AMS Submission to the UBC Board of Governors on Proposed International Tuition Increases

November 17, 2015

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Letter to the Board of Governors

On Behalf of
Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver
International Students’ Association
November 16, 2015

Submission to
The UBC Board of Governors

This submission is on behalf of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) and the International Students’ Association (ISA) of UBC Vancouver. It is in response to the proposed international tuition increases for undergraduate programs and non-thesis based masters programs, the result of a resolution at the June UBC Board of Governors meeting. The AMS has sought to critically analyze the Provost’s submission on this topic throughout the consultation period, with special attention to the following criteria mentioned in the Board resolution: that international tuition should be raised to match peer institutions; that UBC should retain diversity in its international student body; that UBC should continue its healthy recruitment and retention of international students; and that tuition revenue should help UBC achieve excellence.

Multiple conversations with the Provost’s Office have made it clear that their consultation was conducted under the assumption that it would focus solely on the allocation of revenue generated from these increases, not on whether the increases themselves should take place to the proposed magnitude. Students do not agree with this assumption. As per the revised draft of Policy 71 to be passed by the Board on December 3rd, “the University will provide an opportunity for the Elected Student Leadership to give thoughtful consideration to pertinent issues” regarding changes to tuition and mandatory fees (1.3.2). In the present tuition consultation, the most pertinent issue is the amount of the increases. With this in mind, the AMS has viewed this consultation period as about both the amounts being proposed for the increases and the allocation of new revenue, and you will see this focus in the following submission. Additionally, in the 2014 New to UBC Vancouver Student Survey, 53% of incoming international students said that “cost of UBC’s tuition and fees” was a top reason they chose UBC. This leads the AMS and ISA to note how important tuition and fees are to international students, meaning they are pertinent in this discussion.

As per its Policy on Affordability and Accessibility, the AMS opposes, “any UBC international student increases that exceed increases to domestic student tuition” (http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/University-Affordability-Accessibility-Policy.pdf). We would like to reiterate our continued opposition to all increases to international tuition and fees in the context of the current proposal. With the Board of Governors resolution that international tuition should be increased over the next three years, real, substantive consultation on whether the increases should happen at all could not take place. We advise that in the future the Board of Governors not mandate increases to tuition, but rather that the UBC
Administration be the ones to propose tuition changes based solely on need, to allow for a substantive and real consultation with students.

Through meetings with many university administrators, and through the critical eye of students, the AMS has realized that the submission by the university administration in fact does not meet most of the goals set out by the Board resolution, which will be demonstrated below. The AMS and the ISA have edited the proposal for international tuition increases for both undergraduate programs and non-thesis masters programs to articulate the poor fit of the current document with the criteria set out by the Board, which also seriously considers the opinions and insight of students across the UBC Campus. Below is a presentation of these numbers, with a brief explanation, followed by appendices for each component of the Board Resolution and Tuition Consultation to further evidence our opposition to the current proposal.

Best,

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Modified Tuition Proposal

The AMS and ISA will present alternative percentages and increases, based on what we consider a better methodology than that used by the Provost’s Office. Numbers are being finalized and will be included in the final report on November 17, 2015.

Modified Proposal for Undergraduate Programs

<table>
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</table>
Modified Proposal for Non-Thesis Based Masters Programs

Additionally, the modified proposal for inflationary increases per year is 3.5% for both undergraduate and non-thesis based masters programs.

The modified proposal includes a proportional amount of funding for international students in those programs that currently offer an International Tuition Award:

- Master of Archival Studies
- Master of Library and Information Studies
- Master of Arts in Economics
- Master of Social Work
- Master of Music
- Master of Education
- Master of Arts (through the Faculty of Education)
- Master of Kinesiology
- Master of Health Science
Percentage Allocation

With the proposed numbers, the AMS and ISA are also suggesting a slightly reconfigured allocation for the international tuition increases over the next three years. We propose:

- Strategic Investment Fund, 58.49%
- Faculties, 19.83%
- Administrative Units, 10.68%
- Student Financial Support, 10.0%
- Outstanding tuition/fees, 1.0%

As part of the Board of Governors resolution, the normal tuition allocation of 35% to Administrative Units and 65% to Faculties after Student Financial Support and Outstanding tuition/fees has been deviated from, in order to support the goal of UBC achieving excellence. In order to also support the Board’s goals related to diversity and recruitment and retention, allocation to Student Financial Support should also be increased. The small increase we propose above would be instrumental in ensuring that, in coming years, new needs-based financial supports for incoming and continuing students can be implemented.

The following sections will explain the modified proposal for lower tuition increases, and allocation profile.
I. Excellence

We begin with excellence because it is the basis of these increases. The front page of the consultation page states, “UBC aspires to excellence. Among Canadian universities, we aspire to pre-eminence - a standard well within our grasp” (https://consultations.students.ubc.ca/consultations/international-students-tuition-fall-2015). What constitutes university excellence is entirely subjective, and, as the AMS can attest from feedback throughout the consultation process, this topic is viewed very differently from the perspectives of different populations. Students see the university looking to university rankings as the key measure of excellence. However, there is an especially wide discrepancy between students’ perceptions of excellence and those of high-level university administrators. Consultation meetings with student leadership identified three pieces that together make up university excellence: the student experience, teaching and learning, and research. The last piece is more than covered by the university’s proposed allocation to strategic priorities, so a balanced focus on excellence needs to shift to focus more strongly on the first two.

Before moving on to discussions surrounding teaching and learning and the student experience, the issue of rankings should be discussed, with it being such a valued measure at the institution and the basis for the increases to international tuition. It is important to note that no research supports the claim that increased revenue causes, or is even correlated with, an increase in university rankings, with the exception of increases to research funding. If excellence can be measured by university rankings, then an increase in tuition is not necessarily going to result in excellence. In fact, after international tuition was increased at UBC for the 2015/2016 year, UBC’s rankings dropped two spots in the Times Higher Education Ranking, and 7 spots in the QS World University Ranking. The University of California system has seen a similar decline in rankings even after increasing out-of-state and international student tuition, with similar concerns voiced by their students. Both UC Berkeley and UCLA, the two top ranked universities, in this system, decreased in the Times Higher Education Rankings, from 8 to 13 and 12 to 16, respectively. The assumption that increasing tuition and major revenue streams can bring an institution up in the rankings does not have any real empirical evidence as a basis, with examples to refuting it.

A. Teaching and Learning Excellence

One of the main indicators that UBC and most public research institutions point to in order to determine excellence and priorities are the many higher education rankings, specifically the QS World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education Ranking. The latter was identified as the ranking that most students identified in the New to UBC survey in helping them to make their decision to attend UBC and which subsequently all but one of the benchmarks was judged on for the proposed increases.

The Times Higher Education Ranking is one of the most reputable international rankings, and one of the few that sees “teaching (the learning environment)” as an important factor, making up 30% of the assessment. It is important to note that the Times Ranking is one of the few that places equal importance on teaching and research. With an acknowledgement that this is the ranking most frequented by international students, teaching and learning should be one of UBC’s main focuses if it wants to strive for excellence.

As students have heard many times over, UBC strives to be the top public research institution in Canada. Currently, we sit below the University of Toronto in the Times Higher Education Ranking. This is the current ranking spread:
The factors evaluated on are as follows:

- Teaching (the learning environment), 30%
- Research (volume, income, and reputation), 30%
- Citations (research influence), 30%
- International outlook (staff, students and research), 7.5%
- Industry income (knowledge transfer), 2.5%

With these measurements in mind, UBC clearly needs to target teaching and research in order to move up in the rankings. However, if we look at the strength of both measures at UofT, their teaching category is weaker. One of the simplest measures of this is student-staff ratio, with UBC at 17.6 (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-of-british-columbia?ranking-dataset=133819) and UofT at 19.5 (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-of-toronto?ranking-dataset=1083). If UBC were to strategically invest primarily in teaching, and use the assets it already has in terms of teaching and learning, UBC would move up in the ranking while benefitting the student experience at the same time.

The National Survey of Student Engagement also speaks to the realm of teaching and learning. This survey takes into account student satisfaction, as well as teaching and learning environment. UBC took part in the NSSE between 2006 and 2011, and has also published its results. The NSSE does not rank universities, but rather sends each university their own results for their own use. A Maclean’s article in 2015 asked universities around Canada for their results from 2013/2014 in student satisfaction and six indicators of student engagement. 66 of 73 Canadian universities complied, including UBC. Of these six factors, UBC placed below average on all but collaborative learning, including effective teaching practices, higher-order learning, student-faculty interaction, and supportive environment. According to Maclean’s, Canadian universities performed much more poorly than their American counterparts (http://www.macleans.ca/education/unirankings/national-survey-of-student-engagement-a-truer-measure-of-quality/#higherorderlearning). UBC should be focusing on improving these factors related to the teaching and learning environment at UBC, ultimately leading to better scores for teaching in the Times Higher Education Ranking.

