

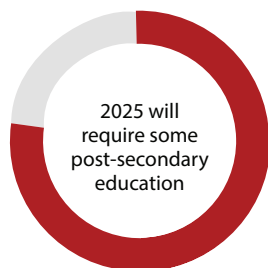
The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Simon Fraser University building, a large, ornate stone structure with a prominent central dome and arched windows. The image is partially obscured by a large, semi-transparent yellow vertical bar on the right side and a dark grey frame that outlines the page's content area.

simon fraser
student society

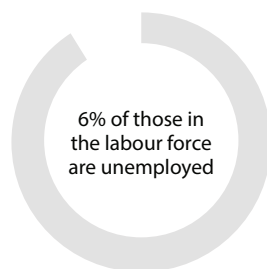
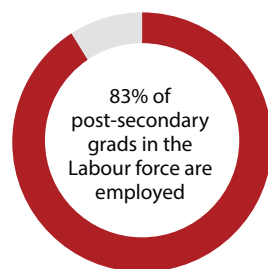
**ADVOCACY
AND
LOBBYING**
2018-19

The Importance of Investment in Advanced Education

- The economic value of investments made into post-secondary education cannot be discounted.
- Retirements and economic growth are predicted to create one million job openings in BC by 2024.
- Investments into education further individual knowledge and skills so graduates can succeed in their chosen occupation.
- Post-secondary education will allow newly-skilled workers to capitalize on the predicted one million open jobs by 2024 and ensures that labour market needs are met to fill these jobs.



More than three quarters of the job openings projected for 2025 will require some post-secondary education, with 36% requiring a bachelor's degree.



83% of post-secondary graduates in the labour force are employed, and only 6% of those in the labour force are unemployed.

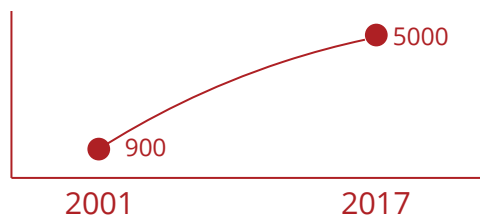
Capping Residence Housing Fees

BACKGROUND

Housing costs in Vancouver are some of the least affordable in Canada, and constitute the major portion of living costs for students. It has been estimated that for students who rent a place (on-campus or off-campus) in Vancouver, housing costs are between 30% and 50% of their annual expenses. As of 2015, 36% of SFU students live away from home. For students living outside of their parents' home, annual costs of living are on average, 50% higher than those that live with their parents. Additionally, international students are more likely to bear higher housing costs than other undergraduate students.



The Number of International Undergraduate Students at SFU



Increasing housing costs could also be one of the main factors contributing to increasing student debts. Many students rely on loans and credit lines to finance their education and living expenses.



According to Statistics Canada, more than half of undergraduate students complete their study with debt, averaging \$26,000 at graduation, compared to an average of \$13,6006 in 2005, which would only amount \$16,744 in 2018 dollars.

RATIONALE

Students that live off-campus and not with relatives are more likely to have incomes below the poverty level. Living in poverty has a physiological impact on the brain that hinders academic success, and also pushes students to enroll part time, live off campus, and work long hours to save money. Rent for a 1-bedroom purpose-built rental unit on SFU Burnaby campus is \$843 per month. On average, rents at SFU and UBC campus are priced 25% below market rate for those areas. Keeping rent prices 25% below the market rate would help ensure greater affordability and thus a lower debt burden on students.

Capping Residence Housing Fees

The province as well as student advocacy groups have argued that the provision of more on-campus residence and affordable housing for students would have the following benefits:

- Helps students to graduate with less debt and complete their studies
- Contributes to freeing off-campus places, easing the existing pressure on the rental market
- Students would live closer to where they study, reducing long distance commutes
- Students working to pay for their education would work fewer hours while they are in school
- Reduces congestion on the overcrowded transit routes that service post-secondary institutions
- Helps build campus culture

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short Term

To define any terms and conditions the government could set on the new student housing initiatives, requiring universities to limit the residence fee below the average market rate.

