

# **STOP THE CUTS**

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# **FUND IT. FIX IT.**

BC Federation of Students

**Joined by:**  
Alliance of BC Students  
BCIT Student Association  
Simon Fraser Student Society  
University of Victoria Students' Society



**BUILDING RESILIENCY: STABILIZING BC'S  
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM**

# STUDENTS WORKING TOGETHER

The British Columbia Federation of Students represents over 170,000 college and university students from across all regions of the province. The Federation represents full- and part-time students at the college, undergraduate, and graduate levels. Together these students advocate for a well-funded system of post-secondary education in BC that is affordable and accessible for all students.

## **The Federation's membership is comprised of:**

Camosun College Student Society  
Coast Mountain Students' Union  
College of New Caledonia Students' Union  
Douglas Students' Union  
Emily Carr Students' Union  
Justice Institute Students' Union  
North Island Students' Union  
Northern British Columbia Graduate Students' Society  
Okanagan College Students' Union  
Selkirk College Students' Union  
Students' Union Okanagan of the University of British Columbia  
Students' Union of Vancouver Community College  
Thompson Rivers University Students' Union  
Vancouver Island University Students' Union

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Simon Fraser Student Society  
University of Victoria Students' Society

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207-245 East Columbia Street  
New Westminster, BC V3L 3W4  
(604) 733-1880  
wearebcstudents.ca

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## Strengthen the Tuition Limit Policy

Strengthen the enforcement of the Tuition Limit Policy to maintain the 2% cap on domestic fee increases, and ensure that institutions do not increase fees beyond the prescribed limits in the form of new ancillary fees, or realigning existing ancillary fees.

## Implement a New Funding Model for Public Post-Secondary Institutions

Complete the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review and implement a new funding model that provides long-term financial stability for institutions, accounts for inflation and does not rely on student fees as the primary source of revenue.

## Restore provincial funding

Restore provincial funding to BC's public institutions to not less than 75% of institutional budgets.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

British Columbia's public post-secondary education system, once a cornerstone of economic growth, social mobility, and regional development, is now in crisis due to decades of chronic underfunding. Provincial contributions to institutional budgets have dropped from 68% in 2000 to just 40% today, forcing institutions to rely on international student tuition as a primary revenue source. This funding model has been proven unstable in the wake of COVID-19 and the federal government's 2024 cap on study permits. As a result, institutions across BC are grappling with layoffs, program closures, and growing deficits. These cuts not only undermine student success and delay graduations but also jeopardise local economies, particularly in rural communities where post-secondary institutions are major employers.

Our findings show that the current funding model is unsustainable and out of alignment with BC's workforce and equity goals. We recommend three core actions: (1) strengthen enforcement of the Tuition Limit Policy to protect affordability for students; (2) complete the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review and adopt a funding model that ensures long-term stability, accounts for inflation, and reduces dependency on student fees; and (3) restore provincial funding to cover no less than 75% of institutional operating budgets. Without immediate action, the province will continue to lose capacity to train its future workforce, deepen regional inequality, and risk the collapse of a once world-class post-secondary system. Reinvesting now is not just prudent—it's essential for BC's economic future and social well-being.

## INTRODUCTION

British Columbia boasts a world-class public post-secondary education system—one that has long supported economic growth, trained engaged global citizens, and increased the earning potential of individuals and communities across the province, all while serving as an important vehicle for social advancement. However, systemic underfunding now threatens these benefits. Without adequate investment, our post-secondary education system cannot deliver the outcomes that government, industry and communities expect.

With major budget deficits reported across nearly all institutions, we must ask: are we funding post-secondary education at a level that aligns with BC's economic and social goals? How will underfunding impact reconciliation efforts and accessibility of education for marginalized communities and non-traditional learners? When do hiring freezes and layoffs in communities, where post-secondary institutions are major employers, become a threat to local economies? How many programs, classes, and services that students rely on will be cut before we consider it too many? How much more strain can the system endure before government action is taken?

What will it take to answer calls for stable, annual, public funding to be restored to the levels necessary to operate a world-class post-secondary system—and keep the lights on at our institutions?

For years, the BC Federation of Students (BCFS) has raised alarms about the systemic underfunding in the province's post-secondary education system—a system being pushed to its limits and on the brink of collapse—masked only by the reliance on international student tuition fees. Students have repeatedly warned of the precarity of tying institutional funding to volatile tuition revenues and leaving funding vulnerable to fluctuations in enrolment, federal policy changes, and global events. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed this fragility, and the federal government's sweeping changes to Canada's international student programme in 2024 serve as a stark reminder of the consequences of failing to fix a system in crisis by stabilising public funding levels to adequately sustain institutional operations.

