Student Priorities for 2022/23 UBC Operating Budget
Office of the Vice President, Academic and University Affairs
October, 2021

Prepared by:

Eshana Bhangu
Justin Kim
Lawrence Liu
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Dear Provost Szeri, Vice President Smailes, and Vice President Carry,

I write to you on behalf of the Alma Mater Society, representing all students of the University, regarding the 2022/23 UBC Operating Budget. In this report, you will find recommendations for a holistic range of student priorities for the coming year in relation to the University budget. While we sought to estimate the cost of as many of the priorities and proposed initiatives as accurately as possible, some figures have been approximated based on available data. I acknowledge that the actual figures may vary slightly as you advance in the budgeting process.

The areas we highlight in this report are:

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As student fees account for a significant portion of the University’s operating budget, consistent integration of student priorities is a sine qua non. I aver that affordability issues remain the principal concern for the students we represent; it is the primary barrier to continuing education and the primary reason students take up multiple employment opportunities, which often results in them not being able to perform to the best of their academic abilities. With a multitude of costs to consider and with limited funding options, tuition costs should not be prohibitive to a student’s learning. The University’s efforts and duties towards students are not limited to making efforts to ensure affordable education but also include striving to ensure that students are receiving value for the tuition they pay through initiatives that are of high import for them.

I would like to express my unalloyed gratitude to you for engaging with the Alma Mater Society and giving our desiderata the most earnest consideration. If you have any questions about the undermentioned detailed priorities, please do not hesitate to reach out at eshanabhangu@ams.ubc.ca

Sincerely,

Eshana Bhangu
Vice President, Academic and University Affairs
Alma Mater Society
Graduate Student Support

A central element of a graduate student’s education at UBC is their research contribution to the University. The current minimum funding for doctoral students at UBC (22,000 CAD/year) is significantly lower than the annualized BC minimum wage (29,184 CAD/year). While the minimum wage does not technically apply to graduate students, it acts as a relative measure of income required to stay above the poverty line. With a myriad of expenses to cover, each graduate student pays an average of $36,000 per year on living expenses (e.g. rent, groceries, transportation) and an additional $41,000 on tuition.\(^1\) As minimum funding is not nearly enough to support even the cost of tuition alone, students are forced to take on other employment opportunities in order to continue their research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate Description</th>
<th>Rate (CAD)</th>
<th>Annualized at 40 h/week (CAD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UBC Minimum Funding for Doctoral Students</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Minimum Wage (01/06/20)</td>
<td>14.60</td>
<td>28,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Minimum Wage (01/06/21)</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>29,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Work Learn Rate (4)</td>
<td>21.37</td>
<td>41,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current TA Rate</td>
<td>33.10</td>
<td>63,552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78% of graduate students in the research stream selected funding advocacy as a priority for the Graduate Student Society.\(^2\) Even amongst students who self-identify as having a mental health disorder, stipends are still the top requested advocacy issue, ahead of mental health and wellbeing initiatives. The lack of funding is beyond stressful for all students.

The majority of graduate students also do not have the luxury of parental support that many undergraduate students may be able to enjoy. Moreover, many graduate students have dependents of their own that require their care and attention. As a result, 61% of graduate students expect to have debt at graduation, with the average being around $40,000.\(^3\)

There is an inverse correlation between the number of hours spent at work and hours spent on research. The marginal value of each hour spent by a graduate student on research far outweighs the opportunity cost of each additional hour’s worth of tuition paid to the University. Further, students with insufficient funding tend to have longer completion times, a greater likelihood of attrition, and lower satisfaction regarding their overall graduate student experience.

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\(^1\) GSS Affordability Survey 2020
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) AMS Academic Experience Survey 2021
Thus, as representatives of both undergraduate and graduate students at UBC, and in line with the Graduate Student Society’s past efforts, we propose the immediate:

1. Introduction of an incremental funding plan for the PhD Minimum Funding policy and PhD Tuition Award (i.e. PAEIA or PAEIPA)

In the past, the Graduate Student Society has proposed a funding roadmap for PhD students that we take the opportunity to highlight below:

![Funding Roadmap: PhD](image)

**Figure 1**: GSS Funding roadmap for PhD students

In order to better support doctoral students, we ask that the University adopt this funding roadmap and engage in further conversation with the Alma Mater Society and the Graduate Student Society to increase PhD minimum funding and PhD tuition award allocations.