Long Term

To monitor the residence fee structure on a yearly basis, specifically by considering housing quality and adequacy as evaluation factors.

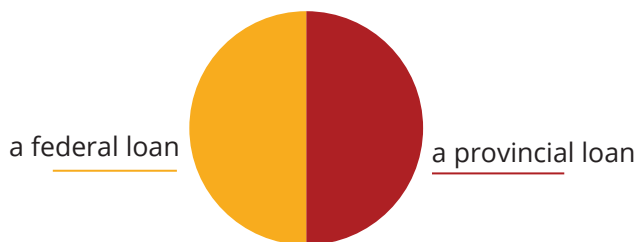


Eliminating Student Loan Interest

BACKGROUND

During the 2017 provincial election campaign period, one of the commitments of the New Democratic Party (NDP) was to eliminate interest on all current and future BC student loans to ensure low and middle income students can access the education they need to succeed. This commitment comes after a cut on student loan interest rates from prime-plus-2.5% to prime in Budget 2017, introduced by the Liberal government. Budget 2018 does not dedicate funds to meeting the goal of zero interest on student loans.

Student Loans in BC



The two portions together form the integrated student loan – which students apply for through a single process, administered by the BC government through StudentAid BC and then subsequently managed by the National Student Loan Service Centre.

Many students rely on loans and credit lines to finance their education and living expenses. According to Statistics Canada, more than half of undergraduate students complete their study with debt, averaging \$26,000 at graduation, compared to an average of \$13,600 in 2005 which would only amount \$16,744 in 2018 dollars.

Additionally, international students pay much higher tuition than other undergraduate students, and annual tuition increases are not capped like they are for domestic students. These students are not eligible for grants or loans from StudentAid BC. The number of international undergraduate students at SFU has increased from less than 900 in 2001, to close to 5,000 in 2017.

amount international students paid in tuition fees

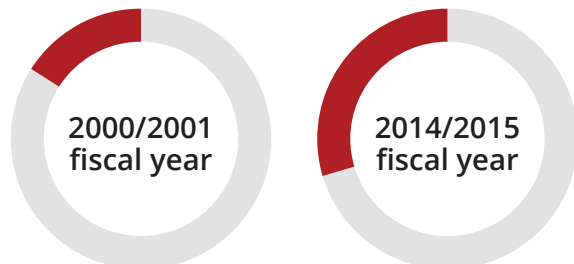
2018/2019:
\$30,328 per year

Eliminating Student Loan Interest

RATIONALE

The cost of education – including tuition, student fees, book and supplies, and living expenses – is rising much faster than inflation and income levels.

The percentage of university revenue supplied by students has gone from 16.5% to 27.1% due to a decrease in provincial funding.



The result is a significant debt burden on students. Eliminating student loan interest not only relieves some of this debt burden for students, but shows the province's commitment to student success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Receive a government commitment by next fiscal year to fulfill the campaign promise of eliminating interest on BC student loans, and have it reflected in Budget 2019.

- Receive mandate from membership approving a lobbying campaign to see the commitment met during the next fiscal year.

- Follow-up with the Cabinet and shadow ministers of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills, and Training and members of the Select Standing Committee on Education, at the fall lobbying trip to Victoria.

RESULT

The Ministry of Advanced Education and the Standing Committee on Education both committed to fulfilling the recommendation of eliminating interest on BC student loans during the Budget Consultation and during Fall Lobbying Week due to an united front of student societies across the province.

Interest charged on a student loan of \$25,000 adds an additional \$7,400 during a 10-year repayment; on a \$40,000 loan adds \$11,900 over the same period.

