caucus at Local 16 to discuss the emerging needs in the post-secondary sector. The conversation centred around inadequate funding to the province's post-secondary institutions, the lack of supports for international students, student financial assistance, and educational access in rural British Columbia. The meeting was productive, and the Federation looks forward to continuing to build relationships with the opposition.

## BCCAMPUS

The Federation maintains a strong relationship with BCcampus, a government agency that works on open education, teaching and learning and a variety of other special projects for the government.

Throughout the year, the Federation collaborated with BCcampus on multiple engagement efforts to support OER awareness, as mentioned in the *Open Textbooks Now!* section of this report. The Federation was also invited to meet with BCcampus's Acting Director, Clint Lalonde, where Chairperson Chirino provided a presentation on how open resources have impacted students, and to provide the student perspective on open resources. The Federation also participated in BCcampus's Facilitating Learning Online (FLO) panel on academic integrity in post-secondary education, where Organiser Davies provided the student perspective on student usage of AI in the classroom. Some topics included accessibility supports, academic integrity, and ethics.

Students have now saved over \$34 million through providing OER – this success is due to the continuous work of the Federation, member locals, and BCcampus. There are now 288,104 BC students using open textbooks at 43 BC institutions; further, there are 895 known faculty who have adopted OER.

## BC POST-SECONDARY DIGITAL LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The BC Post-Secondary Digital Learning Advisory Committee was initiated to lead a collaborative process across the post-secondary system to better understand and support the use of digital learning models in post-secondary education in British Columbia moving forward. Chairperson Chirino has a seat on the Digital Learning Advisory Committee.

The committee is working with post-secondary institutions and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills to improve digital learning by developing research-based recommendations and updating policies.

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION APPROACH

The Ministry is working on a student-centered and sustainable approach to international education. To support the work, the Federation was engaged to ensure that student voices and other non-traditional stakeholders in the post-secondary education sector are consulted.

As previously reported, the Federation participated in a third-party-led, independent consultation process regarding international education in the province in May 2022. Member locals raised concerns about international students not having a cap on their tuition fees, the lack of bursaries for international students, and institutions depending on international tuition fees to fill in the gaps in their budget due to a lack of public funding.

The International Education Strategy has yet to be released, but the Federation has seen massive increases in international student fees at numerous institutions over the last year. These increases far exceed the costs of inflation, and institutions have been very clear that these increases are being used to either address structural deficits or to continue to grow institutional surpluses.

As reported under the *Fairness for International Students* section, the Federation is working to engage every students' union, including member locals and non-member unions, in the province to collectively call on the government to cap international tuition fee increases by amending the Tuition Fee Limit Policy and to invest \$200 million into the post-secondary system to begin the process of progressively reducing tuition fees for all students.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCY WORKING GROUP

As the Ministry is focusing extensively on student mental health, BCcampus' special projects department was tasked with the creation of two Mental Health and Resiliency working groups, each with different focuses. The first is comprised of institutional staff, faculty, and student representatives and will focus on the student side of mental health; former Chairperson Klassen represents the Federation in this working group. The second is made up of faculty and administration representatives and focuses on how instructors and institutions can aid students in their mental health journeys. The goal of these working groups is to provide more comprehensive supports for student mental health.

On November 24, the group met to provide feedback to the consulting firm hired to review the final guidelines for institutions. The consulting firm identified a number of gaps in supports, such as resources on suicide awareness and prevention, international student supports, and Indigenous student supports.

## RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

### MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

In December 2022, Chairperson Chirino joined the British Columbia Institute of Technology Student Association (BCITSA) for their federal lobby week in Ottawa. The Federation and BCITSA met with 7 MPs and 2 Senators – a full list of the MPs and Senators can be found in Appendix II. Additionally, the Federation and BCITSA met with the Ministry of National Defence and the Prime Minister's Office to discuss the Canada Student Grant program and pathways to permanent residence for international students.

### FEDERAL BUDGET 2023

Each year, the Minister of Finance produces a budget for the Government of Canada. This budget is provided to legislators who review the makeup of the government's financial expectations for the coming year, then vote on the proposal. In March 2023, Chairperson Chirino attended the Federal government's 2023 Budget announcement, where it was announced that an \$814 million allocation would be made to the Canada Student Grant program. As reported under the Grants Not Loans section of this report, the funding will allow eligible students to access up to \$4,200 in non-repayable grants – an increase from the pre-COVID funds available to eligible students but a decrease from the amount available as a pandemic relief measure. The Federation will continue to advocate for additional investments in the Canada Student Grant and to reduce systemic barriers to the program.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFF-CAMPUS WORK LIMITATIONS LIFTED

In November, the Federal government announced that it would be removing the restrictions on international student work permits on a trial basis until December 31, 2023. The Federation and other student groups have long advocated for international students to have the right to work as much as they see fit while going to school. Previously, international students were only allowed to work off campus for 20 hours. Even though this change is temporary, it will allow international students to find better, safer jobs, and better support themselves while filling important labour shortages, especially in rural communities.

The Federation will continue its advocacy to make this change permanent and ensure that this is not an excuse to continue increasing international student tuition fees.



## ELIMINATION OF INTEREST ON FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS

In 2019, the Federation launched the *Knock Out Interest* campaign calling on the federal government to eliminate interest charged on federal student loans and to remove the unnecessary financial barrier to low- and middle-class students accessing education.


Over the years, student advocates, and campaign supporters sent more than 15,000 postcards and emails to the Prime Minister and their local Member of Parliament, discussed the issue in hundreds of meetings with MPs, and received endorsements from more than 30 non-member students' unions and community groups, garnering support for this recommendation from across the country.

In December 2021, Prime Minister Trudeau issued his mandate letter to Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion Carla Qualtrough with directions to eliminate interest on student loans and to increase the repayment threshold to \$50,000, which are both in line with the asks of the Federation. On November 3, 2022, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland, released a statement that interest on federal student loans would be permanently eliminated effective April 1, 2023.

The successful elimination of interest on federal student loans is a massive victory for students across Canada, resulting from persistent advocacy efforts of the Federation, member locals, and coalition partners.







# **COALITION & SOLIDARITY WORK**

## BC FEDERATION OF LABOUR

### THE BC FEDERATION OF LABOUR

The BC Federation of Labour is one of the Federation's oldest allies, representing over half a million workers in every part of BC through over 50 affiliated unions, with over 800 locals. They have a long history of fighting for the rights of all working people to have safe workplaces and fair wages. Students are often workers, and issues in post-secondary impact working people in the province, so the partnership between the Federation and the labour movement is invaluable.

Chairperson Chirino was invited to give greetings on behalf of the Federation to the BC Federation of Labour's annual convention. In the remarks, Chairperson Chirino discussed the importance of solidarity and the need for labour's support in calling on the government to fix our underfunded post-secondary system.

### YOUNG WORKER'S COMMITTEE

The BC Federation of Labour represents unionised workers throughout British Columbia and has historically been one of the Federation's strongest allies. The Federation has represented student voices on the Young Workers Committee (YWC) for many years and actively provides a student perspective when speaking about the realities for young workers and their communities. Chairperson Chirino is currently appointed to the YWC.

The YWC will host its BCFED Young Workers School from September 6 to 9 at Loon Lake Lodge. The Young Workers School will allow participants to connect with other young workers from around the province while attending courses to help them build skills in political and community organising, leadership, and other skills useful in the labour movement.





## BC HEALTH COALITION

The Federation is a member of the BC Health Coalition (BCHC), a democratic, non-profit, and non-partisan network that brings organisations and over 800,000 individuals across BC together to strengthen, defend, and improve public health care. Together, the BCHC runs campaigns, educates the public and lobbies the government to improve the public health care system. The Federation has been a member and ally of the Coalition for many years, working on initiatives and campaigns together. The Coalition meets monthly and Director-Operations Patigdas holds an elected seat on this committee.

The Coalition has been actively discussing the Exemption from Controlled Drugs and Substances Act: Personal possession of small amounts of certain illegal drugs in British Columbia. This Act, a pilot from January 31, 2023, to January 31, 2026, grants possession of small amounts of certain illegal drugs for personal use up to 2.5 grams for adults 18 years and older in the province. The dialogue and discussion allowed stakeholders and members to understand the Act's nuances, advantages, and disadvantages toward harm reduction strategies and decriminalisation. A report outlining the key findings and recommendations of the dialogues hosted by the Coalition, titled *Beyond Prohibition: Community Engagement on Workers' Rights and Addressing the Drug Toxicity Crisis* report, has been published.