B. Student Experience and Excellence

Along with teaching and learning, students have systematically mentioned that the student experience at UBC is what makes it excellent, and why they chose to attend the university. In the 2014 New to UBC Vancouver Student Survey, when asked for the top 5 reasons why they decided to attend UBC, 81% of international students noted that the “quality of campus life” was instrumental in their decision. Furthermore, 80% of students said that “opportunities to learn outside the classroom” were important to their decision to choose UBC, and 65% of students noted that “opportunities for student engagement” were important. Among factors influencing international stu-
dents who decided to attend another institution instead of UBC, 79% noted the quality of campus life, 71% noted opportunities for student engagement, and 66% noted diversity of the student body and campus community. Similarly, among over 60% of students in four year programs that expect to take longer than four years to complete their degrees, 56% indicate that their extracurricular experiences influence them to extend their time at UBC (http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Academic%20Experience%20Survey%20Report%202015%20Final.pdf).

With these numbers, it is clear that there are factors beyond the reputation of an institution that dictate the choices international students make in deciding to attend UBC: the excellence of the campus experience and the time that they spend at the institution are also very important. Students are choosing to stay at UBC because they want to experience all their campus can give them, not only because of the teaching and learning environment. With this in mind, the student experience should be a place to invest strategically. Not only will it ensure that measures like the NSSE will display more positive findings for UBC, but international students will see UBC as being a phenomenal institution for all three of teaching and learning, research, and overall student experience.
II. Peer Institution Benchmarking Methodology

A. Methodology Issues in Benchmarking for Average Inflation

The data on which the proposed 5% annual increase for undergraduate and non-thesis based masters programs is based is problematic. The Provost’s Office offered a Statistics Canada report on tuition fees as the basis for these proposed inflationary increases, which states that, “nationally, average tuition fees for international undergraduate students rose 5.3%...in 2014/2015” (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140911/dq140911b-eng.pdf). This average was taken to be the number that should be set for inflation for both undergraduate and graduate program increases. However, pegging inflationary increases to an average does not make sense. It would be much more logical to go off of inflation per year, which for education was 3.5% between September 2014 and September 2015 in British Columbia, according to Statistics Canada. (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/cpis01k-eng.htm). Even granting a small increase of 0.5% to account for discretionary changes, that would still amount only to 4%, not the proposed 5%. Additionally, using Statistics Canada evidence in a benchmarking process that involves more than just Canadian institutions does not methodologically make sense, further problematizing this inflationary increase.

Additionally, this same Statistics Canada report remarks that the “average tuition for international full-time students in graduate programs rose 3.3%” (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140911/dq140911b-eng.pdf). Inflation for graduate programs cannot be set at 5% per year, both because there is information from Statistics Canada to prove that there is a difference between average increases to undergraduate and graduate programs, and because the reliance on average increases does not make sense, as illustrated above. As such, neither inflationary increases proposed fit undergraduate or graduate programs.

B. Methodology Issues in Benchmarking Program-by-Program

In order to benchmark UBC programs, as per the Board resolution, the Provost’s Office chose comparator schools predominantly within +/- 15 of UBC in the Times Higher Education Ranking, as well as collaborating with Faculties and departments to find comparative programs. However, the AMS and ISA believe that many of the institutions chosen do not count as peer institutions. A number of programs had comparator institutions which were outside the +/- 15 rank band or which did not even make the Times Ranking. Many did not even have curriculum that were completely in line with comparator programs at UBC (include examples). Additionally, when looking at some non-thesis based masters programs that do not have any true comparators, like the programs in the Faculty of Education, comparator tuitions within the faculty itself were used to benchmark, once again deviating from the methodology set.

Beyond the issue with anomalies from the methodology, the peer institutions chosen are not only Canadian institutions, or with similar economic realities and government support to Canadian institutions, but are public institutions in the United States, Australia and elsewhere. Though in the Times Higher Education Ranking these institutions are comparable to UBC, the context in which they are situated is vastly different. Even if the first consideration for benchmarking of tuition fees is against Canadian peers, with non-Canadian institutions used for “validation & potential re-calibration,” (http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Consultation-With-Elected-Student-Leadership-Present-Oct-14_15-V2.pdf) global universities are not appropriate as peer institutions. (Institutions with huge endowments and different economic situations for financial aid)

With the anomalies in the explanation of the benchmarking, it is clear that there is inconsistency in the methodology employed by the Provost’s Office in setting international tuition rates for both undergraduate and non-thesis based masters programs. There are some programs whose numbers are clear and in line with other Canadian institutions, and others that were chosen based on problematic data since no Canadian comparators existed.

One of the most important pieces overlooked by the Provost’s Office in setting these benchmarks was the number of students in the programs mentioned in the proposal. Most undergraduate programs have very high enrolment,
as well as some non-thesis based masters programs, but there are a number of graduate programs benchmarked that have very low enrollment. This should impact decisions surrounding tuition for these programs. Firstly, increasing international tuition substantially for low-enrollment programs ensures that the few students who might have attended UBC will have another reason to go elsewhere, impacting student diversity within those programs. Secondly, it simply does not make financial sense to increase fees for these programs, because if less international students enroll the gross revenue in those programs will go down.

C. Methodology Employed in this Report

The methodology employed by the AMS and ISA to create a modified proposal for benchmarks for international tuition takes into account all of the criticisms of UBC’s methodology outlined in the previous section. This means that to set benchmarks we have looked at the Times Higher Education Ranking, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and tuition rates at Canadian institutions. The Times Higher Education Ranking is an important measure because of its inclusion of teaching and learning, and though it does not take into account the broader student experience, this has been made up by including the NSSE. Additionally, Canadian universities should be considered because of the large discrepancy mentioned in funding models for universities in different countries, specifically the US. According to Hobsons, students select the country in which they want to study before the specific institution (http://www.hobsons.com/uploads/documents/hobsons_international_student_decision_making.pdf). Comparing ourselves to American counterparts, for all incoming students besides in-state American students that pay less than out-of-state and international students for American public post-secondary institutions, therefore does not make sense when selecting peer institutions.

We are also taking into consideration the numbers of international students in a program, specifically for non-thesis based masters programs with low international enrollment. With the low numbers of international students in some programs, they may lose international students altogether if the tuition increases, reducing overall revenue and diversity.

Inflationary increases to international tuition should fit inflation per year, which for education was 3.5% between September 2014 and September 2015 in British Columbia, according to Statistics Canada. (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/cpis01k-eng.htm). This would be applicable to both undergraduate and non-thesis based masters programs, truly answering to issues of inflation, rather than including another cost onto international students.

One final consideration is made. If programs were approved in the last two years, the AMS and ISA have suggested that those programs not increase again right now. The most apparent programs falling into this category are the Dual Degree Masters of Architecture and Landscape Architecture approved last year, and Vantage College, approved within the last two years. The former is only being increased because of the increases to the two programs in the dual degree, even though the tuition was set last year. The practice of adding the tuition from each program together to make the tuition of a Dual degree program option is already problematic, not properly taking into account the highly increased cost students are paying per credit, without more class time. Making the same assumption with increases of this amount taking place is unjustified. Vantage College includes four new programs, with no real peer comparitors, and it is very problematic to be increasing tuition for a program that was just approved and is in its infancy. Other programs that are new, many of which do not have real peer comparitors in terms of curriculum and purpose, include the following:

- Bachelor of International Economics (2012)
- Masters of Public Policy & Global Affairs (2015)
- Bachelor of Media Studies (2014)
- Master of Urban Design (2013)
- Master of Engineering in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering (2014)
- EMBA in Strategic Mining Management (2015)
III. Diversity, Retention & Recruitment and Student Financial Aid

A. Definition & Data for Diversity

UBC, along with most U15 institutions, does not have a real definition for diversity in its student body. When institutions do have a definition, it is extremely broad, like the McGill Faculty of Medicine which defines human diversity as “the sum total of all ways in which human beings can vary from each other, including their life experiences and social histories” (https://www.mcgill.ca/medicine/about/our-vision-mission-values/diversity-statement). Though it is great that so many institutions have stated a commitment to diversity, this commitment cannot be meaningful unless it takes into account all measures of diversity, including socioeconomic diversity. It is not enough to excel in one area, such as geographic diversity, for a campus community to be diverse.