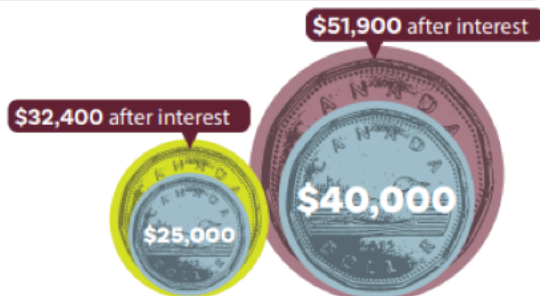


Figure 1: BC student loan interest. Reprinted from Making post-secondary education affordable for British Columbians, pg. 11, by the BCFS, 2018

International Student Tuition Affordability

BACKGROUND

Based on SFU's 2010/2011 Budget, tuition at SFU has risen 34% for international undergraduate students beginning their studies prior to September 2017, and 38% for international students who began their studies in Fall 2017 or later in the past 8 years. Comparatively, inflation has risen 14.37% since 2010.

For students studying Engineering, Computer Science, or Beedie business, these statistics are even higher.



Domestic student tuition increases are capped by the provincial Tuition Limit Policy, while international student fees have no associated provincial funding or regulations and thus fees are set “in the context of the competitive global market”. In 2015, tuition surpassed provincial government funding as the number one source of revenue for SFU, and international student tuition is projected to outpace domestic tuition as SFU's greatest source of revenue (Figure 1).

These funding decreases coupled with an increase in tuition well beyond inflation makes post-secondary education in British Columbia increasingly unattainable for foreign students.

According to Statistics Canada (2016), more than half of undergraduate students complete their study with about \$26,000 debt at graduation. In 2005, this same amount graduated with an average debt amount of \$13,600, which would only amount \$16,744 in 2018 dollars.

This statistic is likely much higher for international undergraduate students due to international students not being able to access Canadian and BC government loans.

International Student Tuition Affordability

This problem, coupled with the fact that international students are more likely to bear high housing costs and spend, on average, 50% of their income on housing, is troubling. Increasing student debts and high housing costs are two of many factors that can affect students' education and quality of life, and more importantly, act as a barrier for them to continue their studies.

RATIONALE

The BC government's "Budget 2019 Consultation Report" reports on value that international students bring to post-secondary institutions and their surrounding communities.

In 2016, it was estimated that international students contributed over \$3.7 billion to the BC economy. In 2011/2012, international student spending added \$75 million in government revenue without raising taxes.

International student enrolment can also benefit domestic students - at North Island College on Vancouver Island, revenues from international students allowed them to enroll an additional 688 domestic students in 2017.

However, both the province and post-secondary institutions are economically vulnerable as international tuition is unregulated with decisions left to each institution, and institutions would lose a major portion of their operating revenue if international student enrollment dropped. When international student enrolment dropped in 2009 due to the global financial crisis, SFU ran an operating deficit.

Credit Tuition Revenue by Type

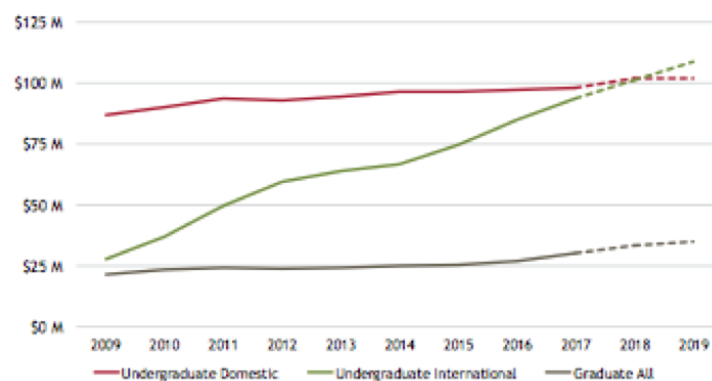


Figure 1: Tuition revenue by type of student. Reprinted from 2018/2019 Budget and Financial Plan, by Blair & Kennedy, April 1, 2018.