Over the last year, the Coalition advocated for increasing the Canadian Health Transfer from the federal government to provinces and territories, with strings attached, to ensure that the provincial governments apply these transfers to their public healthcare systems.

Though the Federal government announced a 5% increase, this is less than the province requested. Further, this increase still has limited conditions, which does not guarantee direct investments in the public healthcare system. The advocacy for this issue is ongoing and includes asking Premier Eby to prioritize investments that expand capacity and address the labour shortage in the system.

## BCHC ANTI-PRIVATIZATION WORKING GROUP

The Federation is also a member of the Coalition's Anti-Privatization Working Group. This working group advises the Coalition on privatization issues in the healthcare system of BC. Particularly, its ongoing work has been the Save Medicare campaign, fighting against Cambie Surgeries Corporation's appeal to eliminate the Medicare Protection Act clauses that protected the principles of BC's publicly funded Medicare system in 2015. Over the past year, the working group has been working on the appeal submitted by the Cambie Surgeries Corporation to Canada's Supreme Court. This decade-long legal case has ended with the decision of the Canada Supreme Court to dismiss the appeal, affirming the decision made by the BC Supreme Court to uphold the clauses in the Medicare Protection Act. This decision is a significant victory for the BC Health Coalition and in keeping the healthcare system in BC public. More work must be done to strengthen the legislation around the public healthcare system to prevent such threats again in the future. More information on the Cambie Case can be found at [savemedicare.ca](https://www.savemedicare.ca).

## CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

The Canadian Union of Public Employees represents over 700,000 workers nationwide in public services including health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, libraries, municipalities, transportation, and airlines. CUPE represents many students' union staff across the province, and Federation staff are also represented by CUPE local 2396.



The Federation continues to work closely with CUPE BC on issues related to post-secondary education and workers rights and has endorsed many of their initiatives, including *Public Childcare Now*.

## CONSENT CULTURE

One of the initiatives that the Federation undertakes to provide member locals support on consent culture work is implementing the *Let's Get Consensual* campaign from the Anti-Violence Project and the University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS). The *Let's Get Consensual* campaign aims to combat rape culture, advocate for sexualised violence training, and build a consent culture on campus. The Federation has been working with these groups to create physical materials, including posters and rack cards with QR codes that can be used on campuses to start conversations around these topics and direct students to supportive resources.

The Federation has received the campaign posters, which have been added to the Federation's Campaign Shopify store for member locals to order at no cost. The Federation met with Anna-Elaine from the AVP to restart the discussion on creating new materials for LGC partners and to explore organising quarterly meetings to provide space for LGC partners to discuss on-campus work being done and to provide campaign feedback. The Federation will continue meeting with Anna-Elaine to discuss how both groups can work collaboratively on the LGC campaign and the creation of new materials.

## FEDERAL STUDENT ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

Over the past three years, the Federation has built relationships with students' unions outside the province to engage in federal advocacy work. Specifically, the Federation has been working with representatives from the Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC) and the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Students' Association (SPSA) on federal lobbying opportunities. In 2021, the Federation, ASEC and the SPSA formalised their relationship and created the Federal Student Advocacy Alliance (FSAA). The Alliance will provide each participating organisation representing a province with the opportunity to put forward shared federal lobbying priorities for the year. Together, the organisations created a missions, vision, and values statement and are in the process of finalising the Alliance's foundational documents and organisational structures.

The BCITSA passed a motion to formally join the FSAA and the Federation agreed to share a vote with the BCITSA in the Cabinet. The Federation is excited to build relationships and have more students united in advocacy efforts across the country.

## **INTERSECTIONAL SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PROJECT**

BCcampus is currently engaging in a two-year project that began in 2019 in partnership with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills to increase post-secondary institutions' access to resources that support the prevention of and response to sexualized violence. It has been identified that particular prevention and response support is needed for acts of sexualized violence experienced by Indigenous students, international students, graduate students, and technology-facilitated sexualized violence.

This project aims to help post-secondary institutions identify ways to support these student populations, address any existing systemic barriers, and develop a comprehensive response to sexualized violence that utilizes an intersectional approach in its application.

## **TENANT RESOURCE AND ADVISORY CENTRE**

The Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (TRAC) is a non-profit organisation that provides free legal education, representation, and advocacy on residential tenancy matters. The Federation has represented young people on TRAC's Board of Directors for many years. Director-Membership Outreach Gauld currently sits on the TRAC Board as an elected Director.

TRAC has signed a service grant contract with the City of Vancouver and plans to move into the new Renters Service Centre (RSC) as the lead operator in early 2025. The Renter Services Centre (RSC) is a city program that aims to assist renters through rental applications, awareness of their rental rights and responsibilities, eviction issues and more. This new space will assist TRAC in expanding its current capacity to better serve tenants across the province and will be located at 900 Howe Street. Furthermore, the city allocated \$750,000 to the RSC as an operating grant after the closure of the city-run Vancouver Renters Office by the Council.

TRAC's information and general services have increased drastically since 2021-22. The number of tenants assisted through their website, social media, email, and telephone info line jumped from 10,413 to 12,866 in 2022-23.





# FEDERATION SERVICES



## STUDENT DISCOUNT PROGRAM: THE DEALS APP

The Federation has coordinated the provision of local and provincial discounts for individual members for several decades. This service is one of the most tangible, direct benefits of membership in the Federation. By saving members and non-member students money in their day-to-day lives, the Federation and member locals are working to reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education.

### MOBILE APPLICATION

The Deals App is the evolution of a discount program that previously used a physical card to save students money at participating businesses. At the direction of members in attendance at the 36th Annual General Meeting, the app was developed to better fit members' needs by allowing them to easily find savings near campus, in their hometown, or while travelling throughout BC. The app, launched in 2019, has three key components: a map feature showing discounts nearby, a discount listing grouped by category to make browsing specific discounts easier, and a unique virtual identifier that students can present to business partners when using a discount.

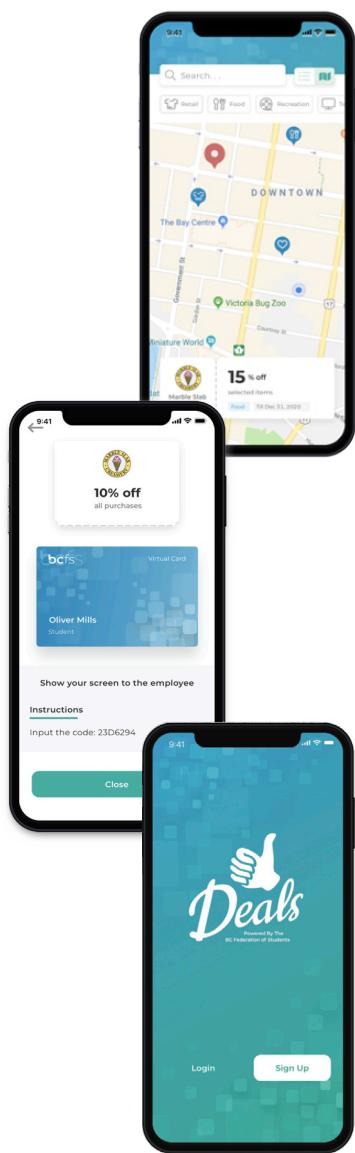
The app is free for members to download through the App Store and Google Play. It is also available for non-member students' unions to access for an annual per-member fee or for non-member students to access individually for an annual fee, which allows the Federation to offset some of the development and maintenance costs while offering savings to all students in the province.

### DISCOUNTS

The value provided by the discount program is a joint effort between member locals and the Federation's office. Federation staff work to secure online, regional, and province-wide discounts to serve as "anchor" discounts with well-known or easily accessible business partners. Meanwhile, member locals focus their solicitation efforts on local businesses; the local knowledge of students' unions is key in building and maintaining relationships with businesses that are popular and valuable to students in the area. The Federation also develops Deals branded materials to aid in the discount solicitation, solicitor training, and app promotion.

### New for 2022-23

In an effort to increase member awareness of the student discounts available through the app, the Federation introduced an Instagram account (@The\_DealsApp) to connect with members. The app's social media pages are used to share new discount partnerships, promote existing offers, host giveaways, and engage members about the types of discounts and specific businesses they would like to see added to the app.