Without immediate action, BC risks undermining its own future. The province will struggle to address today's social and economic challenges. Its ability to protect good-paying jobs in rural communities—where institutions serve as economic and social anchors—will decline significantly. Without a well-educated, diverse workforce, BC will fall short on housing goals, resolving healthcare shortages, and closing critical labour gaps.

The time for action is now. We cannot keep burdening students and their families with rising tuition and ancillary fees, nor can we allow post-secondary access to narrow for low- and middle-income learners. BC must reinvest in post-secondary education to secure its future. The post-secondary system has served past generations well, and it can be preserved to ensure future generations share the same opportunities.

# A SHORT HISTORY OF UNDERFUNDING IN BC'S POST-SECONDARY SYSTEM

## A Steady Decline in Public Funding

Historically, the province was the primary source of funding for BC's colleges and universities. In the 1970s and 1980s, public funding made up over 80% of institutional revenue;<sup>1</sup> By 1991, this share of public funding had dropped drastically, and tuition fees made up a far greater portion of general operating revenue.<sup>2</sup> Since the deep cuts of the 1990s, funding for BC's post-secondary sector has not recovered. In 2000, provincial funding made up 68% of operational revenue; today, that figure is just 40%.

The divestment from post-secondary education was later worsened by austerity measures implemented by the BC government after the 2008 financial crisis. Despite commitments to build a world-class post-secondary education system, past BC governments have fallen short of providing the resources needed to realise that vision. Institutions have grappled with persistent underfunding, and have resorted to cost-recovery programmes and tuition fee increases to address annual shortfalls.

## Rising Demand, Flat Funding

Even as institutions were increasingly starved of public funding, participation in post-secondary education grew. Between 1991 and 2019, enrolment rose by 105%.<sup>3</sup> Between 1991 and 2003, full-time equivalent (FTE) spaces increased 38%, and participation rates climbed from 15.4% in 1992 to 21.4% in 2000.<sup>4</sup>

However, this increased demand was not matched by equivalent funding increases. This discrepancy resulted in many challenges on campuses: larger class sizes that undermined learning conditions, overcrowded facilities, insufficient student-support services, and fewer upper-level course offerings—delaying graduation and increasing student debt.<sup>5</sup>

## The End of the Tuition Freeze & the Rise of Internationalisation

The widening gap between demand and public funding spurred two major policy shifts:

1. The end of BC's 10-year tuition freeze (from 1991 to 2001); and
2. A growing reliance on international students as a key revenue stream, and the selling of international education as a vital provincial export.

Between 2001 and 2005—when tuition fees weren't capped—undergraduate domestic tuition rose 92.6% from \$2,527 to \$4,867. Enrolment growth subsequently began to slow. After 2005, the once steady trend of annual increases in student numbers began to falter.<sup>6</sup> The 2009-10 academic year was the last time enrolment in BC increased by more than 4%. In 2012-13 and 2013-14, enrolment growth fell below 1%. From 2014 and 2019, enrolment actually declined,<sup>7</sup> despite the number of 18 to 24-year-olds in the province growing by nearly 5%.<sup>8</sup>

Over the past decade, BC's public institutions have seen eight years of negative enrolment growth. The system has yet to recover to the growth levels seen in 2005-06,<sup>9</sup> even as the school-aged population has continued to rise.

## International Education becomes a Precarious Revenue Strategy

The growth of international education in BC wasn't an organic response to global demand—it was driven by deliberate provincial and federal policy.

In 2011, the government announced a target to increase BC's international student enrolment by 50% (about 40,000 students). When BCFS representatives met with then-Minister of Advanced Education in March 2015, the Minister explicitly stated that institutions selling education

at a profit to international students was designed to be a cornerstone of the funding model for BC's public post-secondary system.

The results were immediate: between 2010 and 2015, international student numbers in BC increased by 44%.<sup>10</sup> By 2022-23, that figure had more than doubled since 2012, with international students representing 22% of all students in the public post-secondary system.<sup>11</sup> Beyond the classroom, this surge in international enrolment also brought substantial economic gains for institutions and the province. In 2010, international education was BC's fourth-largest export (\$2.1 billion); by 2015, it ranked third (\$3.5 billion).<sup>12</sup> In 2021, international education (labelled "education-related travel") was the province's top service export, valued at \$3.8 billion and accounting for 80% of total travel service exports.<sup>13</sup>

To learn more about the unchecked growth of BC's reliance on international students, and its impacts on see the BC Federation of Students' 2023 report *International Education in British Columbia: Keeping the Post-Secondary System Afloat*.