… and at the appropriate juncture, consideration of the following:

2. Eliminate tuition costs for doctoral students;
3. Increase the guaranteed funding requirements from 4 to 5 years (and extend 4YF to 5YF);
4. Remove continuing fees for research Master’s students;
5. Yearly indexing of stipends and fellowships based on the cost of education increase; and
6. Separate TA compensation from stipends.

Each of these measures would significantly assist graduate students in improving their productivity and quality of their life, and help maintain the University’s position as one of the top 40 research institutions in the world.
International Student Awards

For the average international student at UBC, the cost of tuition for one year is equivalent to what one domestic student will pay over the course of a four-year undergraduate career. Over 16,000 international students attend UBC and thus make up a significant proportion of tuition revenue and UBC’s overall revenue. University operations (e.g. central, faculties, the Academic Excellence fund, etc.) hinge on the revenue generated from student tuition.

International students also face significant challenges moving to Vancouver, far from home and family. Ensuring that they have the necessary financial assistance to help them navigate such a life-changing decision is essential to their long-term personal and professional development.

In order to better support international students, we propose the following:

1. Funding for resources to assess financial need in foreign countries and implementing need-based scholarships for international students

Currently, only merit-based and hybrid awards (i.e. awards with consideration of both academic merit and financial need) are available for international students. For the hybrid awards that fully support international students, only 45 students are able to be funded (approximately $56,000 per recipient) out of approximately one thousand applicants. With considerably limited funding options compared to domestic students (e.g. BC Student Aid, more donor-based awards, etc.), funding for strictly needs-based scholarships for international students is a necessity to alleviate the financial burden of tuition.

Another barrier to providing need-based scholarships is the assessment of need and the lack of a baseline. In order to accurately assess the financial needs of international students, the University needs to start by supporting collaborative conversations with the administration to understand and solidify the definition of “need” as identified by international students. From there, a model of determining financial need across different countries can be developed with consideration to different financial institutions, regulations, and socioeconomic contexts to more easily support international students in the years to come.

2. Expansion of the International Impact Award

The International Impact Award (a hybrid-based entrance award), within the International Scholars program, recognizes first-generation students that have demonstrated leadership in climate sustainability, human wellness, and social justice. Nine students were brought in for the 2021 Winter session, and the expansion of the program would see the acceptance of an additional ten students ($560,000 if funding per student is assumed to be $56,000) for the coming years to eventually develop a steady-state cohort of 50 total fully-funded spaces in the program.
3. Reallocate funding from automatically adjudicated awards (e.g. Trek Excellence Scholarship) to support more valuable experiential awards

Automatically adjudicated awards like the Trek Excellence Scholarship pay between $1,500 - $4,000 per year to a handful of international students based on past performance. Currently, funding for the Trek Scholarship comes directly from a pool of over $1 million. Given that $1,500 - $4,000 only makes up less than 10% of annual international student tuition per student, that funding could have a much more valuable impact if it as a whole were diverted to experiential awards rather than divided up and used as a cash payment.

The $1 million will be better used to increase funding for the Work Learn wage subsidy program (currently $8/hour) to support students in the Canadian job market and help build their careers out of university. The cost of increasing the $8/hour subsidy to $10/hour would require $1 million in order to maintain the same number of opportunities for students (900 in the summer and 1200 in the winter). Alternatively, the funding could be put towards expanding International Undergraduate Research Grants (currently up to $6,000 per term) to foster even stronger research development at the University. These funding allocations provide greater value to the student by supporting their long-term professional development and tangible goals, rather than a relatively insignificant short-term financial stipend. Therefore, we propose that the entirety of the funds allocated towards auto adjudicated awards be redirected to these opportunities that better support the development of students, as well as the academic mission of the university, in a more impactful manner.

4. Increase the Tuition Allocation Model (TAM) allocation for International Students Initiatives (ISI)

Revenues generated from student tuition contribute to the central, faculty, and academic excellence fund budgets. Currently, 7.5% of every international student’s tuition is directed towards awards and support for international students. We propose that this percentile be increased to 8% in the near future to better support all of the aforementioned proposals.