Led by members' and member locals' feedback, the Federation also worked with its app developers on three key improvements – creating an online discount category, improving download availability for international students, and troubleshooting the login case sensitivity and password reset function.

1. A new online discount category has been added to the app to allow all online offers to be grouped for users to browse more easily.
2. The app has been made available for download in multiple countries beyond Canada, including India, China, the United States, the EU and Brazil in order to ensure international students who have not changed their app store settings to Canada can still download and take advantage of student discounts throughout their studies.
3. The case sensitivity for account login credentials has been adjusted to improve the ease of login for students. Additionally, the password reset function has had a bug fix applied to ensure it works efficiently for all users.

### **2023-24 Update**

Currently, the Deals App has over 350 discount partners, with discounts at over 675 locations, including province-wide, and online discounts with nearly two dozen companies; new partnerships include Jiffy Lube, the Canadian Brewhouse, Central Mountain Air, Getonly.ca, Fitness World Canada and 30 Minute Hit. A full list of available discounts can be viewed on the Deals App. Solicitation and renewal efforts for the 2023-24 year are ongoing; this year's focus is on finding additional discounts on necessities such as phone and internet services, food and groceries, and educational and course materials to support students struggling with Canada's high inflation.

The Federation staff continues to offer solicitation training by request to ensure directors interested in participating in member local solicitation and renewal efforts have the necessary training and resources. Member local-specific online solicitation materials have also been created to improve the discount solicitation and renewal processes further.

## **MEMBERS' HANDBOOK AND DAYPLANNER**

The Members' Handbook and Dayplanner Service were created by member locals in 1993 as a means of delivering high-quality, ethically produced, and affordable products for members. While the service was initially created to benefit small member locals, students' unions of all sizes benefit from the economies of scale and shared resources when purchasing handbooks. The handbooks contain a section about the Federation, a fully customizable member local section, and weekly and monthly calendars. The quantity produced has allowed for better quality paper and full-colour pages while achieving savings in writing, editing, designing, printing, and binding costs. The savings enable students' unions greater flexibility in the amount of advertising content, making room for more local-specific information. The Federation sells cover advertisements on those covers not sold by member locals as an additional way to subsidise the cost of the handbook project and keep costs low for participating locals. Additional value is provided by the Federation, offering complete administration and logistical coordination of the orders.

The handbooks are produced in BC by a unionised printing facility, using recycled paper and vegetable-based inks. Further, the printing facility uses industry-leading processes to ensure all waste from the production is reused or recycled responsibly.



## 2022-23 PRODUCTION

As directed by the Executive Committee, the layout and order of the weekly and monthly calendar pages were updated to increase the functionality of the organisational pages for members. This year's handbook also includes note pages and a checklist that students can use to find out more information about the Federation and their students' union, how to get involved in the student movement, and how they can make the most of their Federation membership.

The Federation saw member locals return to ordering quantities more reflective of their pre-pandemic orders to meet the needs of members returning to in-person learning. Twelve locals and the Federation participated in the service for the 2022-23 year, and a total of more than 30,000 handbooks were produced and distributed to members across the province.



## 2023-24 PRODUCTION

The Federation again secured a contract with Mitchell Press for the 2023-24 production year; the pricing of the handbook increased, which was reflective of a rise in the cost of paper and other production materials, shipping costs and Mitchell Press labour, each impacted by high inflation. The Federation hopes to continue its partnership with Mitchell Press for future handbook production but will take steps to source quotes from various printers to ensure members and member locals receive the lowest price possible.

Based on positive feedback about re-ordering the weekly and monthly calendars in the 2022-23 handbook, the Federation has also re-ordered the timetable pages so that all relevant pages are categorised by semester for the 2023-24 handbook. The Federation also adjusted the 2023-24 handbook production timeline to meet member locals' requests to receive the handbooks in early August to have them available to members during orientation.

Twelve locals and the Federation again participated in the service for the 2023-24 year, and a total of nearly 32,000 handbooks were ordered; the small increase has been attributed to several member locals running out of handbooks in the winter semester and increasing their order numbers to reflect the needs of their members. Handbooks are currently in production and are expected to arrive on time.

## MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS

The Federation coordinates a bulk purchase program through which member locals can purchase membership development materials that are ethically produced and of high quality while maintaining a low price. The Federation works with Fairware, a Vancouver-based company dedicated to providing ethically-sourced materials – with a focus on using union labour, recycled materials and high environmental standards – for the provision of the service.



Students' unions order through the Federation's online Shopify store based on what their members want and with the ability to customise designs. By purchasing products collectively through the Federation, students' unions realise cost savings by driving down the per-item cost through increased purchasing power, while becoming leaders in making campuses sweatshop-free. The Federation is further able to reduce the cost to member locals by subsidising the cost of shipping.

## 2022-23 ORDERS

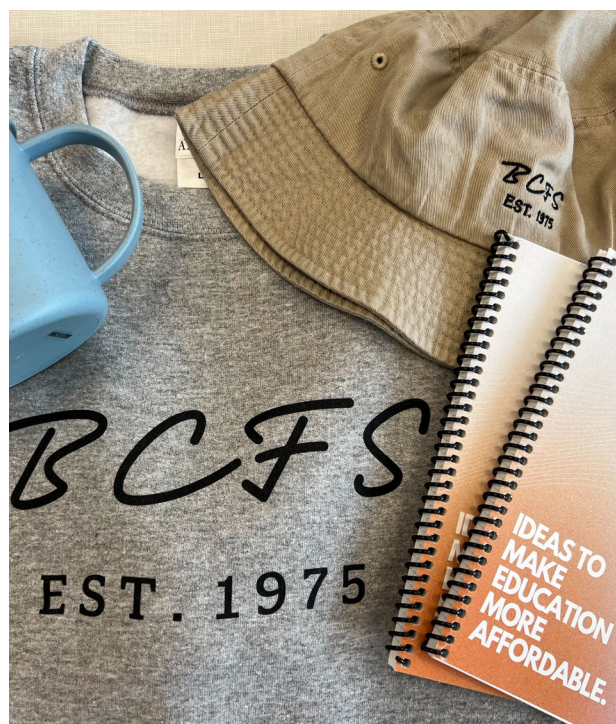
The Federation facilitated two order intakes in the past year: a summer order and a winter order. The store offerings were updated to include a wide range of giveaway materials, including a mix of core items, the most popular items from last summer, a range of items from a wheat straw collection, and requested items such as umbrellas, bucket hats, and mini water bottles.

Thirteen member locals and the Federation participated in the summer bulk purchase, collectively ordering more than 90,000 items, while ten member locals and the Federation participated in the winter order, ordering more than 24,000 items. As usual, the most popular items included pens, pencils, highlighters, water bottles and lanyards, and reflect items that best serve members during their day-to-day studies.

## 2023-24 ORDERS

This year, the Federation's Shopify store opened earlier, from May 1 to May 19. This change ensures that all materials will arrive on campuses by mid-August, which will allow member locals additional time to prepare materials ahead of welcoming students back to campus and provide materials during orientation events. Eleven member locals and the Federation have placed orders, and more than 61,000 items have been ordered. Most orders are in the proofing and production stages, and items are expected to arrive on time.

The Federation also worked with Fairware to develop better processes to communicate imprinting fees and to provide additional support to convert supplied artwork into the proper format to improve the experience of member locals using the service.



## ONLINE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

The Federation's suite of digital services primarily focuses on the coordination and centralisation of purchasing/hosting online services such as websites, emails, voting and design software, and campus apps on behalf of participating member locals. As with all of the Federation's co-operative services, the goal of offering digital services is to provide access to high-quality services as cost-effectively as possible. In addition to a discounted rate, this service particularly benefits those locals that don't have credit cards, as that is the only way to pay for these services directly.

The centralisation of these services allows member locals to access their account administrative panels individually, while enabling the Federation staff to assist in resourcing and with technical support.

## CAMPUS MOBILE APPLICATIONS

The Federation coordinates a master user agreement with Ready Education for use by member locals and individual members. The application serves as a communications platform between the Federation, member locals, campus groups, and individual members and extends communication of campaigns and services beyond print and social media platforms. Internal Affairs Policy Section O: Ready Education Partnership Service outlines cost-sharing with participating member locals.