## The Cost of Commodification

While lifting the tuition freeze and commodifying international enrolment may have generated short-term financial gains, these measures created lasting challenges:

### 1. Reduced Accessibility

As education became more expensive, fewer people could afford to attend. The lifting of the freeze in 2001 caused tuition to rise faster than inflation. Since 1972, tuition has risen 1137% for domestic students and 6761% for international students<sup>14</sup>—extraordinary increases for a public good essential to the province's social and economic welfare.

### 2. Reduced System Resiliency

Relying on international tuition—a volatile, funding source influenced by factors beyond provincial and federal control—institutions became exceedingly vulnerable to global market shifts, travel disruptions, and domestic and foreign policy changes. Neither the government, nor institutions developed a long-term stable funding strategy, or a contingency plan to cope with inevitable downturns when external factors reduced the sale of international education.

### 3. Government Divestment Led to a Shift in Institutional Priorities

Cuts in the 1990s and 2000s fundamentally reshaped how institutions operate. Rather than receiving sufficient provincial funding to meet regional labour and community needs, institutions were increasingly forced to respond to market demands outside of Canada. As a result, administrations redirected focus from supporting teaching and core research toward revenue generating activities—placing the educational mission at odds with budget-driven objectives.<sup>15</sup>

## BC Government Acknowledges Funding Issues

In March 2022, the BC government announced a sector-wide review of how it funds operations at its 25 public post-secondary institutions. Aimed at modernizing a funding model that had "not been updated in more than 20 years and that has created constraints for inequities for some public post-secondary institutions," the review was widely celebrated as a crucial first step to ensuring institutions have the resources needed to support economic goals and student success.

The review focused on three objectives: (1) ensuring fair distribution of provincial funding, (2) aligning provincial funding with the needs of British Columbians and local communities, and (3) ensuring access to affordable, high-quality post-secondary education and student supports. It was guided by eight core principles, including advancing reconciliation, establishing transparency in funding provision, improving regional access and funding distribution, and ensuring funding is adaptable, stable and predictable.

Phase one, led by Don Wright, engaged sector stakeholders. Submissions were received from every post-secondary institution; 9 student unions and the BCFS; 7 faculty and staff associations; CUFA BC and FPSE; 3 labour unions; and three special interest groups. Although the government also committed to publishing the engagement findings, it has yet to do so. Phase two, led by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, was intended to develop policy options and design of an updated funding model. This step remains essential to ensuring our institutions have the resources needed to support students and train the province's future workers.

# CRISES HIT A SYSTEM IN DECLINE: HOW COVID AND IRCC POLICY CHANGES EXPOSED A BROKEN FUNDING MODEL

Recent events—first the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently, the 2024 changes to Canada’s study permit policies implemented by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)—have triggered widespread layoffs, programme and student services cuts, and budget crises at institutions across BC. Years of provincial divestment left institutions reliant on international student tuition to offset stagnant public funding. Yet, it is clear this model is no longer viable. Seeking new external revenue instead of restoring stable public funding continues the same cycle—without addressing core problems.

## Students Bear the Brunt of this Instability

When budgets are cut during funding shortfalls, essential student support services and academic programmes are usually the first to go. Students across BC report reduced library and cafeteria hours, long waits for on-campus counselling, discontinued services (like grocery shuttles) and eliminated Indigenous student supports. These cuts not only diminish the quality of education students receive but also add barriers by removing services that support learning, food access, community and mental health.

The less visible but equally damaging are cuts to course offerings, which can delay graduation. One Vancouver Island University (VIU) student said her institution’s shrinking course catalogue forced her into a fifth undergraduate year due to insufficient upper-level course availability.<sup>16</sup> This increases the overall cost of a credential, worsens student debt, and undermines the province’s ability to train workers needed to fill the dire labour shortages we face in healthcare, trades and education.

## Lessons from the Pandemic: A Global Crisis Exposed Systemic Funding Failures

The pandemic offered a stark snapshot of the systemic vulnerabilities created by over-reliance on international tuition revenue, and lack of contingency plans for drops in non-domestic enrolment. Okanagan College lost 25% of its international students during the pandemic—about 380 students<sup>17</sup>—resulting in over \$2.3 million in lost revenue.<sup>18</sup> Comparatively, the loss of 900 domestic students led to a \$2.0 million shortfall.<sup>19</sup> While neither Canada nor BC could control the pandemic, federal and provincial governments must take steps to ensure the post-secondary system can withstand fluctuations in international enrolment.