International Student Tuition Affordability

Net Operating Accumulated Surplus as a Percentage of Total Consolidated Revenue

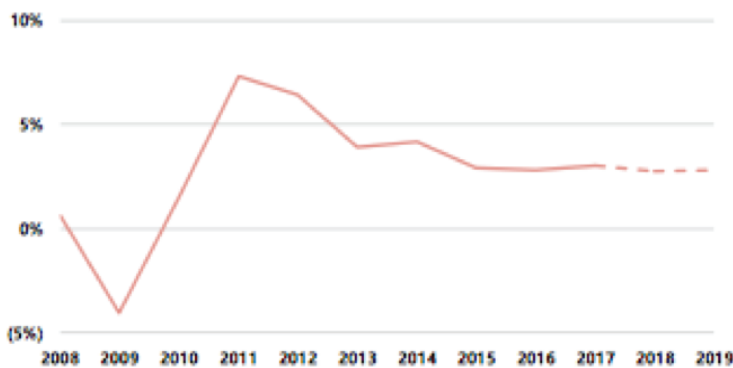


Figure 3: SFU Operating surplus. Reprinted from 2018/2019 Budget and Financial Plan, by Blair & Kennedy, April 1, 2018.

A comprehensive strategy that creates both stability and predictability of international student enrollment and ensures international education will benefit institutions, local communities and the BC economy is necessary. SFU currently provides an undergraduate fee schedule for the duration of a student's degree, allowing for greater predictability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Utilize the 2019 Advocacy Survey to gather SFSS member student feedback on international student tuition.
- Lobby the provincial government conduct a study into the value of international education in BC. Encourage consultation with local communities on the value of international student enrolment.
- Lobby the provincial government to institute a policy mandating post-secondary institutions to have tuition fee transparency (i.e. the provision of information outlining the cost of undergraduate student tuition for each year of a student's degree if completed in the expected time period).

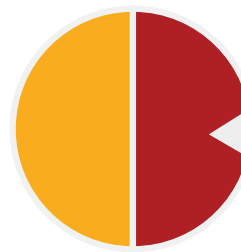
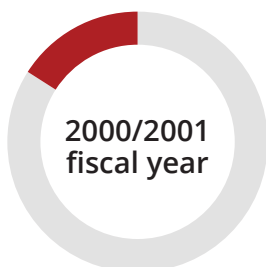
*Note: Data on international students routinely takes three to four times as long to appear in Canada as they do in the US, the UK and Australia.

Needs-Based Grants

BACKGROUND

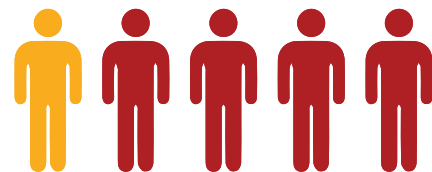
Needs-based grants are grants that provide funds for lower income students to receive post-secondary education, as the up-front cost of education poses a barrier for lower-income students hoping to access a post-secondary education. BC is the only province without a provincial needs-based grants program. The elimination of BC's student grant program in 2004 left a significant gap in BC's post-secondary financial aid programs. The federal needs-based grant only provides a maximum of \$375 per month to students with the highest assessed financial need. The cost of education – including tuition, student fees, book and supplies, and living expenses – is rising much faster than inflation and income levels.

The percentage of university revenue supplied by students has gone from 16.5% to 27.1% due to a decrease in provincial funding.



According to Statistics Canada, more than half of undergraduate students complete their study with debt, averaging \$26,000 at graduation, compared to an average of \$13,6006 in 2005. which would only amount \$16,744 in 2018 dollars.

The result is a significant debt burden on students. The majority of students from middle- and lower-income families need to take out student loans to pay for their education, and these students are more likely to come from marginalized backgrounds. When students who have to take on loans graduate, they often start out in the labour market with huge amounts of debt.



Needs-Based Grants

Children and youth born to immigrant or First Nations families are even more likely to live below the poverty line. Students from marginalized groups are statistically likely to continue to make less money over their lives in comparison to their university-educated peers. This means that due to the interest rates on student loans, a poor and/or otherwise marginalized student will pay more for a longer period of time for their education than those that did not have to take out loans, or took smaller loans, to pay for their education.

RATIONALE

The Government of Ontario made changes to its student financial aid system that made average college and university tuition free for low-income students.



In Ontario, full-time students whose parents make a combined household income of less than \$50,000 per year receive non-repayable needs-based grants that enable them to access post-secondary education. In Ontario, 185,000 full-time students who are low income or middle income holders will receive non-repayable needs-based grants that enable them to access post-secondary education. The Government of Ontario is eliminating barriers to access post-secondary education as a part of its strategy to create jobs and grow its economy.