In partnership with its Campus Success Consultant, the Federation hosted triannual ideas-sharing sessions for participating member locals to engage with one another on best practises for using the app to engage members and facilitate a digital community space for members.

The Federation is in the process of renewing its two-year master user agreement with Ready Education, with the new terms beginning August 1, 2023 and expiring July 31, 2025. The renewed agreement includes licenses for Locals 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 17, 20, and 21. The new contract also outlines the process and fee to add participants mid-way through the contract should other member locals wish to set up an app. Ready Education has been directed to release the inactive applications from any Local not listed above.

## ONLINE HOSTING AND SOFTWARE PURCHASING SERVICES

The Federation provides Locals with access to the following digital services:

**Adobe Creative Cloud Licences:** The Federation centrally purchases Adobe Creative Cloud license subscriptions for participating member locals. The centralisation of purchasing enables member locals to benefit from significant savings and ensures that locals use the appropriate license for business use. These licenses are purchased and retired at the request of participating member locals.

### Domain Registration and Network Settings

For a website to be hosted, the domain needs to be registered, and the domain network systems (DNS) settings must be hosted. The domains of 10 member locals and the Federation are hosted with Hover through the Federation.

### ElectionBuddy Partnership

ElectionBuddy is used by unions, political parties, and institutions across North America. The company offers two services: election/referendum email voting and "LiveVote", a platform for voting at meetings like the Federation's annual general meetings. They also offer a variety

of customer support packages for member locals who would like to use their services for a fully externally-administrated vote. Recognising that many member locals conduct elections online, the Federation negotiated a 20% discount for all member locals who work with ElectionBuddy. To date 11 member locals have conducted elections through this partnership.

### **Email Hosting**

The Federation currently works with Rackspace to coordinate email hosting for member locals but has identified Microsoft Outlook as a better fit for meeting the needs of member locals. Not only can Microsoft Outlook be provided at no cost for not-for-profit organisations, but it also serves as a powerful email service and offers file storage and productivity and scheduling tools for member locals. The Federation has supported several member locals with migrating their emails to Microsoft and will be supporting any remaining Locals still using Rackspace to Microsoft in the near future.

### **Web Hosting**

The Federation works with Rackspace Cloudsites Web to provide stable, independent cloud-based website hosting that allows member locals to host WordPress, Drupal, or PHP websites that are fully customisable. Currently, the websites of 11 member locals and the Federation are being collectively hosted through this service. Member locals utilising this service also can create sub-domains for clubs and other local initiatives.

## **INSURANCE SERVICES**

### **BC STUDENT HEALTH CONSORTIUM (BCSHC)**

The Federation coordinates a buying consortium for health and dental insurance, along with connected products, with the primary purpose of using the collective expertise and combined purchasing power of participating member locals to secure lower rates and better coverage for individual members. Working with GreenShield, a Canadian not-for-profit insurance carrier, the Federation works collectively to move the industry in a positive direction while providing eligible members access to benefits tailored to students' needs at the best value.

Together with the assistance of the BCSHC's broker, Prosum Health Benefits, the Federation assists member locals in reviewing their plan renewal to ensure member locals have an in-depth understanding of industry trends, new products available, and members' needs as informed by their claim patterns. Renewals are completed annually with the goal of member locals securing the best possible services and rates for their members in a profit-driven industry. The Federation also assists Consortium members in seeking strategic partnerships and expanding benefit access, supporting member locals and health plan administrators with the day-to-day operations of the health and dental plans and updating communications to members as required.

The Federation and Consortium members use the services of J&D Benefits as their third-party data administrator (TPA). J&D Benefits was onboarded in the 2020-21 year and continues to manage the following: the enrollment data, billing, the hosting of the member portals, which contain information about a member's coverage and the opt-out sites, which includes a function allowing students to add one or more dependents and to process the dependent fees.

### **Consortium Membership**

The Consortium is composed of Locals 1, 2, 4, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 21. Within the Consortium, Locals 2, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 21 comprise the "Block Plan" to pool their revenue and claims to create plan and rate stability for members.



## **Plan Improvements**

In April 2023, the provincial government made prescription contraceptives free for BC residents. In partnerships with Prosum, the Federation has worked with Consortium members to maintain access to contraceptives for members who do not have access to provincial health plans and increase mental health coverage available through member locals' health and dental plans in lieu of the expected plan savings.

Last year, the accidental death and dismemberment benefit, provided by Wawanesa Insurance, was upgraded to a full life insurance policy. Over the last year, the upgraded benefit has allowed member locals to provide more coverage for members and fill existing gaps in coverage.

## **International Student Coverage Alternative**

The Federation continues to explore ways to improve the lives of students through insurance offerings, including working with Prosum to develop an interim primary care plan for international students who are required to have this coverage before they become eligible for MSP. Commonly, this coverage is provided by institutions through GuardMe and duplicates several benefits provided by member locals' extended health and dental benefits plan.

The newly developed plan complements the coverage provided through member locals' plans by removing duplications and removing predatory drug, alcohol and self-harm exclusions, which are common in existing international student coverage plans – all at a lower rate without extremely high commissions that other companies currently charge. Member locals or institution administrators can administer this plan; the Federation is available to work with interested member locals who would like to learn more about this plan and further efforts to provide higher quality, lower cost coverage to international students.

## **Consolidation of Health & Dental Providers in Canada**

Over the last few years, the Federation has observed concerning ownership trends amongst Canadian health and dental brokers which provide insurance to students' unions. Brokers charge a variable commission to act as the middle person between the students' union and the insurance company while advising students' unions how much their members must pay to access the health and dental plan.

Throughout 2019 and 2020, Gallivan, We Speak Student and Studentcare – brokers used by numerous Canadian students' unions – were acquired by People Corporation and are now wholly owned by the for-profit company. The Federation's concerns were furthered in early 2021 when People Corporation was acquired by Goldman Sachs, one of the world's largest publicly traded banking conglomerates. People Corporation has described the student market as "highly attractive", and has identified Canadian student benefit plans as a large revenue-generating component for their business and shareholders.

The Federation remains committed to fighting the privatization of student benefits plans through partnering with not-for-profit insurance providers, eliminating opportunities for commissions, ensuring member locals can make informed, fact-based plan decisions, and emphasizing annual rate renewals rather than multi-year rate contracts, with the ultimate goal of offering quality health and dental coverage options to members at lower premiums.

## **STAFF BENEFIT PLAN**

The Federation coordinates a staff benefit plan, now entering its eighth year of operation. Locals 1, 2, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 21 have joined the plan, including Federation staff and full-time elected members of the Executive Committee.

## PROPERTY, CASUALTY, AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

The Federation continues to work to develop a bulk purchase arrangement for various forms of property, casualty, and liability insurance using a BC-based provider called Aon Reed Stenhouse (Aon). 3 member locals and the Federation purchase property, casualty, and liability insurance from Aon in Victoria, with most using the carrier/underwriter Northbridge.

## MEMBER SUPPORT AND WELLNESS SERVICES

### LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICE

The Federation works with Sykes Legal to provide members with free, over-the-phone legal advice on a wide range of topics and substantial discounts on legal referrals. The service is currently offered as an added value option to member locals participating in the BC Student Health Consortium. Still, the service is universally available to all Federation member locals. The service is currently used by 12 member locals. In the 2021-22 academic year, the service was expanded to include the review of simple legal documents up to 6 pages and the provision of a simple legal letter.

The 2022 usage report shows that 89% of callers used the service to access legal information, while 11% also used the legal referral service. Landlord and tenant (22%), civil litigation (21%), family law (19%) and immigration (16%) were the top types of law students requested advice on.

The 2023 usage report shows that 90% of callers used the services to access legal information, 6% of callers used the document review service, 3% used the legal referral service and 1% made use of the simple legal letter service. Like the previous year, landlord and tenant (28%), civil litigation (23%), family law (15%) and immigration (13%) received the highest call volume. Overall service usage is up by roughly 15% from the previous year during the same period.

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM

Since 1985, the Federation has held an annual skills-building symposium for member local representatives in BC. The Skills Development Symposium consists of workshops and seminars that provide elected representatives and local staff with the opportunity to acquire, learn about and develop a broad range of skills required to operate a students' union effectively. The Symposium allows participants to exchange information and develop relationships in an informal setting. Fully subsidised by the Federation for one participant from each member local and partially subsidised for the next 11 attendants, the Symposium is highly accessible to member locals.