Further exposing the dangers of depending on international students to sustain institution’s operations, 20 public institutions were approved deficit budgets in 2020-21, and 17 were approved to have another deficit budget in 2021-22.<sup>20</sup> Though institutions adapted to online delivery, variances in international student tuition and ancillary fees still exposed the weakness of the current funding model. The continued dependance on international tuition, alongside other unstable revenue streams, is not a sustainable foundation for maintaining a strong post-secondary education system.

# Systemic Failures Repeating: Study Permit Cap Leads to Layoffs, Deficits, and Program Closures

Over the last year, the financial precarity of BC's post-secondary institutions has once again been sharply exposed. Institutions are confronting mounting financial pressures, with six projected to run deficits in 2024-25 and 17 expected to run deficits by 2025-26.

On Vancouver Island, the University of Victoria (UVIC) is cutting \$13 million from its budget, due to falling international student enrolment.<sup>21</sup> Vancouver Island University (VIU) faces a \$20.2 million deficit, citing a 60% drop in new international graduate students, a 48% decline in incoming international undergraduate students, and a 7% decrease in continuing international students. VIU has frozen hiring, cut its renowned music and jazz programmes (among several others), cut support for ElderCollege, reduced library hours, and cancelled two ongoing projects—a new daycare centre and a student information system modernization project. Colleges on the Island are also struggling. North Island College (NIC) has started laying off faculty and staff, and plans to cancel jewelry, adventure guiding, anthropology and sociology programmes amid a projected 30% drop in international student enrolment<sup>22</sup> and a 5% decline in domestic enrolment. Likewise, Camosun College expects an \$11 million deficit, has begun layoffs and is restructuring its course offerings.<sup>23</sup> It has publicly stated that provincial operating grants are no longer sufficient to sustain operations, highlighting the urgent need to address the systemic underfunding of public post-secondary institutions.

On the mainland, Simon Fraser University (SFU) has cut \$50 million this year, by eliminating more than 80 staff and faculty positions,<sup>24</sup> and closing both the Vancity Office of Community Engagement and SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs. Despite these measures, SFU still expects a \$20 million deficit in 2025-26. Langara College expects consecutive deficits: a \$2 million deficit this year and \$13 million in 2025-26. It has announced layoffs and will cut all Chinese language courses.<sup>25</sup> Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) is projecting a \$49 million decline in international tuition revenue next fiscal year and has announced plans to lay off around 70 faculty.

Institutions in the Interior and Northern BC are also experiencing financial pressures. Okanagan College (OC) saw a 50% drop in new international student enrollment this fall, with further declines expected and an \$8.3 million deficit projected for 2025-26.<sup>26</sup> Eleven part-time term faculty contracts have been cancelled, with as many as 80 full-time positions at risk as well. OC also plans to reduce arts, foundations, business and Adult Basic Education programming.<sup>27</sup> Thompson Rivers University (TRU) expects a \$16.6 million deficit next year and is evaluating further budget cuts after already implementing a hiring freeze resulting in more than 100 vacancies.<sup>28</sup> TRU has seen a 50% drop in undergraduate international enrollment and a 75% drop in post-baccalaureate student enrollment. Selkirk College anticipates a 60-85% loss in international students in the coming years—a \$9 million loss in revenue. It has already begun layoffs and announced plans to suspend multiple business diplomas, its culinary and hospitality management programs, web development and gerontological nursing.<sup>29</sup> The College of New Caledonia (CNC) has also announced cuts to arts and English language programs, after losing \$7 million due to a sharp decline in its international student enrolment.<sup>30</sup>

Together these examples paint a bleak picture. Institutional stability is deeply tied to public investment. Without adequate and reliable provincial funding, institutions are being forced to make decisions that harm students, staff and the long-term interests of communities across BC.

# WE CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO: THE COST OF INACTION IN POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION

## Undermining Economic Anchors: Post-Secondary Cuts are Community Cuts

Post-secondary institutions are more than places of learning—they are vital economic anchors, especially in regional and rural communities. Funding shortfalls that lead to layoffs, programme cuts, or that threaten campus closures, have impacts that extend far beyond campus walls. In many BC communities, colleges and universities are among the largest employers. They provide stable, family-supporting jobs for faculty, staff and service workers. They also attract students who rent apartments, shop locally, and participate in community life. Crucially, these institutions enable young people and non-traditional learners—to pursue higher education without leaving their home communities, ensuring a home-grown workforce ready to meet local employment needs, and easing pressure on already overburdened urban centres.