It is doing this by investing in its people and by offering people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds a real educational opportunity that will improve their economic standing. Meanwhile, BC remains an outlier - the only province without a needs-based grants program where students receive the lowest proportion of non-repayable student assistance in the country. Increased student debt will have deep and long-lasting consequences for British Columbians and the long-term health of our economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The joint BCFS-SFSS recommendation for needs-based grants is to “redirect the proposed \$1,000 post-secondary completion grant towards instituting a comprehensive system of up-front needs-based grants.”

RESULTS

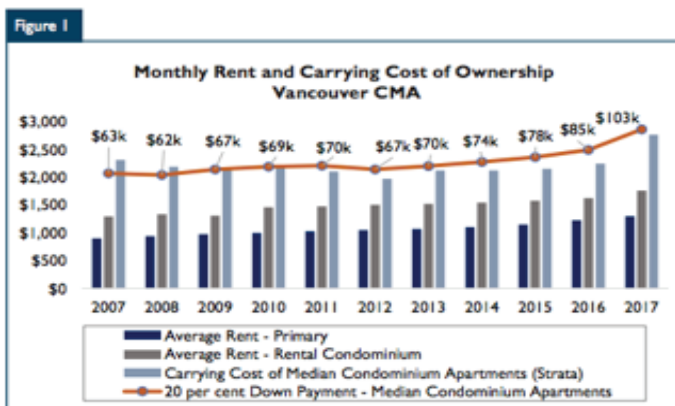
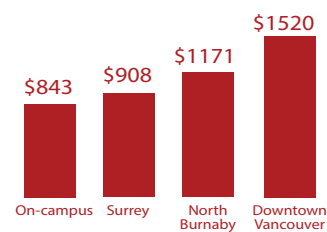
During Fall Lobbying Week and in the “Report on the Budget 2019 Consultation” (the Budget Report), the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services’ affirmed their commitment to “Review and evaluate “completion grant” and “up-front needs-based grant” models with the aim of ensuring post-secondary students have access to the most beneficial and impactful support”.

Off-campus Living Allowance

BACKGROUND

Budget 2018 includes a commitment to building more affordable housing by investing over \$1.6 billion over three years to build and maintain affordable rental housing in British Columbia. Housing costs in Vancouver are some of the least affordable in Canada, and constitute the major portion of living costs for students. It has been estimated that for students who rent a place (on-campus or off-campus) in Vancouver, housing costs are between 30% and 50% of their annual expenses. Rental costs for purpose-built rental housing in Vancouver has risen by 75% from 2001 to 2017.

The Average Monthly Market Rent for a Purpose-built One Bedroom Apartment in 2017



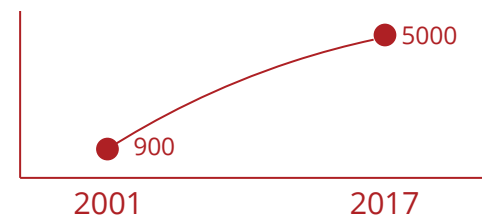
Sources: CMHC Rental Market Survey, CMHC Secondary Rental Market Survey, REBGV, FVREB. Internal calculations by CMHC. Note: Carrying cost includes mortgage payment, median condominium (strata) fees and median property taxes.

Figure 1: Monthly rents, Metro Vancouver. Reprinted from Rental market report: Vancouver CMA by CMHC, 2018.

On-campus rents on UBC and SFU Burnaby campus are priced, on average, 25% below the rental market rate for those areas.



The Number of International Undergraduate Students at SFU



Increasing housing costs could also be one of the main factors contributing to increasing student debts. Many students rely on loans and credit lines to finance their education and living expenses. According to Statistics Canada, more than half of undergraduate students complete their study with debt, averaging

Off-campus Living Allowance

\$26,000 at graduation, compared to an average of \$13,600 in 2005, which would only amount \$16,744 in 2018 dollars. Student Aid BC and the Canadian National Loan Service currently offer a maximum monthly living allowance of \$1600 for single BC students with no dependents for the 2018/2019 year.