**Accessibility**

26% of buildings on campus are inaccessible according to the UBC Wayfinding Interface, and 5% of the student population reported having a mobile disability.\(^4\) Within our current student population, those who have access needs are a minority, and it’s worth exploring if there are barriers that prevent prospective students with disabilities from enrolling at our institution. We propose:

1. An audit of all buildings on campus (e.g. academic spaces, student residences, etc.) to assess modification needs across campus and follow the audit with renewal of those spaces to incorporate accessible design

\(^4\) AMS Academic Experience Survey 2021
Career Support Services

UBC has committed to supporting students’ career development as a foundational practice, as reflected in the University's institutional priorities for Student Research (Strategy 8), Practical Learning (Strategy 13), Student Experience (Strategy 15), and Alumni Engagement (Strategy 18). Although around 70% of students plan to enter the workforce after graduation, merely half of these students feel prepared to do so. As a globally leading institution that prioritizes the holistic development of its students, UBC must provide robust support for the enhancement of career support services on campus.

For this, we propose the following:

1. Ongoing funding for term soft-funded positions

In order to strategically sustain the high-impact results achieved through the pilot investments from the Academic Excellence Fund, and to form the next series of actions to further expand career development for all students at UBC, we request continuous funding for ongoing soft-funded positions to ensure the sustainability of evolving work in partnership with employers, organizations, and faculty partners. It is imperative to provide continuous funding for pilot projects and positions from the Academic Excellence Fund, all of which has demonstrated success and built capacity within the CSI&C for expanded reach to UBC students and alumni for career development support, access to workplace experience, and opportunities to connect students and employers. The exact proposal of funding for the various positions is listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Names</th>
<th>Estimated Cost (CAD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Program Assistant, Workplace Learning (x 1)</td>
<td>65,000/year (salary + benefits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager, Employer and Alumni Engagement (x 1)</td>
<td>110,000/year (salary + benefits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Workplace Learning Portfolio works to facilitate experiential learning opportunities that provide professional mentorship, guidance, support, and supervision from UBC faculty, staff, and/or community partners through intentional design that integrates high-impact career development strategies that help students reflect on career learning that takes place during work terms. Securing ongoing funding would address the administrative burden of a portfolio that manages approximately $7 million in annual funding in support of workplace learning experiences for current UBC students.

2. Increase financial investments into additional full-time employees (FTEs)

The Career and Professional Development portfolio of the CSI&C has been committed to building strategic partnerships with faculties to build discipline-specific career development supports, with an emphasis on Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and other equity-deserving populations.
With over 40% of students feeling that they do not have adequate opportunities at UBC to decide their career and 75% of students wishing for more UBC opportunities around professional development and academic opportunities, UBC must extend their investment to better support the Career and Professional development portfolio by funding five additional full-time Career Strategists in order to:

a. Provide career development support to Indigenous students and alumni;
b. Provide career development support to BPOC students and alumni;
c. Work with faculties to partner on building career development support to discipline-specific populations;
d. Rebuild structures and practices to ensure equitable, career-related access for all UBC students and alumni; and
e. Build more self-accessible and dynamic digital career development resources and strategies.

Over the past triennium, the portfolio these FTEs would be supporting has stewarded over 10,000 new employer accounts with UBC and engaged over 1,000 organizations in campus recruitment activities for students. In light of the impact they have been able to make with limited capacity, the Alma Mater Society is confident that the funding of five additional full-time Career Strategists will expand student opportunities for career exploration, meaningful engagement with employers, and overall career and identity development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Names</th>
<th>Estimated Cost (CAD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Strategist (x 5)</td>
<td>5 x 96,000/year (salary + benefits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Evaluation of technological platforms to increase the reach of the current capability of career advising, exploration, and skill-building workshops

While approximately 60% of students have attended in-person career advising sessions and workshops (e.g. resume or cover letter writing, interview preparation, workplace knowledge, etc.), over 40% of students still feel that they have inadequate information to decide on their degree and career paths. We ask that the University hold holistic strategic reviews of existing career exploration systems such as VMOCK, 12twenty, Salesforce, LinkedIn Learning, and other platforms to determine the single best-suited technology to be integrated across all faculty-based Career Centres and Co-op Offices to enhance the quality and scale the delivery of career advising support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Estimated Cost (CAD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various Platforms</td>
<td>Ranges from 20,000 - 200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 AMS Academic Experience Survey 2021
Teaching & Learning