This lack of a specific definition for diversity also means that UBC has not sought to collect socioeconomic data for international students. Dr. Anji Redish has stated on a number of occasions, including to the Ubessey, (http://ubyssey.ca/news/as-tuition-hike-looms-ubc-lacks-data-to-measure-impact-on-economic-diversity/) that this data to measure socioeconomic diversity does not exist. A proposal to increase international tuition while maintaining diversity cannot truly succeed if there are no mechanisms to measure diversity in place. As you will see in the proposal for student financial aid below, the AMS and ISA ask that a new needs-based award be created for international students, that students are made properly aware of emergency funding, and that in-program bursaries for students with ongoing changes in financial situations be expanded. However, the most important piece is that UBC take into account and commit to maintaining not only geographic diversity, but socioeconomic diversity as well.

B. Recruitment & Retention with Increasing Tuition

According to the Briefing Note on Accessibility and Affordability released by the AMS in 2015 (http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/065-16-BN-Affordability_Accessibility-2015_07_07.pdf), diversity of students is particularly important not to overlook because of the impact increasing tuition actually has on institutions’ diversity, recruitment, and retention. A study conducted in April 2015 “demonstrates that there is a correlation between increased tuition fees and decreased diversity on campuses in the United States,” with increased tuition impacting enrolment patterns, especially for historically underrepresented populations (http://www.aera.net/Portals/38/Newsroom%20Research/Exploring%20the%20Effects%20of%20Tuition%20Increases%20on%20Racial- Ethnic%20Diversity%20at.pdf). Specifically, Allen and Wolniak note that their “findings suggest that tuition increases at public four-year institutions have negatively and significantly affected the racial/ethnic diversity of college student bodies.”

Although no published articles study this question at Canadian post-secondary institutions, and keeping in mind that correlation does not imply causation, what has been occurring at the University of Toronto may still be instructive. Starting in the fall of 2007, Uoft began raising undergraduate international tuition fees by 10% annually. It should be said that this rise in tuition was also accompanied by an increase in the number of undergraduate international students, going from 5,655 in 2007 to 11,894 in 2014, a 110% increase. However, a closer look at the data shows a startling drop in the diversity of international students at that institution, since students from the People’s Republic of China account for 81.4% of this increase. The two pie charts on the following page provide a visual illustration of how diversity has been impacted at the University of Toronto in this time period:
Although an increase in the number of Chinese students is undoubtedly, and for a variety of reasons, a positive development for the university, the relative weakness in the increase of students from other countries should be a source of concern from a diversity perspective. At the very least, the correlation between significant increases in international tuition and decreases in diversity warrant closer study in order to be better understood. This illustrates that even with preventative measures taken, including needs-based student financial aid, diversity, recruitment and retention may all suffer with increases to international tuition.

C. Student Financial Aid and Diversity

UBC is currently one of the largest providers, if not the largest, of international student financial aid in Canada. However, needs-based aid is only available to international students who demonstrate extreme and almost absolute need. This means that a number of international students who could never have afforded to attend UBC are afforded that opportunity. However, with a proposed increase to international tuition by almost 50% by 2018/2019, there will be many more students caught in a place of need created by these increases. With this in mind, the AMS has created a proposal for a new award that is both need and merit-based, and specifically for students who need between $15,000-$30,000 per year to supplement their ability to pay throughout their degree.

**Emergency Bursaries International Students**

UBC does have an Emergency Bursary program that exists to support international students who are truly experiencing a one-time emergency situation. Students can seek this funding by contacting their Enrolment Services Professionals, though there is a very small number of international students that know about it and use it. This money specifically comes out of the 7.47% of international tuition that goes towards support for international students at UBC Vancouver.

The AMS Financial Assistance Fund collects $12.00 per student every year to provide bursaries that all students should have access to. As per the referendum question that introduced this fee, the AMS should be collecting money from all students going towards aid for all students, both domestic and international. Right now, these
funds are only going into emergency aid for domestic students. As a result, the AMS will begin to put a percentage into the international Emergency Bursary fund, based on the demographic population of AMS members, to ensure that all students have access to the money collected by the AMS. This change ensures that the AMS is following the referendum question passed by students, and that as many students as possible have access to funding.

Another consideration to make in terms of international funding is that increasing numbers of international students may increase the number of students in need of emergency funds. The AMS would encourage Enrolment Services to message out to international students that if they are having difficulties they should be reaching out to their ESPs, and that, though only available in truly one-time emergencies, there is funding available to help them.

International Award for Excellence

With the impending international tuition increases, the students who will be most impacted are those that had planned to attend UBC and no longer will be able. With substantial increases will come a number of students who can no longer access UBC. This means that existing international student financial aid will not be sufficient to aid those students that will be affected by the proposed increases, and there will therefore be a loss of socioeconomic diversity and richness in the population of students who attend UBC. There is also an acknowledgement that there exists a group that cannot access UBC as they are less needy than those who apply for the ILOT and MasterCard awards, but nevertheless need financial support to access UBC, and this award would be geared toward them as well.

With this in mind, the AMS proposes that a new award be created, the International Award for Excellence. This would be a renewable award based on both need and merit for students who need between $15,000-$30,000 a year to supplement their ability to pay for tuition. It would target students who would have been able to meet the need for tuition up until 2015, and can no longer do so going forward. The goal would be to open UBC up to a more diverse range of people.

How would this be adjudicated?

The first measure of adjudication would be an inclusion of a statement of finances in international applications to UBC, to determine which students are eligible or in need of the award, though this differs from practices at other Canadian public research institutions. Financial information is asked for by many American universities in applications, and if included in UBC applications could be used to determine need of applicants, while not overwhelming ISI with massive amounts of applications.

This award would be adjudicated using best practices and set procedures already used by the International Student Initiatives to adjudicate awards like the International Leaders of Tomorrow (ILOT). With these practices already existing, the adjudication of the award should be able to happen without the need to create new processes. Additionally, in order to ensure that the largest diversity of students can access this award, merit will be taken into account primarily for the adjudication, with amount needed assessed by ISI staff, similar to other needs based awards.

What resources would be needed?

An additional staff member would have to be hired in order to take over this award and the work behind it, especially for the period between December and April. The salary for this staff member would be in line with other International Recruiter/Advisors and this money would come out of the Strategic Investment Fund, or the central budget. The staff member would facilitate the collection of applications and adjudication of the award, based on
the best practices already set up by the ILOT program. Beyond this staff member, there would also have to be supports set up to ensure that students receiving this award could transition into UBC successfully and ultimately succeed in their time here.

Resources should also be allocated is into the implementation of new systems to be able to adjudicate these awards and be more efficient in International Student Initiatives. The additional staff member could help with the transition into this new system, and its implementation.

**What exactly would the criteria be?**

This award would be targeted towards students who demonstrate between $15,000-$30,000 in need to be able to attend UBC. The students would have to fulfill similar requirements to other needs/merit-based and merit-based international entry awards.

**What barriers exist?**

The main barrier that does exist for this award is that the number of applications that will come in will be quite burdensome, with many students needing a little bit of extra money to be able to attend UBC. The way in which this award is messaged out would have to be thoughtful to ensure that only students at a high scholastic level and in need of this amount of aid would apply. This problem could potentially be alleviated by collecting financial information during application to UBC, though remaining needs-blind in the admissions process.

The level of support provided to these students will also be a barrier. The students receiving this money would need to be chosen very thoughtfully, with a consideration of the type of support they would need to attend UBC. Because the range of need in the award is so large, many different students will be accessing it and have a differing level of support needed, which will be hard to deliver effectively.

**Other Student Financial Aid Proposals**

The tuition increases that have been proposed ensure that there will be much more money coming into international student financial aid in the coming years, with this money now being suggested to go to creating a more robust international financial aid framework. However, as mentioned in the previous section, this money and its uses should be diversified, ensuring that it is truly targeting the people who will need it the most as a result of the increases in tuition.