Thompson Rivers University, for example, contributes over \$885 million annually to Kamloops' economy and supports one in every ten jobs in the region.<sup>31</sup> It also provides essential social value, allowing more students—especially those from rural and Indigenous communities—to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees without leaving the region.

Now imagine the impact of reversing these benefits. Layoffs not only harm staff, but also the wider local economy. Shutting down a programme—or worse an entire campus—reduces opportunities for rural and regional residents while depriving local businesses of prospective skilled workers. In communities where post-secondary institutions serve as economic anchors, funding instability doesn't just threaten the education system; it threatens the community itself.

## A System in Decline: BC's Inability to Train the Workforce of Tomorrow

BC is also failing to maximise its public post-secondary system to meet the province's pressing need for skilled workers. The problem isn't a lack of demand, rather, the system lacks the resources to respond effectively. Despite provincial goals to fill healthcare vacancies, accelerate housing construction, and expand early learning, institutions across the province are being forced to reduce seats, lay off faculty, and cancel or suspend programmes.

The problem is structural. Provincial operating funding has not kept pace with enrolment growth or inflation, leaving institutions without the stable, long-term funding they need to maintain or grow key programmes. Simultaneously, rising tuition adds further strain and places a growing burden on students, who are paying more for fewer course offerings and increasingly strained services. Students attending the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) report sessional instructors with limited experience and the re-use of lab equipment as cost-saving measures—visible signs of the erosion of education quality tied to chronic underfunding.

Without decisive action to restore stable public funding, BC risks losing its capacity to train the next generation of workers—further exacerbating critical labour shortages in healthcare, skilled trades, and beyond.

Today, we have a post-secondary system unable to deliver on workforce development on the scale required. Over the next decade, 76% of the more than 847,200 job openings expected in the province will require some level of post-secondary education or training,<sup>32</sup> yet the funding

needed to rescue an education system in crisis is not being prioritized. Instead of expanding capacity to meet workforce demand, institutions are closing programmes directly tied to sectors experiencing worker shortages.

Nowhere is this contradiction more clear than in the case of Okanagan College's two-year Bachelor of Nursing. The case study below shows how a high-demand programme serving a critical sector was eliminated without warning, leaving students, staff, and the healthcare system scrambling amidst the loss.

## The Okanagan College Nursing Program: A Case Study in Systemic Failure

The 2023 closure of Okanagan College's two-year Bachelor of Nursing programme<sup>33</sup> reveals how administrative decision-making can be disconnected from both student and workforce needs. In 2022, the province announced 602 new nursing seats across BC.<sup>34</sup> The BC Nurses Union applauded the announcement, citing year-long waitlists for nursing programmes and applicant volumes that far exceeded available spots.<sup>35</sup> Yet only one year later, Okanagan College (OC) abruptly shuttered its nursing programme.

Students and faculty were blindsided. There were no plans in place to transfer bursaries or financial aid tied to students' enrollment at OC, nor any support for the higher tuition costs at UBC-Okanagan, where students were expected to finish their studies.<sup>36</sup> Despite a national shortage of nursing educators,<sup>37</sup> no strategy was implemented to retain experienced instructors within BC's public post-secondary system.

Summing up the confusion, the Okanagan College Faculty Association stated *"at a time when the province is recommitted to filling nursing vacancies and guaranteeing nurse to patient ratios coming out of the pandemic it is puzzling why our college would lose this programme."*<sup>38</sup>

This is not an isolated case. There are countless other examples across the province of class and programme closures made with little regard for student needs (small class size, regional location, lower tuition fees, etc.) that also appear to contradict the province's economic needs. Each

short-sighted cut compounds already urgent labour market shortages.

## A Call for Stability & Public Reinvestment

British Columbia's post-secondary system is in crisis—not from a lack of demand or potential but from decades of chronic underfunding and short-sighted policy decisions that prioritise short-term revenue over long-term stability.

The consequences of BC's unstable post-secondary funding model are clear: campuses are losing essential programmes; instructors and staff are being laid off. Students, both domestic and international, are paying more for less, and regions that depend on local colleges and universities are being left behind.

Government divestment has left institutions dangerously dependent on international student tuition—a volatile and unreliable funding source vulnerable to global events and policy changes. The COVID-19 pandemic and the federal government's recent study permit caps have exposed just how fragile our province has allowed its post-secondary system to become.