### 38TH ANNUAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM

The 38th Annual Skills Development Symposium was held at the Loon Lake Lodge Resort in Maple Ridge from May 26 to 28, 2023. The venue provided more common spaces and access to the outdoors than past venues, providing a more casual environment for delegates from across the province to engage with one another and network with their peers. Over 120 participants attended from 12 member local unions, as well as from the Students' Union Society of the University of Fraser Valley and the British Columbia Institute of Technology Students' Association.



Sessions offered at the 38th Annual Skills Development Symposium included: Building Community; Conflict Resolution & Working Collectively; Digital Strategy: Organising Online; Event Planning; Effective Lobbying; Effective Meeting Participation Facilitating Strategic Planning; Facilitating a Good Meeting; History of the Students' Movement; Implementing Campaigns; Media Training; Navigating Government Decision-Making; Speaking to Members; and Writing Effective Motions.

Workshop facilitators included Federation staff and directors, local staff who are experts in the fields in which they presented, as well as external presenters from the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff at UBC, the Amazon Labour Union, and the BC NDP.

Participants had the opportunity to complete evaluation forms to rate and provide comments on each workshop and the Symposium overall. Participant comments will be considered when planning for future symposiums.

## YEAR-ROUND TRAINING

Member locals have identified that because elections are held at various times throughout the year, there is a gap in training and skill-building for new board members and directors who start in the fall or spring semester. To address this, the Federation published the Students' Union Director's Resource Guide in 2020. The guide contains eleven chapters which teach topics like students' union finances, working with staff, negotiating contracts, membership outreach, and media relations. All member locals can request copies of the guide to provide to their representatives, at no cost, further to support their onboarding and learning throughout their terms.

The Federation is nearly finished phase two of this project, which involves the creation of online training modules to help teach the manual's content so that member locals can provide training to their elected representatives and staff any time of year. The Federation engaged Jean Pak, a curriculum and e-learning specialist certified by Thinkific, to help develop learning modules for incoming and returning directors to access any time of year. A total of 9 interactive modules have been created. The Federation has engaged the support of staff from member locals to review and provide feedback on the modules as part of the final editing stage. The modules will be made available to member locals and their representatives upon completion.



# **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The Executive Committee is the Federation's board of directors; members of the Executive Committee are responsible for the Federation's management, similar to a member local's board of directors.

Previously, the Executive Committee was comprised of 21 elected directors: one representative per member local, elected by each member local and six at-large directors – Campaigns Coordinator, Chairperson, Indigenous Students' Representative, Secretary-Treasurer, Services Coordinator and Women Students' Representative – elected at the annual general meeting.

At the 41st Annual General Meeting, held in January 2023, the Federation's membership voted to change the composition of the Executive Committee. As such the Executive Committee is now comprised of 22 elected directors: one representative per member local, elected by each member local and seven at-large directors elected at the annual general meeting – Chairperson, Directors-at-Large (4), Indigenous Caucus Chairperson and Secretary-Treasurer.

The following is a list of changes within the composition of the Committee since the 82nd Semi-Annual General Meeting:

### Campaigns Coordinator

Aashna Thapar	May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023
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### Chairperson

Melissa Chirino	May 1, 2021 to present
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### Director-At-Large

Alyzea Merchant	May 1, 2023 to present
Aashna Thapar	May 1, 2023 to present
Cole Reinbold	May 1, 2023 to present
Mehre Dhir	May 1, 2023 to present

### Indigenous Caucus Chairperson

Quinn Cunningham	May 1, 2022 to January 22, 2023
vacant	January 22, 2023 to April 30, 2023
Douglas Treloar	May 1, 2023 to present

### Representative-Local 1 Members

Olivia Cundiff	December 3, 2021 to December 2, 2022
Maxine Cristobal	December 2, 2022 to present

### Representative-Local 2 Members

Ava Ghaffari	May 24, 2022 to December 2, 2022
Gagan Singh	December 2, 2022 to present

### Representative-Local 4 Members

Jasvir Singh	May 24, 2022 to present
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### **Representative-Local 5 Members**

Azul Sky Billy	June 10, 2022 to June 9, 2023
Anel Jazybayeva	June 9, 2023 to present

### **Representative-Local 6 Members**

Mehre Dlir	May 24, 2022 to May 1, 2023
vacant	May 1, 2023 to June 6, 2023
Ava Ferenc	June 6, 2023 to present

### **Representative-Local 10 Members**

Ishika Tripathi	September 24, 2021 to present
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### **Representative-Local 12 Members**

Cade Desjarlais	May 24, 2022 to June 6, 2023
Lakshay Karnwal	June 6, 2023 to present

### **Representative-Local 13 Members**

Cole Reinbold	June 10, 2022 to May 1, 2023
vacant	May 1, 2023 to June 6, 2023
Sarah Mei Lyana	June 6, 2023 to present

### **Representative-Local 14 Members**

Jaahljuu	December 6, 2020 to December 2, 2022
Lilian Trimmer	December 2, 2022 to present

### **Representative-Local 15 Members**

Alex McColm	May 24, 2022 to June 6, 2023
Michel Hernandez Granandos	June 6, 2023 to present

### **Representative-Local 16 Members**

Dilara Örs	December 3, 2021 to December 2, 2022
Airan Sahagun	December 2, 2022 to present

### **Representative-Local 17 Members**

Jessie Niikoi	May 24, 2022 to May 1, 2023
vacant	May 1, 2023 to June 6, 2023
Jagjeet Singh	June 6, 2023 to present

### **Representative-Local 20 Members**

Saad Ahmed	May 24, 2022 to June 6, 2023
Rosarydasan Rozanna Devamalar	June 6, 2023 to present

### **Representative-Local 21 Members**

Lief Garrett	December 3, 2021 to present
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## Representative-Local 22 Members

Isobel Casey	December 3, 2021 to September 23, 2022
Syrine Gamra	September 23, 2022 to present

## Secretary-Treasurer

Tashia Kootenayoo	May 1, 2022 to January 3, 2023
vacant	January 3, 2023 to January 22, 2023
Quinn Cunningham	January 22, 2023 to April 30, 2023
Jessie Niikoi	May 1, 2023 to present

## Services Coordinator

Jennifer Gullins	May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2023
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## Women Students' Representative

Puneet Kaur	May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023
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# MEETINGS

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee met on the following dates:

- September 23 to 25, 2022
- December 2 to 4, 2022
- January 19, 2023
- March 17 to 19, 2023
- June 9 to 11, 2023
- July 6, 2023

## 82ND SEMI-ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 82nd Semi-Annual General Meeting was held from Thursday, July 14, 2022, to Sunday, July 17, 2022. 83 delegates were present from 13 member locals.

The Federation received a letter of greetings from the Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia. The Federation also received video greetings from Jagmeet Singh, Leader of Canada's NDP. At the meeting, the Federation welcomed and received remarks from the Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Andrew Mercier, Parliamentary Secretary for Skills Training, and @Frogan, a Public Health Expert, Researcher and Advocate.

## The following sessions were held at the meeting:

**Amazon: Ongoing Unionisation Efforts** – a session that reviewed the grassroots organising tactics used by Amazon workers in New York, specifically what lessons labour and the student movement can learn from the ground-breaking union certification drive. (Federation Staff)

**NaloxHome** – an overview of the work NaloxHome does to provide students and communities with de-stigmatizing education on the signs of an overdose, ending the stigma around substance abuse, using naloxone and keeping communities safe. (Chloe Goodison, NaloxHome Founder, Alex Hinrichs and Kaden Anderson-Hancock, NaloxHome Youth Educators)

**Panel: Grassroots Organising** – a panel providing an overview of grassroots organising efforts by local organisers in BC, with a focus on tactics used to engage community members and to create change. (Doris Mah, Chief of Staff to Member of Parliament Peter Julian for New Westminster-Burnaby, Kane Tse, President of the Health Sciences Association, and Reah Arora, Director of Organising and Campaigns, BC Federation of Labour)

**Panel: Municipal Elections, the Importance of Young Voters** – a panel providing an overview of what municipalities are responsible for and why these issues are important to young voters. (June Liu, Alison Gu and Keefer Pelech – young candidates in BC’s municipal election)

**Public Speaking** – a workshop providing delegates with an introduction to the elements of public speaking as well as tips on expressing themselves clearly and effectively while engaging with members, and in their roles as students’ union representatives. (Local 13 Staff & Federation Staff)

**Reconnecting with our Members Post-Covid** – a workshop assisting member locals in building a framework for reconnecting to their membership and building community on campus ahead of the 2022 academic year. (Local 5 Staff)

**Roe V. Wade: A Closer Look from a Legal Lens** – a brief exploring the implications on reproductive rights of the decision to overturn Roe V. Wade from a legal standpoint, as well as the differences between abortion access and regulations in the United States and Canada. (Julia Riddle, Arvay Finlay LLP)

### **The Federation also received the following proposal for Open Sessions:**

**Addressing Food Insecurity on Campuses** (Local 1, Jennifer Gullins)

## **41ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 41st Annual General Meeting was held from Thursday, January 19, 2023 to Sunday, January 22, 2023. 112 delegates were present from 15 member locals. Observers were also present from the British Columbia Institute of Technology Students’ Association.