1) In-program bursaries and micro-loans

This option would ensure that students who need ongoing emergency help can receive it, beyond just emergency bursaries. This would target those students who have had a change in situation and support. The AMS is in support of a program of this kind, but, though less feasible, would like to see in-program bursaries rather than micro-loans. For international students, loans are difficult to adjudicate, but also can be problematic depending on exchange rates and situations at home. When students have large changes in their financial situation, it is normally difficult to repay a loan.
2) Geo-targeted entrance awards

The idea of geo-targeted entrance awards is interesting, however, it artificially fixes the problem of diversity in raising international tuition. In specifically seeking out students from regions that are underrepresented at UBC, many students who may have never heard of the university may want to attend, but whether or not this initiative will actually achieve diversity is questionable. The AMS sees the potential for geo-targeting, as long as it is paired with active recruitment and other needs-based awards.

These proposals can be achieved alongside the International Award for Excellence, though the in-program bursaries would be much better placed to work with this new award than the geo-targeted entrance awards.
IV. Strategic Investment Fund

The first issue of concern related to the proposed new Strategic Investment Fund is that UBC already has a Strategic Priorities Fund, which the UBC Finance website claims UBC put $4.5 million into last year (http://vpfinance.ubc.ca/reporting/2015-16-budget/). In a consultation meeting on October 29th the VP Students’ Office said that it was not yet decided what this money would be spent on. A distinction was then made on November 12th that this fund would be used at the discretion of the executive for upcoming projects that would need funding. This fund is important to the discussion of the allocation of international tuition for two reasons. Firstly, this fund, though smaller than the proposed Strategic Investment Fund, will go to fund projects very similar to the proposed fund. Secondly, this fund will be at the discretion of the UBC executive, meaning that a real distinction has to be made for the Strategic Investment Fund.

With the Strategic Priorities Fund in mind, it is important to have very clear terms of reference and guiding principles that extend beyond seven key words, that note the importance of student and Faculty intimate involvement in the allocation of the Strategic Investment Fund money. With such a large pool of money (about $41 million projected for 2018/2019 with proposed increases), a fund can be adaptive to new needs and have clearly set out principles. Without these, this fund risks being a slush fund, allowing for initiatives of all kinds to be funded out of dollars coming straight from tuition fees. At a consultation meeting with student leaders on October 29th, Anji Redish mentioned “excellence, sustainability, strategic nimbleness, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness” as the principles she sees guiding the fund. With those in mind, the AMS proposes the following guiding principles:

- A combination of large and small strategic initiatives must be funded every year;
- Ongoing spending must be evaluated for impact, sustainability and feasibility, and must be re-evaluated every year;
- Amongst initiatives supported, each year must allocate a certain amount of the fund to the student experience, teaching and learning, and research;
- The spending of the fund must be disclosed explicitly to the university community;
- A focus should be put on initiatives that support international students, or promoting diversity at UBC.

Additionally, the consultation meeting mentioned above included a proposal for an Advisory Committee, made up of students, faculty and deans, to give recommendations to the Provost on spending the funds. However, being simply an advisory committee, spending would ultimately be up to the discretion of the Provost and university executive. In looking at the Strategic Priorities Fund that already exists to support the needs of the executives, as well as the huge amount of money that this strategic fund will be collecting, the AMS and ISA do not think it is appropriate to leave this spending fully up to the discretion of the Provost. The fund must have an Adjudication Committee that will make decisions on its allocation, to then be carried out by the Provost and Executive. This committee should be comprised of students, faculty, and senior administrators in the Faculties, with two university executives.

With the previously mentioned guiding principles and composition of the committee, there are three areas that the AMS and ISA would like to see the university allocating funds: the Life Building project, innovation and excellence in teaching, and undergraduate research opportunities.

A. The Life Building and the Old Student Union Building

The site of the Old Student Union Building (Old SUB) sits vacant, with a project on hold that was meant to begin construction as soon as the new AMS Student Nest was finished, the UBC Life Building. The plans for this building received Board 1 approval on November 26, 2013, with a Steering Committee coming up with plans for the project after that. The building was to include recreational facilities, student services (including Counselling Services, the Wellness Centre, a satellite Student Health Services office, Access & Diversity, Nurses on Campus), the Centre for Student Involvement & Careers, the Centre for Community Engaged Learning, the VP Students Office, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Students, and, most importantly, International Student Services.
International Student Services are currently predominantly housed in International House (I-House), which is located on the North West corner of campus in a seismically unsafe building. Large amounts of international students do not know where I-House is located, as remarked by multiple students at an AMS hosted Think Tank on November 5th. Those who are aware of its location see it as a symbol of the lack of commitment that the university has towards international students. At Northwestern University, where a new student-centered building is being built to consolidate student services and needs on campus, a student remarked that “[The old location] reinforced a sense of worthlessness” (http://groups.northwestern.edu/nsc/). This is how a lot of students see the I-House. With these increases to international student tuition, there is a need to re-assert the commitment that UBC has to international students, and the Life Building is a way for the university administration to show that international students and their experiences matter.

The other important aspect of the Life Building is the opportunity that it creates for student services to be consolidated into one space. This was proven to increase reach in services, especially with students who get lost in the system, by the University of Saskatchewan in their campus-wide review of advising (http://www.usask.ca/vpteaching/documents/campus-wide_advising_review-final.pdf). Many students who commented on their experience with UBC Counselling Services in the 2015 AMS Academic Experience Survey expressed strong concerns over feeling like they were constantly “handed off” between services, rather than feeling like they got the care they needed. The centralization of services is extremely important for effectiveness of the services and their collaboration, and to allow for new innovations in services that will make them much more efficient. This will also reduce the resources that go into handing students off to other services, since all will be housed in the same, centralized place (http://www20.csueastbay.edu/oaa/files/student_success/CenStudSuccCtr.pdf).

B. Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

As mentioned in reference to the Times Higher Education Ranking and the National Survey of Student Engagement, Teaching & Learning is a cornerstone of an excellent university. This is especially true given that learning is the main reason students are attending a post-secondary institution in the first place. Importantly, in reference to research, the teaching and learning implications of quality research have been provided by many university administrators as clear justification for research propensity and success being a fundamental measure of excellence. Innovation and excellence in teaching is comprised of a number of different themes, including collaborative learning, teaching and learning infrastructure, student-faculty interactions, effective teaching practices, open educational resources, and improved learning technologies. Strategic investments should focus on the undergraduate and graduate student learning environment across all of these dimensions.

C. Undergraduate Research Opportunities

With research being one of the main focuses for university excellence by UBC administrators, Faculties, and faculty members, it is important to recognize that there is a large part of the university population, roughly 39,000 undergraduate students, who have minimal interaction with substantive research experiences. If research excellence is one of the fundamental priorities of the university, the majority stakeholder of the university should be engaging in it and offered opportunities to contribute to their institution’s excellence.
V. Appendices

A. International Student Headcount (New Intakes and Total): Non-Thesis Based Graduate Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2015 New International Intakes (Headcount)</th>
<th>2015 Total International Students in Program (Headcount)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts - UBCV</td>
<td>Master of Archival Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Journalism</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Library Information Studies</td>
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<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Library Information Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (Distance Program)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Arts in Economics</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters of Social Work</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters of Music</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Urban Design</td>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Architecture</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Landscape Architecture</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Landscape Architecture</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied</td>
<td>Master of Community &amp; Regional Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science -</td>
<td>Master of Health Leadership &amp; Policy</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBCV</td>
<td>Master of Engineering Leadership</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Engineering</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Engineering Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Engineering in Clean Energy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>Master of Science + Diploma in Dental Specialties</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD + Diploma PhD + Diploma in Dental Specialties</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Doctor of Education</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Educational Technology</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Education in Adult Learning &amp; Global Change</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Master of Museum Education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Education</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Arts (through Education)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Master of Kinesiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Master of International Forestry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Sustainable Forest Management</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Master of Laws (Common Law)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Laws (Taw)</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFS</td>
<td>Master of Food and Resource Economics</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Food Science</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Land and Water Systems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Master of Health Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Health Administration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Master of Public Health</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Science Genetic Counselling</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Rehabilitation Science</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master of Science Occupational and Environment hygiene</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sauder</td>
<td>Master of Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EMBA in Strategic Mining Management</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N/A = not available
B. VSEUS Tuition Analysis in Economics Report

November 1st, 2015

RE: Tuition Analysis in Economics, 2015

Dear UBC Board of Governors,

On October 14th, 2015, UBC announced a series of proposed increases in international tuition to most undergraduate degrees and some graduate degrees. These increases were the result of a Board of Governors motion that was passed in June 2015, to adjust international tuition levels to reflect the status of UBC as a global university.

