

Policy Number: E-5
Title: Government of British Columbia and Student Affordability

Passed: July 29, 2015
Expires:

Summary:

Directs the VP External to advocate to the provincial government for increased affordability measures for students.

Number & Title:

E-5: Government of British Columbia and Student Affordability

Effective Date/Expiry Date:

July 29, 2015

Approval Date:

September 27, 2017

Policy Type:

External Policy

Review Date:

This policy shall be reviewed every two (2) years.

Responsible Body:

AMS Advocacy Committee

Authority:

AMS Code of Procedure Section II, article 11(1)

“Council may create external and internal policies as well as combined policies.”

Purpose and Goals:

This policy is designed to state the AMS’s stance on:

- 1) The issue of UBC student affordability as a whole, from the perspective of how the Government of British Columbia can increase financial accessibility;
- 2) Ways that the AMS can advocate for the provincial government to alleviate financial pressures on students.

Applicability:

This policy is applicable to the AMS’s stance towards the Government of British Columbia, and the advocacy of the VP External Affairs to the provincial government.

Exclusions:

There are no exclusions for this policy.

Definitions:

There are no definitions for this policy.

Policy:

Whereas UBC has been increasing tuition for both domestic and international students every year since 2002, with increases to international student tuition consistently exceeding increases to domestic tuition;

Whereas the cost of living in Metro Vancouver, especially housing, has risen significantly in the past few years, including a 20% increase for UBC student housing approved by the Board of Governors in 2015;

Whereas UBC has been facing serious financial challenges for several decades, due in large part to the stagnation in funding for post-secondary education and research from the federal and provincial governments;

Whereas British Columbia's recent history of having student loan interest rates that were the highest in the country, has left students with the highest average amount of debt;¹

Whereas British Columbia is the only province in Canada without a needs based grants program;

Whereas the BC Provincial Government has maintained a 2% cap on annual tuition increases for domestic students since 2005;

- 1) Be it resolved that the AMS acknowledges the importance of the 2% tuition cap for tuition affordability and encourages the government to make this cap permanent;
- 2) Be it further resolved that the AMS advocate for the provincial government to regulate international tuition increases in a similar manner;
- 3) Be it further resolved that the AMS advocate for the provincial government to increase the level of its funding for post-secondary education to offset the financial challenges faced by UBC;
- 4) Be it further resolved that the AMS advocate to provincial government for legislation targeting the affordability of and regulating the terms of student housing on campus;
- 5) Be it further resolved that the VP External Affairs work with the relevant entities within the University to advocate for measures that would improve the affordability of and access to post-secondary education;
- 6) Be it further resolved that the VP External Affairs advocate for the provincial government to provide additional resources for financial aid, including a needs-based grants program, lowering student loan interest rates, and other measures that would improve access to post-secondary education;
- 7) Be it further resolved that the VP External Affairs work with the provincial government for further funding and support for Open Education Resources, with an emphasis on resources that lower costs for students.

Consultations:

The following groups have been consulted during the development of this policy:

¹ Information about the submission to the 2015 budget of the Government of BC can be found at: <http://www.bcstudents.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ABCS-Submission-to-the-Select-Standing-Committee-on-Finance.pdf>

AMS Policy Advisor, AMS Advocacy Committee, AMS VP External Office, AMS VP Academic & University Affairs Office.

History:

This is the first draft of the first version of this policy.

Related Policies:

AMS's former policy 2011-04 "Improving student loan program", which expired in July 2014, mandates the AMS to advocate for changes to the student loan program to reduce the created financial barrier to education access.

Appendix/Appendices:

A briefing note titled "Post-secondary affordability and accessibility" accompanies this policy.²

² http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/065-16-BN-Affordability_Accessibility-2015_07_07.pdf