The Federation received remarks from the Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills; the Federation also received video greetings from Coralee Oakes, Shadow Minister for Advanced Education. Greetings were also received by Kane Tse, President of the Health Sciences Association.

### **The following sessions were held at the meeting:**

**Engaging Your Audience Through Campaigns** – a workshop that explored ways to make campaigns more engaging through interactive activities and making issues more approachable to members. (Local 13 Staff)

**Immigration: The Next Frontier** – a session that examined the successes and failures of Canada’s immigration system and explored what impact they have on the student movement as well as what student advocacy is needed to push meaningful change forward. (Amanda Aziz, Migrant Workers Centre BC Society)

**Inflation’s Impact on Young People** – a session that looked at the impacts of the rising cost of living and inflation on young people in Canada. (Brent Farrington, National Director of Political Action and Campaigns, Canadian Labour Congress)

**Knowledge Library** – a drop-in session to provide delegates the opportunity to ask students’ union staff from across the province about their areas of expertise including, but not limited to international student tuition fees, navigating institutional relations, institutional governance and government relations, and Federation services. (Local Staff and Federation Staff)

**Media Training** – a workshop to support delegates in crafting and sticking to a message box and identifying effective uses of traditional and social media to discuss student issues. (Michael Olson, BC Government, Director in Government Communications)

**Organising Against the Notwithstanding Clause** – a session exploring Doug Ford’s troubling use of the notwithstanding clause and CUPE’s efforts to organise against it as well as potential implications for labour and the student movement. (Federation Staff)

**Redefining Success** – a session exploring what success in the student movement entails, with the aim of empowering delegates to redefine success through community building. (Sacha Médiné, BC Association of Clinical Counsellors)

**Towards an Understanding of Antisemitism** – a session to help delegates understand what antisemitism is, how it has reinvented itself in digital spaces and how delegates can be allies in combating this form of hate speech digitally, in the classroom and in their daily lives. (Alyssa Blank, Public Servant)

The Federation received no open session proposals for the 41st Annual General Meeting.

## STAFFING

Federation staff are unionised with CUPE Local 2396. The current collective agreement is now in effect until 2025. As previously reported, the Federation applied for and received a Canada Summer Job grant from the Federal government to support the hiring of a summer student in 2022. The Federation’s temporary role of Services-Discount Program Coordinator, filled by Dana Kessler, concluded on September 1, 2022.

Additionally, the Federation was authorized to develop a Director-Membership Outreach position at the December Executive Committee meeting. The Federation concluded its hiring for the role and Michael Gauld was the successful candidate. Gauld previously held elected roles at Local 12 and the Federation and worked as staff at Local 6. Gauld started in the role on April 3, 2023.

## STUDENTS’ RIGHT TO ORGANISE

### BACKGROUND

Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights provides people fundamental freedoms, including the Freedom of Association. A provision to have a right to establish, belong or maintain any organisation unless it is illegal. Traditionally we understand this from the labour perspective, as it provides workers with the right to associate with unions to represent their collective interests to employers. It also allows each of us the right to belong to student unions. However, for students’ unions and the Federation to do their work and secure their continued survival, they need to be able to collect fees from members.

While labour unions have the Rand Formula, a feature of Canadian labour law, requiring anyone covered under a union’s collective agreement to pay membership dues; until 1994, no legislation existed in BC that provided for the right of college and institute students’ unions to have their membership dues collected. Before 1994, students’ unions were continually under threat, as institutions could cease to collect their dues solely at the administration’s whim.

Between 1994 and 1999, the Federation fought for a number of amendments to the College and Institute Act and University Act to strengthen the right for students to organise for themselves.

In 1999, the Federation won an amendment to the Acts that required Institutions to give student unions their fees so long as they provide the institution's board of governors with an annual notice that includes:

- the amount of the membership fee to be collected;
- an indication that the financial statements are available to the membership, and
- assurance that the union remains in good standing with the Registrar of Societies.

Provided the students' union fulfills the duties outlined above, an institution's board of governors is obligated to collect and remit the membership fee to the union. However, the Federation has maintained its position that the union is accountable to its members, not to the institution's board of governors. Hence the clauses still permit an institution to undermine the union if it disagrees with its political or advocacy aims.

## THREATS TO STUDENTS' RIGHTS TO ORGANISE

Since the 1990s, the Federation has fought against any attempt to limit students' rights to organise. The largest threat is legislation that would make students' union membership optional on an individual basis. In British Columbia, the BC Liberals have either discussed or attempted to amend legislation in 2002, 2004 and most recently in 2015. These attempts were thwarted by organising of the Federation and member locals. But British Columbia is unique. No other jurisdiction in Canada has protections for student unions. In 2019, Doug Ford's government in Ontario announced the Student Choice Initiative – which introduced opt-in student union membership. This Initiative was overturned after cases at the Ontario Divisional Court and Court of Appeal, but this was undoubtedly a costly endeavour for students in Ontario.

The Federation will continue to stand against attacks on students' rights to organise and will remain vigilant in ensuring attempts get stopped as soon as possible. The Federation has also been working with the Alberta Student's Executive Council to help inform their fights for legislative protection and will continue to work with any democratic student organisation that needs support.

## FINANCES

### 2022-23 BUDGET MANAGEMENT

The Federation's budget serves as a set of revenue and expense projections adopted annually by voting members at each semi-annual general meeting. The Executive Committee manages the Federation's annual spending throughout the year in accordance with these projections.

Adjustments to the 2022-23 fiscal year reflect the efforts to fully resume on campus delivery of Federation campaigns, services and membership development following the pandemic as learning returned to in-person delivery.

Specifically, the Federation's membership approved a deficit budget to allocate the appropriate funds to resume work on campuses as well as acknowledge the previous year's surplus which was a result of less expenditures being incurred than initially anticipated as a result of the ongoing pandemic considerations being made during the 2021-22 fiscal year. For example, prioritizing support to member locals through travel to campuses across the province, providing additional campaigns and membership development materials, and the creation and hiring of the Director-Membership Outreach.



The Federation also prioritised government relations consulting support to adapt its strategy to suit the unforeseen changes to the provincial government composition, in particular as it related to the province's new Premier, cabinet appointments and mandate letters.

## **MEMBERS' EQUITY**

The members' equity currently exceeds \$6 million, which includes the Federation's wholly owned office space (valued at approximately \$1.2 million) and other capital assets. The remainder is composed of cash (approximately \$1.6 million), short-term investments (approximately \$1.4 million), and long-term investments (approximately \$1.9 million).

The Capital Fund, established for purchasing or upgrading property for the Federation's operations, stood at \$300,000 at the commencement of the current fiscal year.

The Disabled Access Fund, established to enhance the accessibility of the Federation for people with accessibility needs, stood at \$311,451 at the commencement of the current fiscal year.

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) Legal Defense Fund, established to assist member locals and the Federation in the event of legal cases against them related to ongoing membership issues, stood at \$100,000 at the commencement of the fiscal year.

## **ANNUAL AUDIT**

The audited 2021-22 financial statements were distributed to, and approved by, members at the 41st Annual General Meeting. Preparations for the audit of the 2022-23 financial statements will begin upon the close of the fiscal year, which is August 31, to conclude the formal audit in October 2023.

## **JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AUDIT**

As previously reported, the Federation engaged Bakau Consulting to perform a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) audit of the organisation. The audit included a survey of respondents involved with the Executive Committee and had a 97.5% response rate. As a result, at the September 2021 Executive Committee meeting, the Executive prioritised a number of initiatives with short, medium, and long-term goals.