Within the Vancouver School of Economics, there are three affected programs: the Bachelor of International Economics, the Bachelor of Arts in Economics, and finally the Masters of Arts in Economics. This analysis will mostly contribute to the understanding and benchmarking of the Bachelor of International Economics and Masters of Arts in Economics, the two degrees offered specifically in the Vancouver School of Economics.

Bachelor of International Economics:

For the Bachelor of International Economics, from our own analysis, UBC’s definition of comparable program at peer institutions seem to be the Bachelor of Commerce (or equivalent) degree at these peer institutions. This is not the right way to benchmark the BIE program. This is due to the fact that even though Bachelor of International Economics has some Commerce components, it is largely an economics degree; its major teaching staffs are economists and not business professors. In addition, the program is still at its early stages with no graduates produced. It is inappropriate to judge that the value of the BIE degree is comparable to those of established Commerce programs.

This analysis finds that for the Bachelor of International Economics, using the budget data provided by the school during the program’s creation in 2012, there is no need for additional surplus. This budget data used is appropriate as there hasn’t been any significant change in the program delivery that has been observed or reported by VSEUS that is in excess of these budget items. We adjusted the revenue model from the original budget proposal for two scenarios. The first scenario reflects the current state, with a 3% increase per annum for new international students. The second scenario reflects the proposed state (of 15% increase per annum for the first two years for incoming students.) We do not project the financial status of 2018/2019 as cost data is not available and we would like to avoid unfair extrapolation of costs. We believe that our point is illustrated well even without taking fiscal 2018/2019 into consideration.

Using the above model (detail provided in the Appendix), staying with the first scenario will, after subtracting for direct costs and allocation given to all other faculties, Arts (VSE) will be expecting to have a $1 million surplus in 2017/2018. With the proposed increases, assuming all of the incremental revenue goes towards the school, this net surplus increases to $1.23 million (a 20% increase.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015/2016</th>
<th>2016/2017</th>
<th>2017/2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Tuition Rev-</td>
<td>$385,970</td>
<td>$524,920</td>
<td>$535,410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VSEUS would like to bring to attention, the Board’s decision in 2012 to approve the Bachelor of International Program. The board agreed in that meeting that the BIE tuition number as initially proposed was in excess of where tuition needs to be. As such, the board voted to approve the program with a tuition level that was more appropriate (7% above Sauder at the time.) This decision has not been a detriment to the program, widely reflected by the popularity of the program, the range of students it attracts and the engagement these students have already done. In fact, the only issue that has been brought up by students recently surrounds the cancellation of the International Service Learning program, which initially was envisioned to form the cap-stone class for the BIE program.

In addition, in the initial proposal, a benchmarking process was conducted, with many schools used in the benchmarking process used in this round of benchmark. At that point, the proposed tuition ($29,000 for international students) was agreed to have been set at the appropriate level. Though initially, this was lowered to around ($27,900); last year’s 10% increase in all incoming international tuition program for undergraduate students has increased the program tuition to be above this initial proposed level (once adjusted for a 3% annual increase.) However, the result of this round of benchmarking seems to directly contradict the previous round of benchmarking as it seems to say that the initial proposed levels were not high enough. This fact alone shows that the proposed tuition levels are highly subjective in nature and does not translate directly on the quality of the program at BIE or the result of a rigorous and fair benchmarking process.

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3 Meet the BIE Students(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTmJplXaXpw&ab_channel=VancouverSchoolofEconomicsatUBC )

4 International Service Learning Program Cancelled(http://ubyssey.ca/news/ubc-cancels-international-service-learning-program142/)
This year was the first projected year where the net contribution of the BIE program was significant (in the tune of $240,000), this was reflected in the hiring of many new Assistant Professors and Sessional Lecturers (5 in total), in excess of the school’s hiring tradition of 2 Assistant Professors per year. Despite this, we do not believe that enough justification has been given on how the school is using the net contribution from the program and therefore believe that it is inappropriate for further revenue to be made (though only a small portion of this incremental revenue is proposed to go toward the faculties) when the financial prospect for the program is highly positive.

We reached this conclusion, understanding that not all of the incremental revenue will in fact go towards the school. However, if UBC Central does express a need for its funds, it seems as though there could be a redistribution of the net contribution that Arts (VSE) is expected to receive without any major implication for the overall financial prospect (or planned investments by the VSE) of the school.

It is important at this point to clarify that VSEUS is not opposed to all tuition increases. Some tuition increases, especially when well justified (such as accounting for higher than general inflation for education), can be accepted. We are however, opposed to the magnitude of this increase specifically because of the poor justification that has been provided, as well as the rapid timeline of the increase. Furthermore, the proposed allocation of 60% into Strategic Investment Fund is left extremely vague. We would feel more comfortable commenting on the allocation if the decision on what Strategic Investment Fund is was made prior to the decision on the tuition increases. It is inappropriate to pass the increases and then finding ways to spend the revenue that comes as a result.

**Bachelor of Arts:**

We believe that there is little we can add in terms of analyzing the tuition status for the BA program as a whole. However, we acknowledge that the BA Economics program and undergraduate Economics classes are often oversubscribed and sometimes have the largest class in the university (the near 500 student sections of ECON101 come to mind.)

We are going to note however, that currently the program’s admission is based on GPA without any other factors considered. It is a reality that there are never enough financial aids to support deserving international students (though we still advocate for increased allocation towards international financial aid.) This means that students who come from a less affluent background will be put on an increased level of financial pressure. This means that these students will be at a higher risk of compromising their academic performance due to these financial pressures. We urge BoG to consider whether it is appropriate to deny students who will be students at UBC a fair chance (academically) to participate in one of the best undergraduate Economics program in the world.

In addition, undergraduate research funding is usually limited in Economics. However, for those who would like to pursue a graduate degree in economics, undergraduate research experience is almost essential. Except for some rare cases, most students do have to engage in research opportunity at a below-subsistence wage. Without proper financial assistance to these students, we will also not allow them to be the best version of themselves.

By going through with this increase without properly reviewing both the magnitude and the financial aid that is available, UBC will not be doing justice to students who would benefit most from a UBC education. If UBC would like to be a university with a global standing, its responsibilities should also lie with that global community.

**Masters of Arts in Economics**

We were first surprised to learn that Masters of Arts in Economics was within one of the programs that an increase in international tuition was proposed. In UBC, Masters of Arts in Economics is a program that
has a primary objective of preparing students for a PhD program in Economics. Though it is true that there are many students who do not continue pursuing academia after their Masters degree, it is designed to be academically rigorous and prepare students for serious research. Therefore, we first contest the characterization of the Masters of Arts in Economics as a “professional program”, especially in absence of any alternative program at UBC for an Undergraduate student in Economics to transition to a graduate level Economics program.

This distinction is important as both the comparable program used in the benchmarking process and the funding justification for this program depends on whether the MA Economics program is an academic program or a thesis program. As an example, though the Doctoral-stream MA Economics program in University of Toronto charge a $20,000 tuition fee, it awards “every student admitted to the Doctoral Stream MA $15,000-$18,000 plus tuition and incidental fees.” In contrast, no ordinary funding is available for the General MA program at the University of Toronto. In contrast, at UBC, international students in the MA Economics program receive a partial scholarship, covering the difference between domestic tuition and international tuition. In addition, they will also be awarded a teaching assistance position, earning $11,469.60. There is no commitment (that we know of) that is given that this partial scholarship will have the same value after the increases.

Given this important distinction and given the academic nature of the program, we were perplexed to see the MA Economics program at UBC to be defined as a Professional program. In addition, we were further perplexed when the program was benchmarked against many programs that are in no way related to MA Economics program at UBC. Notably, the tuition fee for the comparable program at Duke University was noted at $120,000(CAD). The closest program at Duke we can find that has that level of tuition is the MBA program, a 2 year program at $60,000(USD)/year. The Master’s program in Economics has tuition of $23,795(USD)⁵. This is simply unacceptable. It is unacceptable when the definition of the Masters program of Economics is intentionally skewed to justify inappropriate benchmarking method to “prove” that the tuition levels of this program are below the benchmark.

It is again important to clarify that VSEUS is not opposed to the formation of a professional based Masters degree in Economics. However, we find it inappropriate that the MA Economics program as of its current structure is considered anything other than an excellent academic program. This decision, unlike other program, will hurt the MA Economics program at UBC and Economics at UBC more broadly, especially when most MA students do act as teaching assistant to undergraduate students. In addition, UBC will actively take away one of the few opportunity current undergraduate students have to pursue academic research in Economics, an aspect UBC is so keen to excel at.