This allowance is intended to cover rent, food, local transportation, and all other miscellaneous expenses for the month. This living allowance decreases with income, the length of the program of study, and other factors.

RATIONALE

Students that live off-campus and not with relatives are more likely to have incomes below the poverty level. Living in poverty has a physiological impact on the brain that hinders academic success, and also pushes students to enroll part time, live off campus, and work long hours to save money. Students living in poverty are often unable to afford supplies necessary for academic success such as books or computers, leading them to drop out. In the US, the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is offered to military officers who are not provided living quarters by the government. It is calculated by pay grade (income) and the geographic area the officer lives in (zip code), and dependents are factored in as well.

The purpose of this program is to provide enough funding to afford the average rental market rate in the area the officer works. This program example could be applied to the BC context where postal code of permanent or current address reported to StudentAid BC could be used to determine the loan amount for the school year.

Currently, the BC government's commitment of \$450 million for student housing only accounts for on-campus student housing, and the commitment of \$1.6 billion for housing overall does not specifically address student housing insecurity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short Term

- To receive a commitment from the provincial government to add affordable housing for students to their Housing Affordability Measures.

Long Term

- Introduction of an allowance based on postal code OR CMHC neighbourhood proportional to bringing rental costs to 25% below the market rate for that particular neighbourhood, which is in line with the average cost of on-campus student housing. This allowance should be split between the provincial and federal governments as part of Canada and B.C. Student Loans administered by StudentAid BC and National Student Loan Services Centre.

Open Education Resources

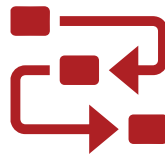
BACKGROUND

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are a solution to ease the financial burden attributed to the high cost of textbooks by offering textbooks in a digital format for free or for a lower cost than print textbooks. OERs can also provide accessible textbook formats for people with disabilities or for those who do not have access to the internet. OERs have been identified by the BC government as a solution to reduce barriers for students to accessing post-secondary education and is working with the BCcampus to oversee the project implementation.

BCcampus is a publicly funded organization that works to make higher education more available and accessible to all individuals. BCcampus has helped over 86,000 BC students save \$9 million since 2012 when the open textbook project first launched. According to the BCFS Lobby 2018 document, increased funding for this project would facilitate the BCcampus to do the following actions:



Create and adapt open textbooks that reflect and serve the diverse needs and contexts of students and educators in BC.



Develop sustainable systems to maintain these open textbooks;



Create open educational resources that are usable by all students, including those with physical and/or learning disabilities; and



Create and adapt required ancillary resources, such as assignments and quizzes, to support more textbooks.

Open Education Resources

RATIONALE

The cost of textbooks in British Columbia has risen by 82% from 2002 to 2012, with the current average textbook cost over \$200. The high cost of educational materials can negatively impact students who are struggling to afford other costs related to post-secondary education, such as tuition and living costs. In order to purchase textbooks, it is reported that some students increase their loan or credit card debt or work more hours at a job to pay for these materials. A Student Textbook Survey found that the high costs of textbooks result in 65% of students opting out of purchasing the textbook, 49% taking fewer courses, and 27% will drop a course with a required textbook.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The British Columbia Federation of Students (BCFS), supported by the SFSS, recommends that the BC government: 'implement a one-time funding increase to BCcampus in the amount of \$5 million for the production and enhancement of open educational resources.'