One issue identified after the JEDI audit was that, though it provided a helpful window into the equity work to be done, it lacks the context on the unique work the student movement does. With that said, the following initial actions are completed:

- Recreated the harassment grievance committee to ensure that meetings remain safe while upholding the principles of restorative justice;
- Ensured that the Federation confronts the past racism and prejudices of the student movement by teaching our shared history; and
- Invested in considering how the Federation ensures that class and social equity are at the centre of campaign initiatives and government relations.

Since the work of the student movement is so unique, it requires a unique approach to anti-oppression work. The Federation reached out to Sacha Médiné, who provides JEDI support to healthcare workers and social service providers. His approach centres on individuals and he believes that without clear and intentional behavioural changes in all aspects of our spaces, including our participation, JEDI policies and practices will not go far enough.

The Federation has used his expertise in helping develop a framework to find and create more appropriate JEDI supports for the student movement. This ongoing work has highlighted the lack of non-corporate JEDI supports available in the province and country.

The Federation's JEDI work is ongoing and requires all Federation members to continuously unlearn neo-liberal capitalist society norms and learn through a decolonial, anti-capitalist lens while centring on building community and solidarity with one another. The following are short, medium and medium- to long-term goals set by the Federation to further its commitments to ongoing JEDI recommendations.

Short Term Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create yearly anti-oppression training. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre compassion and community building within and outside of meetings when engaging with member locals. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>update:</b> The BC Office has reimagined the internal communications process with member locals to create longer-lasting connections and provide grounded support.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively recruit a diverse range of candidates for leadership positions. <b>(complete)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>update:</b> The Federation created the Candidate Search Committee as a resource for those seeking nomination and to actively seek candidates from diverse cultural, religious, regional, and socioeconomic backgrounds.</p>
Medium Term Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amending the constitution to explicitly spell out the Federation's commitment to social equity in its fight for free education for all. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop awareness of privilege and power and how it manifests in group settings and group decision-making. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop conflict management and unconscious bias training for students. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a clear mandate to highlight and teach the exclusionary history of post-secondary institutions on the bases of race, class, gender, and sexuality within the Federation's history. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>update:</b> The Federation has created an interactive presentation, delivered at its Skills Development Symposium annually, to educate representatives, staff and volunteers on the history of the student movement in order to bring awareness to the exclusionary history of post-secondary institutions, as well as help current advocates learn from the missteps of the past. The next step will be to recreate this presentation to be available through the Federation's soon-to-be launching Skills modules to increase the number of representatives that have access to the content.</p>
Medium- to Long-Term Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing opportunities for more interfaith collaboration to increase religious diversity and inclusion. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore ways to include a diversity of lived experiences to inform all advocacy efforts of the Federation. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an election toolkit for Locals to improve their inclusion efforts. <b>(ongoing)</b></li> </ul>



## An abstract geometric pattern featuring a central vertical white stripe flanked by orange and red curved shapes, with a black semi-circle at the bottom right. The top section consists of a grid of squares in orange, red, and black, with a white square in the center. The bottom section features a large red curved shape, a black semi-circle, and a white semi-circle. The overall design is composed of various geometric shapes and colors, including orange, red, black, and white.

# APPENDIX I: MEDIA

## EARNED MEDIA

The following list outlines the media earned during the reporting period.

DATE	OUTLET	SUBJECT
2022/07/21	Richmond News	AccessBC Free Contraception
2022/07/21	Vernon Matters	AccessBC Free Contraception
2022/07/22	Business in Vancouver	AccessBC Free Contraception
2022/07/28	CBC Radio Kelowna	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/08	City News	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/09	CBC News	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/09	CBC Radio Vancouver	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/09	FairChildTV	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/10	CBC Radio Kamloops	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/10	Nexus*	AccessBC Free Contraception
2022/08/11	Ubyyssey*	AccessBC Free Contraception
2022/08/20	Kelowna Capital News	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/20	The Abbotsford News	Affordable Housing for Students
2022/08/24	CKNW AM-980 Talk Radio	Student Debt Forgiveness
2022/08/27	The Runner*	AccessBC Free Contraception
2022/09/05	CBC Radio	Return to Campus
2022/09/08	Toronto Storeys	Housing
2022/09/09	CKNW AM-980 Talk Radio	Education Affordability
2022/09/11	CBC News	International Students and Housing
2022/09/11	Radio-Canada	International Students and Housing
2022/09/11	CBC News	Fairness for International Students
2022/09/16	Vancouver Sun	Education Affordability
2022/09/23	Vancouver Sun	Affordability and Cost of Education
2022/10/11	Burnaby Now	International Student Work Cap
2022/11/02	Nexus*	International Student Work Cap
2022/11/08	The Runner*	Student Mental Health
2022/11/11	Ubyyssey*	International Student Work Cap
2022/11/15	The Peak*	Provincial Fall Lobby Days
2022/11/30	Nexus*	Elimination of Student Loan Interest



## EARNED MEDIA (CONTINUED)

DATE	OUTLET	SUBJECT
2023/01/12	BCITNews	Emily Carr University International Tuition
2023/01/03	CityNews	BC Budget
2023/03/15	CTVNews	Rising Tuition Fees
2023/05/02	BC Government	Future Ready Announcement Press Release

\* denotes student media

## NEWS RELEASES AND MEDIA ADVISORIES

The following list describes news releases issued during the reporting period.

DATE	TITLE
2022/07/26	BC students support calls for free contraception
2022/09/06	Back to school brings excitement... along with more student loan debt
2022/10/07	Students applaud Federal Government decision to allow international students to work without limitations
2022/11/03	Students celebrate the Federal Government knocking out interest on student loans
2023/02/07	Throne Speech leaves students hopeful for Budget 2023
2023/02/28	Budget 2023: more investments in post-secondary funding needed
2023/03/28	Students see an \$814 million investment from the Federal Government

## PRESS REVIEW

The following media was earned by member locals during the reporting period.

DATE	OUTLET	SUBJECT	LOCAL
2022/06/17	IndigiNews	Indigenous Peoples Day	16
2022/07/06	Nexus*	College Changing Fee Deadlines	17
2022/07/26	Nexus*	College Changing Fee Deadlines	17
2022/07/28	TriCity News	Pride	6
2022/09/21	Nexus*	Reconciliation	17
2022/09/25	My Cariboo Now	Free Menstrual Products	4
2022/09/28	Student Pulse News*	National Day for Truth & Reconciliation	13
2022/09/28	CBC Radio	Municipal Elections	12
2022/10/03	Global News	Transit Strike	12
2022/10/05	Comox Valley Record	Municipal Elections	15
2022/10/05	Nexus*	Municipal Elections	17
2022/10/09	Comox Valley Record	Free Menstrual Products	4
2022/10/19	Nexus*	Importance of Student Elections	17
2022/10/24	CBC News	Diwali Celebrations	4

## PRESS REVIEW (CONTINUED)

DATE	OUTLET	SUBJECT	LOCAL
2022/10/29	Nanaimo News Bulletin	Halloween Witches Paddle Event	13
2022/11/02	Castanet	Students Protest College Leadership	1
2022/11/02	Global News	Student Walkout	1
2022/11/02	iHeartRadio	Student Walkout	1
2022/11/02	Vernon Morning Star	Student Walkout	1
2022/11/16	Nexus*	Fall Student Elections	17
2022/11/16	Nexus*	Student Stressors	17
2022/11/29	CBC	Local Transit Issues	12
2022/11/30	Nexus*	Federal Interest on Student Loans	17
2022/12/01	DH News	International Tuition Increases	10
2022/12/01	CityNews	International Tuition Increases	10
2022/12/06	Pie News	International Tuition Increases	10
2022/12/08	SA Observer	Polytechnique Massacre	1
2023/01/06	CTV News	Student Housing	15
2023/01/25	Infonews.ca	Cyberattack at College	1
2023/01/26	KTW	Chinese New Year	5
2023/01/26	The Discourse	Financial Accessibility	13
2023/02/04	Castanet	Campus Parking	12
2023/03/02	Revelstoke Review	Protest at City Hall	12
2023/03/10	Vancouver Island Daily	New Pre-Health Program	15
2023/04/06	Nexus*	Spring Student Elections	17
2023/05/03	Nexus*	Referendum Passes	17
2023/03/21	Kamloops This Week	Reek Rock 17 Movie Screening	5
2023/04/03	CTVNews	International Tuition Fees	17
2023/04/03	Global	Coffee with a Cop	12
2023/04/12	iHeart Radio	BSN Consolidation	12
2023/04/06	Nexus*	Student Elections	17
2023/04/14	Castanet	BSN Consolidation	1
2023/04/19	Comox Valley Record	Free Menstrual Products	15
2023/04/25	CFJC Today	Active Transportation	5
2023/05/19	NIC News	Local and College MOU	15