**Conclusion**

We, as UBC students, want UBC to succeed. We would like to see UBC become a leader in many aspects, including research, sustainability and excellence. We are not opposed to these increases to oppose UBC becoming something better. We are opposing these precisely because UBC can do better. UBC can do better than presenting its community with poor “research” to justify increases. UBC can do better than shrugging and agreeing that it doesn’t have a good measure of diversity. UBC can do so much better than refusing to acknowledge the impact this change will have on its future students.

We invite the Board of Governors to read this analysis with an open inquisitive mind. We hope that you will reach the same conclusion that we reach.

Yours sincerely,

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⁵ University of Toronto Economics funding (https://www.economics.utoronto.ca/index.php/index/graduate/standardFunding)

⁶ Cost to Attend – Graduate School at Duke University (https://gradschool.duke.edu/financial-support/cost-attend)
C. CUS Report on Tuition Increases
Report on the UBC International Tuition Consultation
November 11, 2015

Prepared by
Si Jia Wen
CUS Associate Vice-President Academic
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Summary

In June of 2015, the Board of Governors approved the following resolution:

“The Board of Governors requests that the Administration set international student tuition fees at levels that reflect UBC’s standing as a global university and the value of a UBC degree. While ensuring that the University maintains healthy enrolment of international students and attracts and retains a diverse range of students, the fees should support the mission and excellence of the University and should be comparable to those at peer institutions.”

As a result of this resolution, UBC has proposed to increase tuition fees for international students over the next 3 years. The increases vary from faculty-by-faculty and program-by-program. For Sauder, this means a 23.5% increase for 2016-2017, a 23.5% increase for 2017-2018, and a 5% increase for 2018-2019, culminating in an annual tuition of $47,738 by 2019. Once a student is admitted, their tuition will increase by no more than 5% per year. Existing students will see their tuition rise from 2%-3% yearly, depending on when they were admitted.

The estimated incremental revenue (additional new revenue) from the increases to Vancouver campus international undergraduate tuition is $9 million for 2016/17, $33 million in 2017/18, and $61 million in 2018/19.

The proposed tuition amounts were determined through a rigorous process of benchmarking against peer institutions. UBC believes it is a leading global university, yet its international tuition rates have not kept pace with other leading universities. The selection of UBC’s peers for benchmarking considered results from survey research of UBC’s international undergraduate and graduate students, which revealed that these students also considered studying in the USA (65%), the United Kingdom (34%), and Australia (22%), and selected UBC. The benchmarking process revealed that for undergraduate programs with proposed increases, about 40% are between 15% and 29.9% below benchmark and 60% of the programs are 30% to 50% below benchmark. For non-thesis-based graduate programs about 70% of the programs are within the range of 16% to 260% below benchmark. The analysis took into consideration data from student surveys including information about the primary factors international students consider when they select a university. International students decide to attend UBC because of the institution’s reputation and the reputation of the program. The benchmarking revealed that almost all of UBC’s current international students’ tuition is below benchmark. The proposed increases will bring UBC’s programs in line with peer institutions.

Increased funding will be directed overwhelmingly to support excellence in teaching and research and, more broadly, in enhancing the student experience (pictured below). The majority of the funding will go towards the Strategic Investment Fund, a fund that will be used to support excellence in research, teaching and learning and the educational experience. The rest will be contributed towards UBC faculties, administration, student financial support, and outstanding tuition and fees.*
*All listed data and graph credited to consultations.students.ubc.ca.*
**Opinion of UBC Administration**

UBC’s administration met on several occasions with the elected student leaders in advance of preparing this proposal. During the consultation period through meetings with Executives and Faculty representatives, the CUS has gathered the following information of the opinion of the UBC Administration.

UBC wishes to increase international student tuition for five chief reasons:

1. Increase student financial aid and support;
2. Increase diversity, recruitment, and retention;
3. Improve the international student experience;
4. Meet the standards of peer institutions and international tuition; and
5. Excellence and strategic priorities for students.

**Increase Student Financial Aid and Support**

Currently, financial awards and assistance for international undergraduate students are derived from an allocation of assessed international undergraduate tuition, equal to 7.47%. Each campus has its own financial assistance fund that is firewalled between campuses. With about $12M allocated towards UBC Vancouver and $1.3M at UBC Okanagan, this is the largest pool of dedicated funds for international undergraduates in Canada. In 2015-2016, there is an estimated 1900 students in Vancouver receiving a UBC financial award or support on entrance or in-program, equivalent to 25% of all international undergraduates.

All University Awards are governed by Senate regulations. This means that all new awards must follow due procedure, be presented to Senate Awards Committee for review, be recommended to Senate for approval, and eventually be recommended to the Board of Governors for final approval. Basic eligibility requirements are set by Senate-established regulations, such as the credit load required to receive an award.

Financial assistance currently available includes on-entrance need and merit awards (33%), on-entrance merit awards (33%), in-program merit awards (14%), and other in-program awards (19%). On entrance need and merit-based awards (renewable) are presented to outstanding students with significant financial need. On entrance merit-based awards (both renewable and non-renewable) are presented for high-achievement on entrance. In-program merit-based awards for continuing students recognizing scholarship in faculty. Other in-program awards recognize contributions to building of international community, undergraduate research, Work Learn to support participation in on-campus employment opportunities, emergency bursaries, and Go Global Travel Grants. These awards are granted to students of all regional backgrounds (pictured below).
All ISI SFAA programs are reviewed each year to determine whether they are still meeting their stated purpose. In 2014 and 2015, discussions took place with elected student leaders, Associate Deans, and relevant staff to discuss the future of ISI Financial Awards programs. The results of these conversations around those questions include that recruitment and retention of top international students are valid drivers for awards programs, UBC’s ISI SFAA programs should also support a measure of diversity, all awards programs should have clear and measurable goals, and UBC should preserve parity of awards offerings across the two campuses. There is a wide array of merit-based awards currently available, however, these are the identified gaps: in-program bursaries and/or micro-loans, and geo-targeted entrance awards.

**Increase Diversity, Recruitment and Retention**

The International Student Initiative (ISI) recruits undergraduate students to meet international enrolment targets set by each of the faculties. The ISI recruits students for UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan, and UBC’s English bridging programs, including Vantage College and the English Foundations Program. Graduate and postdoctoral Studies (Vancouver) and College of Graduate Studies (Okanagan) support recruitment for international and domestic graduate students. At the graduate level, there are no set enrolment limits or goals. Recruitment is more decentralized to individual faculty and units, ad centralized recruitment is in the form of a dedicated web presence, social media, online community engagement, representation at select fairs and exhibitions.
Recruitment is carried out in 78 countries worldwide and 18 U.S. states. Recruitment teams are aligned to support regional focus in Asia & Europe (A & E), and the Americas Middle East, and Africa (AMEA). Recruiters are a diverse group of professionals, and languages spoken by the team include: Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Korean, Japanese, German, Afrikaans, Swedish, Bahasa Indonesian, Turkish, and Hindi. The recruitment process includes visits to secondary schools (there are 1250 school visits per year in 350 cities worldwide), in-country international student advisors and recruiters, eRecruitment (including online info sessions, virtual college fairs, live chats with 150 sessions per year), on-campus recruiting (including campus tours with 10,000 + visitors per year, familiarization tours for high school counselors, and other hosted events), strategic partnerships with other universities as well as government sponsoring organizations, and strategic need and merit scholarship programs.

UBC recruits from excellent schools around the world that can provide students with the appropriate preparation for university. Admission to UBC is administered by Undergraduate Admission (Enrolment Services and Registrar's office), competitive, needs-blind (as is common across all Canadian public universities), does not require applicants to self-identify race or ethnicity (which is common for US universities, but not common in Canada on college applications), expects students to be graduating from a senior secondary school program within a 12-year (K-12) system or be applying from a recognized college transfer program, requires a relatively high-level of English language proficiency, and requires appropriate high school prerequisites for certain programs. With a growing worldwide demand for higher education, with 4.5 million internationally mobile students, more than half are from Asia. UBC enrolls 11,965 international students in North America, the second largest number of international students after the University of Toronto (data is as of Fall 2014 and includes both graduate and undergraduate levels).