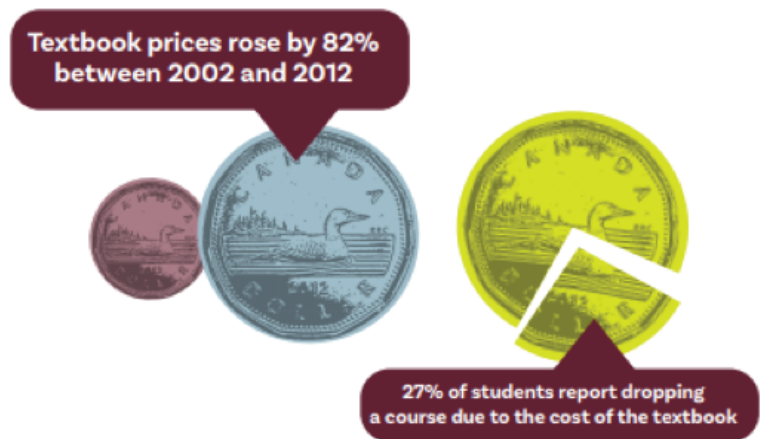


Figure 1: Price of textbooks. Reprinted from *Making post-secondary education affordable for British Columbians*, pg. 11, by the BCFS, 2018.

RESULTS

During Fall Lobbying Week and in the "Report on the Budget 2019 Consultation" (the Budget Report), the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services' affirmed their commitment to release \$5 million in additional support to BCcampus to expand OERs in the province. The provincial government committed \$3.26 million to BC campuses in April of 2019 to support the rollout of more OERs in the province.

Rent with Rights

BACKGROUND

The Rent with Rights (RWR) campaign is an advocacy and awareness initiative aiming to improve housing rights for student renters at SFU. The rights of the student housing tenants should be established and protected to the same degree as the off-campus living students. The SFSS, alongside the SFU Residence Hall Association (RHA), can increase protection and increase rights to student renters at SFU through 9 proposed recommendations to change the SFU Residence License Agreement. The suggested 9 recommendations have been developed in collaboration with the Alma Mater Society (AMS) at UBC and the University of Victoria Student Society (UVSS).

RATIONALE

The 2002 BC Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) is a provincial document that outlines protection, benefits and rights for BC Tenants. However, the rights of students living in on-campus housing on post-secondary campuses are not protected under the RTA. This is reflected under Article 4 of the RTA, 'Where this Act does not apply, part (b)' which states:

"living accommodation owned or operated by an educational institution and provided by that institution to its students or employees".

RTA 4(b) excludes properties owned by educational institutions, simply meaning residence housing contracts favour the institution over providing fair tenancy rights to students. For example, students living in residence are more susceptible to rent increases, and lack the same standards of protection from contract violations with the landlord.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations to amend the RTA and its supporting documentation were developed with the consultation of the RHA:

License agreements should explicitly include the rights and responsibilities of tenants.

- Section 20 of the license agreement should provide more specific reasons for entry into rooms without prior notice. Vague language such as, "to investigate or take action to address an ongoing source of disruption or nuisance" should be clarified.
- The institution, barring emergency or unforeseen circumstances, must provide posted notice of entry to a unit at least 24 hours prior to said entry. This includes all requested repairs and maintenance requests as well.

Rent with Rights

- The license agreement should explicitly state that transfers will only be initiated for the following reasons: safety, extended repairs, or as requested by the tenant. After a housing offer has been accepted, transfers initiated by the institution should not cost the tenant any additional fees, including any mandatory meal plan charges.
 - A Community Standards Appeals Process must be created and outlined in the contract. This process should include a committee of RHA executives and SFU Residence staff to make the appeals process as fair and impartial as possible.
 - The process of eviction needs to be outlined in the license agreement instead of the residence handbook. This process needs to include the following:
 - An eviction notice that must be received at least a month before posted notice, regardless of the violation;
 - The notice period may be waived entirely only in situations where the safety and wellbeing of residents is at risk;
 - If the eviction is a result of unpaid rent, the notice period may be shortened to 10 days;
 - In all cases, students will still have the right to appeal the eviction through the Community Standards Appeals Process.
 - A procedure must be developed to outline what residents should expect during maintenance and repair disruptions. Adequate notice must be given for long-term disruptions, and tenants must be compensated for any transfers or changes to their residence, including any changes to the utilities of their units.
 - Rent increases can only take place once every year. The increase can be no more than that year's inflation rate +2%. Consultation with RHA must take place in the case that there is an increase proposed that is more than stated above.
 - Housing contracts must explicitly state the start and end date of the residence contract. The end date must be at least 24 hours after the last day of exams for the term to give the residents adequate time to move out.
- Furthermore, any additional changes or amendments to the SFU Residence License Agreement and Residence Handbook as a result of the RTA amendments should take place with the prior consultation of RHA and as per relevant regulations. After consultation and agreement with the RHA, all residents should be notified of the changes via the existing process of notification.