\* denotes student media

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## **APPENDIX II: MEETINGS**

# APPENDIX II: MEETINGS

## MEETING: 2022 FALL ADVOCACY WEEK

**Date:** October 26-27, 2022

**Topics Discussed:** Regulation of international student tuition fees, institutional funding and fees, and student financial assistance

### **Federation representatives met with the following Members of Legislature:**

- Pam Alexis (BC NDP, Abbotsford-Mission)
- Brittny Anderson (BC NDP, Nelson-Creston)
- Brenda Bailey, (BC NDP, Vancouver-False Creek)
- Harry Bains (Minister of Labour, BC NDP, Surrey-Newton)
- Bruce Banman (Critic for Citizens' Services, BC Liberal Party, Abbotsford South)
- Lisa Beare (Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sports, BC NDP, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)
- Garry Begg (BC NDP, Surrey-Guildford)
- Shirley Bond (Critic for Health, Critic for Senior Services and Long-Term Care, BC Liberal Party, Prince George-Valemount)
- Jagrup Brar (BC NDP, Surrey-Fleetwood)
- Spencer Chandra Herbert (Deputy Speaker, BC NDP, Vancouver-West End)
- Susie Chant (BC NDP, North Vancouver-Seymour)
- George Chow (Minister of State for Trade, BC NDP, Vancouver-Fraserview)
- Dan Davies (Critic for Social Development and Poverty Reduction, BC Liberal Party, Peace River North)
- Bob D'Eith (BC NDP, Maple Ridge-Mission)
- Mable Elmore (BC NDP, Vancouver-Kensington)
- Rick Glumac (BC NDP, Port Moody-Coquitlam)
- Kelly Greene (BC NDP, Richmond-Steveston)
- Trevor Halford (Critic for Mental Health and Addictions, Critic for TransLink, BC Liberal Party, Surrey-White Rock)
- George Heyman (Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and Minister responsible for TransLink, BC NDP, Vancouver-Fairview)
- Ravi Kahlon (Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, BC NDP, Delta North)
- Anne Kang (Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training, BC NDP, Burnaby-Deer Lake)
- Michael Lee (Critic for Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, BC Liberal Party, Vancouver-Langara)
- Ronna-Rae Leonard (BC NDP, Courtenay-Comox)
- Norm Letnick (BC Liberal Party, Kelowna-Lake Country)

- Grace Lore (BC NDP, Victoria-Beacon Hill)
- Andrew Mercier (Parliamentary Secretary for Skills Training, BC NDP, Langley)
- Renee Merrifield (Critic for Environment and Climate Change, BC Liberal Party, Kelowna-Mission)
- Coralee Oakes (Critic for Advanced Education and Skills Training, BC Liberal Party, Cariboo North)
- Kelli Paddon (BC NDP, Chilliwack-Kent)
- Lana Popham (Minister of Agriculture and Food, BC NDP, Saanich South)
- Bruce Ralston (Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, Surrey-Whalley)
- Jennifer Rice (BC NDP, North Coast)
- Doug Routley (BC NDP, Nanaimo-North Cowichan)
- Niki Sharma (Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits, BC NDP, Vancouver-Hastings)
- Nicholas Simons (Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, BC NDP, Powell River-Sunshine Coast)
- Jinny Sims (BC NDP, Surrey-Panorama)
- Aman Singh (BC NDP, Richmond-Queensborough)
- Rachna Singh (Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, BC NDP, Surrey-Green Timbers)
- Mike Starchuk (BC NDP, Surrey-Cloverdale)
- Ben Stewart (Critic for Transportation and Infrastructure, BC Liberal Party, Kelowna West)
- Elenore Sturko (Critic for Education, BC Liberal Party, Surrey South)
- Adam Walker (Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy, BC NDP, Parksville-Qualicum)
- Jennifer Whiteside (Minister of Education & Childcare, BC NDP, New Westminster)

## MEETING: 2022 BCITSA FEDERAL LOBBY WEEK

**Date:** December 14-18, 2022

**Topics Discussed:** Canada Student Grant program and immigration

### **Federation representatives met with the following Members of Parliament:**

- John Aldag (Liberal, Cloverdale-Langley City)
- Sukh Dhaliwal (Liberal, Surrey-Newton)
- Ed Fast (Conservative, Abbotsford)
- Ken Hardie (Liberal, Fleetwood-Port Kells)
- Irek Kusmierczyk (Liberal, Windsor-Tecumseh)
- Elizabeth May (Green Party, Saanich-Gulf Islands)
- Ryan Turnball (Liberal, Whitby)

### **Federation representatives met with the following Senators:**

- Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson (Northwest Territories)
- Senator Mobina Jaffer (British Columbia)





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# **APPENDIX III: MINISTER'S MANDATE LETTER**



December 7, 2022

Honourable Selina Robinson  
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Robinson:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

.../2

- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

Building a strong, secure, and sustainable economy that works for everyone means ensuring British Columbians have the inclusive, accessible, and future-focused post-secondary, skills, and trades training system they will need to succeed. Whether at a college, university, or any of the apprenticeship programs across B.C., our government needs to ensure everyone has a chance to upgrade their skills and learning to provide opportunities for good-paying jobs that support communities, families, and economic resiliency.

We will not succeed by leaving people behind. Ensuring newcomers to British Columbia can put their training and abilities to work as quickly as possible is essential. Too often, artificial barriers to working in their fields limit new immigrants from contributing right away to help build our province to the full extent of their abilities. Responding to this challenge will make people feel welcome in their new home province, build our economy, and attract more skilled workers from around the world to help create a strong future for all British Columbians.

Ensuring that international students have a positive experience in British Columbia is important. Whether they choose to stay here and build a new life or return home to put the skills they have learned here to work in their home community, the experiences of international students will inform their view of and relationship with British Columbia and Canada for their entire lives. Fair treatment and rapid response to issues and challenges are key to ensuring positive experiences and will help us build our international reputation and continue development of economic, cultural, and personal links with countries around the world.

Indigenous education opportunities across the system need to be promoted and enhanced. Offering culturally responsive and safe environments for Indigenous learners, regardless of their area of study, will help make our province stronger by building diversity across our professions, businesses, and governments, and will support Indigenous students in enhancing the resilience and success of their home communities and our entire province.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Supporting students to succeed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, including new supports for mental health.
- Providing more student housing, with nearly 8,000 new units open or underway across the province.
- Expanding training opportunities for early childhood educators, health care workers and other in-demand jobs.

As you continue to make progress on items in the previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Recognizing the global trend of labour shortages, deliver StrongerBC's Future Ready Skills plan with clear actions to continue expanding access to affordable, accessible, and relevant training so British Columbians have the skills they need for the jobs of the future.
- Continue to advance work to launch B.C.'s second medical school in Surrey.
- Meet or exceed the Homes for B.C. Plan target of 8,000 new student housing units to build even more homes to support students and take pressure off local rental markets, and explore innovative agreements to develop and build more student rental housing.
- Explore the expansion of the Single Parent Employment Initiative.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Labour, help more people to choose jobs in the trades, including by continuing the implementation of Skilled Trades Certification and building on its success through considering other trades that could be included.



- To reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education, continue work to expand the BC Access Grant by increasing eligibility to ensure that people can access the skills they need for the jobs of the future.
- With support from the Minister of State for Workforce Development, lead work to recruit and retain people to build a skilled and flexible workforce in B.C.'s changing economy, and support career paths for skilled immigrants and services that give immigrants and refugees a strong start.
- With support from the Minister of State for Workforce Development, strengthen resources for the evaluation of skilled immigrants' credentials, including the Credential Assessment Improvement Fund.
- With support from the Minister of State for Workforce Development, take steps to ensure our government is able to respond quickly if private institutions promote or offer sub-standard education to international students, and develop protections for international students that support their fair treatment across the sector.
- Advance work on a Traditional Chinese Medicine degree program for our province.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC  
Premier