These impacts are no longer hypothetical warnings; they are unfolding in real time: delayed graduations, fewer student services, economic strain on communities where institutions are major employers, and an education system falling short of meeting BC's urgent labour needs.

The province now faces a choice: continue on this unsustainable path and watch one of our greatest provincial assets deteriorate further or reinvest boldly in post-secondary education. We must move beyond band-aid solutions and rebuild a system that is accessible, resilient, and prepared to train tomorrow's workforce—one that balances the social, economic, and academic benefits to British Columbians with the workforce outcomes our labour market demands.

The cost of inaction is too high. The time to act is *now*.

# BC SUPPORTS AFFORDABLE EDUCATION

In August 2024, Viewpoints Research conducted a survey of 1,000 Canadian residents living in British Columbia. The results show that the majority of British Columbians (81%) think it's important for the provincial government to provide enough funding to the post-secondary education system to support high quality education and adequate student services. The figures below show British Columbian's consistent support for affordable post-secondary education.

91%

*of British Columbians agree that making college and university education more affordable for students in BC is important.*

82%

*of British Columbians oppose increases in domestic tuition fees; moreover, 50% support a reduction from current levels.*

61%

*of British Columbians think government funding should make up a higher portion of university funding.*

55%

*of British Columbians agree the BC government is not doing enough to ensure all those who are qualified have a chance at pursuing college or university education.*

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

**Strengthen the Tuition Limit Policy to maintain the 2% cap on domestic fee increases, ensure that institutions do not increase fees beyond the prescribed limits in the form of new ancillary fees, or realigning existing ancillary fees.**

Decades of insufficient government funding have incentivised institutions to increase tuition and ancillary fees as much as possible—including, in many cases, creating new ancillary fees (effectively tuition fee by another name) to circumvent the Tuition Limit Policy.

Consequently, tuition in BC has more than doubled since 2001, outpacing inflation by every possible measure. Throughout this period, the cost of obtaining an undergraduate degree has increased by over \$15,000 in tuition fees alone.<sup>39,40</sup> As evidenced in 2011, following the deregulation of domestic tuition fees, fee increases have a compounding negative effect on enrolment.

At a time when financial pressures are likely to encourage a short-sighted continued reliance on tuition fees, the Tuition Limit Policy remains critical to ensuring post-secondary education remains within reach for British Columbians looking to skill, reskill and enter the workforce.

2.

**Complete the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review and implement a new funding model that provides long-term financial stability for institutions, accounts for inflation and does not rely on student fees as the primary source of revenue.**

Completing the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review, including implementing a new funding model, will serve two crucial purposes. First, it offers an opportunity to address current challenges: when the government funds the post-secondary system in a stable, sustainable manner that is not tied to fluctuating enrolments and fees, institutions can better adapt to meet BC's shifting workforce needs. An effective funding model will ensure equitable funding, build resiliency against global events and policy changes, and enable institutions to serve rural and Indigenous communities as well as urban areas. The review is now more relevant than ever, as it highlights pre-existing problems compounded by new federal policy developments. This positions the provincial government to advocate for appropriate federal action while also supporting post-secondary advocates to echo BC's calls for support.

Secondly, completing the funding review demonstrates commitment and transparency to stakeholders—including students—who have participated through written and oral submissions. The government should follow through on its pledge to release the What We Heard report and develop a funding model that fairly distributes resources, aligns provincial funding with British Columbians' skills-training needs, and promotes student success by ensuring high-quality, affordable education with key student supports. These are ambitious goals; not ones to shy away from, but to meet head-on by demonstrating provincial leadership, through renewed investment in post-secondary education.

Much has changed since the funding formula was created: colleges have become universities, labour market demands in BC are constantly changing, and the needs of rural and regional communities have shifted as well. It is imperative that our funding model equip institutions to succeed in meeting their educational mandates and in safeguarding our world-class post-secondary system.

# 3.

## **Restore provincial funding to BC's public institutions to not less than 75% of institutional budgets.**

The only way to fix the negative effects of chronic underfunding and decades long divestment is to provide stable, annual provincial funding for institutions to rebuild what has been lost—and what is being cut in real time. Restoring funding to BC's public institutions will ensure our post-secondary education system is resilient, adaptable and world renowned. Investing in BC's post-secondary system will protect the future of young British Columbians, fuel local economies and reduce critical worker shortages in healthcare, trades and early childhood education. It is an investment the public will both support and stand to benefit from.

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