Sexual Violence Prevention Support

BACKGROUND

On May 19, 2016, BC adopted the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act (the Act), obliging all Universities in BC to adopt a policy regulating a standardized response to allegations of sexual violence and misconduct by May 2017. The Act mandates a report on the policy yearly, review of the policy every 3 years, and permits the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training to request a survey on the efficacy of the policy and procedures at any time. In Budget 2018, the province allocated \$5 million towards “Supporting Women and Children Affected by Violence” – however, this budget allocation does not speak to sexual violence or more specifically, campus sexual violence. There are limited statistics on sexual assault on campuses, in part due to low levels of reporting of instances. In Canada, only 33 out of 1000 sexual violence cases reach law enforcement. However, a Canadian survey found that 20% of female post-secondary students, 47% of LGBTQ+ post-secondary students, and 7% of male post-secondary students have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives.



1 in every 5 women will experience sexual violence while studying at a postsecondary institution.¹⁹



There aren't specific statistics for men who experience campus sexual violence, but we know that 1 in 6 men will experience sexual violence in their lifetimes.²⁰



80% of female students who identify as survivors of sexual violence were assaulted by someone they knew.²¹



Frosh week or Fall Orientation is a particularly dangerous time for students. Of the sexual assaults that take place on postsecondary campuses during the academic year, roughly 2/3 of the sexual assaults will happen during the first eight weeks, typically referred to as 'the red zone'.²²

Figure 1: Sexual violence on campus. Reprinted from Our turn: A national, student-led action plan to end campus sexual violence, by Salvino, 2017.

Sexual Violence Prevention Support

RATIONALE

All post-secondary institutions in British Columbia have a sexual violence and misconduct policy; however, not all have the means to support such a policy. The purpose of such a policy is to both prevent and respond to instances of sexual misconduct by discussing it with students and promote a safe, welcoming culture free from sexual misconduct and violence.

The impacts of sexual violence on the survivors/victims are long-term and include mental health issues, physical injury; pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, flashbacks; self-harming coping mechanisms; feelings of vulnerability and feeling unsafe; and impacts on their personal or professional life. People who experience sexual violence are more likely to struggle academically for many of these reasons and drop out of post-secondary education. To address campus sexual assault, prevention (which includes awareness), education, and response (including support networks for survivors) work is necessary, in addition to the reporting requirements to the BC government as required by the Act. Implementing these components can be difficult due to lack of trained staff and lack of funding.



The government of Quebec recently committed \$23 million specifically to support sexual violence prevention on post-secondary campuses due to this pressing need. BC has roughly half the student population of Quebec.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SVSPO AT SFU

- Support for the development of a working group to provide sexual violence and misconduct policy implementation assistance and best practices between institutions
 - Creation of a listserv or forum for sharing information digitally
 - Develop a standing meeting that occurs annually or bi-annually, with in-person and phone-in options
- More dedicated staff or connection to community-based sexual assault responders

Sexual Violence Prevention Support

- More consultation with post-secondary institution staff knowledgeable on sexual violence during the development of future policy, programs or guidelines
 - Promotional material aimed at the post-secondary demographic (e.g. social media campaigns) are both less costly and more effective than the current poster package provided to post-secondary institutions
 - Allows for post-secondary institutions to have a greater ability to budget for sexual violence programs and services when involved in consultations

The joint recommendation from BCFS-SFSS was to provide greater support for smaller post-secondary institutions so they can implement the requirements of the Act.

WORK-TO-DATE

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training is leading a working group that will roll out an “action plan” based on the 3 pillars to address sexual violence on campus:

prevent, respond and support.

This group reaffirmed their commitment to work with all sizes of post-secondary institutions as a result of Fall Lobbying Week.