However, geographic diversity is still a goal and a challenge. UBC international enrolment goals and strategies are subject to global forces of supply and demand. UBC is committed to recruiting from a variety of countries, even if the numbers are small from an individual country, to balance the outsize demand from certain countries. A healthy diversity of students from different countries, different linguistic, and cultural backgrounds supports true internationalization and pedagogical goals. UBC is focusing recruitment on five key regions over the next five years to enhance geographic diversity: Africa (particularly Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria), the Middle East, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the USA. Results from the first year of this strategy are encouraging (pictured below).
Improve the International Student Experience

There is a network of seamless, integrated supports for the whole student, including programs such as Jump Start and Residence Life, International Student Advising, the International Student Guide, Faculty-based International Coordinators, Enrolment Services Professionals, the International Student Initiative, Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, the International Scholars Program, the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program, counseling services, Access & Diversity, Student Health Services and Recreation, and general student life on campus. There is also a network of leadership, learning, and community engagement, including opportunities such as Work Learn, Graduate Student Career Supports, Launch a Career in Canada, community-based experiential learning and research placements here and abroad, Global Lounge, the UBC-AMS Global Fund, UBC Tandem Language Learning, and campus life, such as clubs, recreation, events, dialogues, and peer leadership.

Jump Start is UBC Vancouver’s primary strategy to support international student retention and success. Featuring an immersive two-week orientation, faculty-led learning communities, peer leadership, and yearlong academic support designed to foster a sense of connectedness, capability, resourcefulness, and academic culture. Jump Start was funded as an ongoing University strategy following the international student tuition consultation in 2014-15. Likewise, Jump Start Faculty Fellows puts students at ease with university culture, creates an open-minded dialogue that welcomes diverse perspectives, creates early formative learning experiences before they’re evaluated, encourages students to identify themselves as knowledge-producers, and cultivates the message that professors are approachable. Senior Faculty Fellows aims to create intellectual and pedagogical cohesion, focus communication among faculty fellows for maximum efficiency, and produce an atmosphere of intellectual dialogue among faculty.

Orientation positively influences students’ academic success in first year and retention. Findings from the Jump Start expanded pilot (2011-14) found that Jump Start participation improved student retention and year one sessional averages. There are also predictors of a successful academic, social, and psychological transition to UBC; findings from Dr. Amori Mikami’s study of UBC Jump Start program participants (2012-14) including doing well academically in Septem-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Last Institution</th>
<th>2014 Registered</th>
<th>2015 Registered</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>283</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India/South Asia</td>
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<td>180</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings from the Jump Start expanded pilot (2011-14) found that Jump Start participation improved student retention and year one sessional averages. There are also predictors of a successful academic, social, and psychological transition to UBC; findings from Dr. Amori Mikami’s study of UBC Jump Start program participants (2012-14) including doing well academically in Septem-
ber, feeling close to student leaders in September, feeling close to Faculty Fellows (academic outcomes only), named by Learning Community peers as a friend, and posting on Facebook about participating in fun social events.

UBC cares that students have the ability to be directly and expertly supported as they manage their immigration matters. UBC meets the highest professional standard for immigration, health insurance and cultural transition advising. In international student advising, students have the ability to be directly and expertly supported. Total interactions have been steadily increasing, with 7,633 in the 2014-2015 term. Students learn to manage immigration matters from initial study permit to understanding pathways upon graduation, and this is a critical resource for navigating the uniqueness of life as an international student. 68% of students believe that it is very important for students to resolve the advising issues in order to live and study at UBC.

Strategic support for students’ career development requires an ecosystem of support encompasses four pillars:

1) Identity; 
2) Experiences; 
3) Network; and 
4) Tactical and informational support.

In 2014/15 international students accessed career advising (1:1 advising appointments and career workshops) proportionately higher. Similarly, Work Learn supports and subsidizes meaningful work experiences at UBC. This is one example of how UBC facilitates the “experiences” part of career development for students.

Meet the Standards of Peer Institutions and International Tuition

There was a three-step approach used to ascertain benchmarked tuition levels. The proposed program-specific tuition was determined through a robust, multi-stage collaborative process, with each of the faculties.

1. Peer program benchmarking based on tuition and ranking. The focus is on Canadian peers, and validation and potential re-calibration based on global peers.
2. The proposed benchmark tuition range is placed within range of risk assessment based on program demand, differentiators, and labor market outlook.
3. The proposed benchmark tuition level is to be reached through phasing (over three years).

The peer group of Canadian, international, and UBC internal comparators are determined by English-speaking, primarily public institutions, Times Higher Education university ranking, comparable program pre-requisites and credentials, faculty guidance and survey data, applications, acceptances, and admissions ratios, quality of student applicant pool, faculty input on program differentiators, faculty or subject ranking, survey data, program-specific labour market prospects, tuition and enrolment trends at other universities, and enrolment targets.
This year, there was an average of 12 peer institutions benchmarked for each of the undergraduate programs. Only one undergraduate program was above the benchmark, and most of the rest were approximately 30% to 40% below benchmark. Similarly, there was an average of 10 peer institutions benchmarked for each of the non-thesis-based graduate programs. None of the graduate programs were above benchmark, with 4 at benchmark and the rest below benchmark.

**Excellence and Strategic Priorities for Students**

What defines an excellent university? According to the administration, it is exceptional research, the ability to attract the best undergraduate students both across the board and in select areas, possessing outstanding learning environments based on research, being valued by the community, and acknowledging that innovation should span through all university activities. The result will be hiring great and highly qualified professors, while appealing to great undergraduate and graduate students.

What is an excellent student experience? According to the administration, it is supporting an inclusive environment, having dynamic and engaging community building events, enhanced learning opportunities, connecting students and employers, and preparing students for success post-grad.

UBC is founded on research, and therefore, it attracts excellent faculty from all four corners of the globe due to their world-class prestige. UBC is special in that sense as it is very large and successful in research, dominating research in BC (UBC conducts 75% of the research). Universities are the only place where researchers can pursue what they want to pursue, and it is our duty to do the best possible research. Students should care about research because a better reputation of research attracts higher-level researchers, revenue, and the ability to send undergraduates to various related programs. UBC hopes to provide them with a transformative education, rather than merely teaching and having students attend lectures.
Opinion of Sauder Faculty

The Board of Governors has passed similar policies before, in which the international student tuition is aimed be set at “market rates.” The Board’s mission is to become Canada’s most influential, globally recognized business school through the impact of our research and our graduates. In the past several years, the tuition of the Bachelor of Commerce program has risen by nearly $12,000. Similarly, consultations were held with students over their concerns, and various parties played roles in the consultation process.

Understandably, no consumer ever wants to hear that prices are increasing, albeit no current student is going to be personally impacted financially. Therefore, individuals must view the increase from the perspective of an alumnus. The tuition increase has an important impact on future of the institution, and our ability to meet our mission and aspirations as an organization is contingent on being able to raise additional funds.

In the case of Sauder, some of the resources would be placed in a fund managed by the Provost, called the Strategic Initiatives Fund. The Strategic Initiatives Fund address issues important and critical to all students, although Sauder has yet to determine how additional revenue to this fund will be allocated. Normally, two thirds of the fund supports themes or activities that aren’t faculty specific, and the other third is contributed towards the school. Of this one third, a portion is allotted towards hiring world-class faculty and staff (where recent examples include professors from Stanford, Singapore, ESEAN), student experience programs (such as mentorship, Co-op, experiential learning, Learning Labs, TREK programs, Sauder Kenya, studying abroad, and developing new courses), and student services (such as the Business Career Centre, Canaccord Learning Commons, and Student Orientation programs).

Sauder’s overarching goal is to become the number one business school in research in all of Canada. Currently, it is one of the top ten schools in research in the world in all significant areas of business (finance, marketing, analytics), and is recognized for excellence in the student experience, such as through exchange programs and technology in the classroom. To continue building a strong global presence, it is imperative that Sauder attracts high quality student applicants, establishes a sizeable presence in China (including executive education and strong alumni networks), maintains business clubs around the world, leverages opportunities and alliances with other global schools, and improves global brand reputation.

Globally, Sauder is recognized as the top Canadian business school in China. The school has a long history of activity in China, and therefore, China is the modal contributor to international students to this school, graduating over a hundred Chinese nationals per year. A significant portion of Sauder students travel to China for work following graduation, and as a result, there is an active alumni network in Shanghai, Beijing, and Hong Kong. Geographic diversity has been a challenge for the university as a whole. International efforts have been very focused on China, as they are also providing the largest number of applicants internationally. The growth of China has been substantial; 8% per year in the past decade and 7% for the foreseeable future. Although recruiters are aware of this challenge and are making a conscious effort, the demand is very high and overwhelms applicants from other diverse regions. Sauder has increased its efforts to recruit
outside of China in the past couple of years, but the relative numbers of Mainland Chinese students has moderated. Sauder has put a great emphasis on ethics and values in business education (the three R’s), and it the CUS has embraced this fact when communicating with sponsors and external parties. Recognized as a collaborator across campus and as a facilitator of careers for UBC, Sauder as a faculty receives a lot of pushback from other faculties. There is an opportunity to connect with other faculties, for example, through the recent Dual Degree program, B+MM, and New Venture Design.

Current tuition levels are lower than that of peer institutions, which limits our ability to make investments that will strengthen teaching, learning, research, and excellence. A review of peer school tuition levels revealed that UBC’s international tuition is below benchmark for Undergraduate and Graduate programs as most programs underpriced heavily. Sauder’s international tuition is currently sitting at $29,826, compared to the benchmark at $43,300 (benchmark being program specific labour market prospects, international demand for programs, data from student surveys, and reputation). The peer average is $41,000. By inflating tuition fees by 5%, Sauder can peg it close to international increases. The university also requests for the student bodies to rally with the university to lobby the provincial government to make up for lost funding, as the level of government support has decreased drastically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admitted prior to May 2015</th>
<th>2% annual increase</th>
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<tr>
<td>Admitted on or after May 2015</td>
<td>3% annual increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitted from May 2016 onward</td>
<td>No more than 5% annual increase</td>
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The sustainability of core academic operations is a key objective. After the proposed increase, total funding will equate to $56 million, with BCom domestic students contributing $8 million, BCom international students contributing $17 million, government funding contributing $8 million, MBA students contributing $4 million, and UBC tuition transfers contributing $7 million. Total expenses are $59 million, composed of $47 million of salaries and benefits, and $6 million in operating supplies. The shortfall in budget is covered by donations and professional education activities. Unfortunately, there is no method to guarantee equitable allocation between faculties. Percentage wise, Sauder has notably more international students, but in absolute numbers, other faculties may have a greater number. The revenue from the massive number of Sauder international students will be subsidizing all faculties and all of UBC, and therefore Sauder may end up subsidizing other faculties.
Opinion of Sauder Students

With the knowledge of a major upcoming international tuition increase instated by the University of British Columbia, many questions have been raised. In an effort to gauge student opinion on the matter, the consultation process involved many resources for students, including but not limited to meetings with student leadership, Town Halls, Think Tanks, and feedback forms.

The student societies met with the university administration, specifically the Provost and VP Students, to discuss these proposed international tuition increases and all factors related since April 2015. The meetings were concentrated on the following topics:

1. Student Financial Aid and Support
2. Diversity, Recruitment and Retention
3. The International Student Experience
4. Peer Institutions and International Tuition
5. What is Excellence?
6. Strategic Priorities for Students

The Town Halls were informal gatherings that brought students together to discuss specific issues, listen to students’ concerns, and have a dialogue about the international tuition increases. The Town Halls were concentrated on the following topics:

1. Proposed International Tuition Increases & University Priorities (1)
2. Proposed International Tuition Increases & University Priorities (2)
3. Alternatives to Tuition Increases (AMS Hosted)
4. University Excellence and the Student Experience (AMS Hosted)

The Think Tanks were smaller groups brought together to discuss solutions to problems brought up with international tuition increases in mind. These are meant to be diverse groups for creative and critical thinking, as well as problem solving. The Think Tanks were concentrated on the following topics:

1. How do we select ‘peer institutions’ to UBC?
2. What is the relationship between diversity and an increase in international tuition?
3. How is university ranking affected by tuition?
4. How can we support the average international student? (ISA hosted)

The AMS has also advocated against the international tuition increases, pursuant to the AMS University Affordability & Accessibility Policy. According to an article published in The Ubyssey\(^7\), it outlines how the AMS has passed several motions on how they will take an active stance in opposing the tuition increases.

“The first motion outlines a fund creation of $20,000 to finance a campaign opposing the tuition increases. The second motion instructs the society to reach out to alumni to ask for their support in opposing the increases. The third motion mandates the AMS to campaign for students to boycott UBC Food Services, a profit-based arm of the university.”

Consequently, this boycott can be used as a leverage to put pressure on university administration.

Response Distribution and Overall Feedback

As well, the Commerce Undergraduate Society released a feedback form to its constituents asking for student opinions.* Overall, responses are relatively evenly distributed – with the bars showing a general distribution of each possible outcome between groups (for, against or neutral). Students in years five and above however, contributed very little with regards to providing feedback.

The general feedback with regards to the tuition increase survey is that Commerce students across all years with the exception of students’ years 5 and above are overwhelmingly against the tuition increase – approximately 69.37% of all those who responded.
Feedback Question-by-Question across all years

To determine why the majority of students were opposed to this resolution, we asked four questions as follows:

1. What are your thoughts on the proposed international tuition increases?
2. What does excellence mean to you in the context of UBC? What does it mean to be an “Excellent University?”
3. What would you like to see from the AMS and other student societies (CUS) in regards to this increase?
4. What resources here at Sauder do you think we should be investing in to better support your student experience?

In this report thus far, 174 responses have been read and processed into a more digestible format with unique features from each category noted and summarized below.

The general consensus among international students is that the increase is sudden and unnecessary, and they don’t see much benefit. 77% of respondents believe that the definition of “excellence” is primarily academic excellence and other opportunities, rather than labels such as ranking or quality of facilities. Based on numerous tuition consultations, students consider retention to be more than just research; instead, UBC should invest more in the student experience. To many, UBC is a city within a city, sporting an animated and lively student community. Therefore, they worry how UBC only frames excellence in the teaching and research domain. After graduation, it is the clubs, extra-curriculars, and campus life students were involved in that are meaningful, not the material they learn in lecture.

Moreover, many international students chose to attend UBC because it is more affordable compared to other universities. If the tuition level increases, many students would rather pay the in-
incremental and attend a higher caliber university, such as one in the United States. To these students, they don’t see a reason in paying such an excessive level of tuition, when they could pay the same amount to attend a more respected institution instead. Although the tuition increase will provide minor support to UBC’s financial aid services, there is no denying the direct impact: economic equity will be minimized as the pool of prospective students shrinks, and only students who come from healthy financial backgrounds will be able to afford to come to UBC.

Additionally, students don’t see a pressing need as to where UBC requires additional funds. The only reason for the tuition increase seems to be to keep up with market rates. It is understood that UBC wants to achieve high aspirations of being an esteemed university, but at the same time, the international students are being forced to bear the brunt.
Q3: What Should Student Societies Do?

- Oppose the Increase: 78
- Remain Neutral: 5
- Support the Increase: 17
- Transparency/Information: 20
- Voice Student Opinion: 13
- Other: 41

Q4: Most Desired Resources to Enhance Student Experience

- Academic Resources: 42
- Career Support: 15
- Improved Facilities: 15
- Nothing, Stop Increase: 13
- International Resources: 13
- Student Life/Wellbeing: 13
- Financial Aid: 13
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Q1
- Sudden and Unnecessary: 88
- Reduces Diversity: 17
- Justified/Fair: 47
- Unjustified/Unfair: 6
- Other: 15

Q3
- Oppose the Increase: 78
- Remain Neutral: 5
- Support the Increase: 17
- Transparency/Information: 20
- Voice Student Opinion: 13
- Other: 41

Q2
- Academic Excellence: 80

Q4
- Academic Resources: 42
<table>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Career Support</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Value</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Improved Facilities</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Facilities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nothing, Stop Increase</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking/Public Interest</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>International Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Student Life/Wellbeing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All graphs and numerical analysis credited to AMS Representative of the CUS.*
Conclusion

There is strong unanimous opposition against the projected international tuition increase, and it is asked that UBC will take these opinions in consideration when formalizing the proposal to the Board of Governors. The university has presented a strong case for the increase, in terms of the promised student financial aid and support and improved international student experience. However, although they have provided valid reasons, the decision can be perceived as being too rushed and that the university has neglected to facilitate enough research to back their case.

Based on the student experience of attending the Town Halls offered, questions that still remain unanswered with viable proof of research are as follows:

- Does increasing international tuition increase diversity among students?
- Does excellent research result in an excellent student experience?

Overall, Sauder BCom students generally agree that the university is in the right to take initiative and to invest in the future of UBC; however, students require more details rather than an ambiguous strategic fund with no immediate concrete and actionable plans. In addition to this, the general student population of BComs also question whether increasing international tuition is ethical and if it is the right—and only—method to do so.