In the past year of virtual learning, lecture capture technology has demonstrated multiple advantages in terms of accommodations and accessibility for students that should carry on into the return to in-person learning. Over two-thirds of students stated that they would use recorded lectures in addition to attending in-person classes as learning materials. The ability to pause and play, control the speed, and have 24-hour access to direct learning materials are unique to recorded lectures and allows the student to learn at their own pace. 84% of students agreed with the statement that having control over recorded lectures would increase their efficiency and enhance their learning. We propose the following:

1. The integration of an Enterprise Video Platform (EVP)

Currently, UBC employs three different systems that enable lecture capture and video creation: Kaltura, Mediasite, and Panopto. While each software provides different features for instructors, having three separate systems hampers efficiency and makes it difficult for a holistic integration of campus-wide lecture recording implementation and uptake. Therefore, in order to keep up with the increasing student demand for recording and streaming capabilities (e.g. lecture capture, international student events, etc.), we ask that the University invest in integrating an Enterprise Video Platform (EVP). An EVP will enable consistent lecture capture and video experiences throughout the university and the gradual transition to permanent installations in all General Teaching Spaces (GTS) on campus. We request that the University resource efforts to address the need for an EVP from the initiation of the project to engagement with the academic community, to procurement, and finally to implementation.

2. A review of Restricted Teaching Spaces (RTS) for permanent lecture capture technology installation

While our phenomenal UBC IT Audio Visual Team has outfitted a significant proportion of the approximate 340 total GTS to support lecture capture in the institution’s transition back to in-person learning, there is limited information on the capabilities of the approximately 170 Restricted Teaching Spaces (RTS) on campus. Given that RTS are largely faculty-controlled and that a sizable tranche of student tuition is used by the faculties, students must have transparent data available on how their fees are being used for their top priorities, one of which is video experiences in learning spaces. There is quite a lapse in central knowledge of these spaces, and consequently, what students would presume to be fragmented recording and streaming capabilities between RTS and GTS. We ask that the University commit resources to conducting a review of all RTS to assess the existing state of RTS and scope for permanent lecture capture installations.

6 AMS Academic Experience Survey 2021
Mental Health & Wellbeing

According to the Canadian release of the 2019 National College Health Assessment (NCHA), students’ serious mental health issues including depression, anxiety, insomnia, self-harm, and suicide attempts have all increased since the last survey in 2016. 44% of students felt so depressed that they had difficulty functioning, 16% of students had seriously considered suicide, and 10% of students reported self-inflicted harm.7

Students are experiencing higher levels of stress, anxiety, and social isolation as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. The need for a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to mental health on campus is greater than ever before. We appreciate the existing initiatives, for example, the expansion and addition of seven embedded counsellors within faculties, that provide targeted support to students. However, students have received little communication regarding their responsibilities and how to access the new services. We want to highlight that in addition to our recommendations, the University should be on the qui vive to evaluate student awareness of the resources it provides.

To support the mental wellbeing of students, we propose the following:

1. Funding of $240,000 over the next 2 years for the UBC Black Student Caucus Mental Wellbeing Project

A growing concern at UBC is the barriers to effective support for students of equity-deserving groups. Studies on the influence of race and ethnicity in mental health treatment have shown that “culturally relevant aspects of the mental health service experience are salient to ethnic minority clients and can affect how they respond to services.”8 Another study on the barriers and facilitators to accessing mental healthcare in Canada for Black youth reported that many aspects of the mental health care system are Eurocentric, and “lack the understanding of the unique experiences of Black youth.”9

In response to consistent and repeated requests from Black UBC students, staff, and faculty, the UBC Black Caucus launched a Mental Wellness Pilot Project from March 1 to 31st, 2021, connecting Black students to Black counsellors to better understand the needs of Black students and address one of the major barriers to accessing UBC’s mental health supports. With only two weeks of lead time, 51 hours of one-on-one virtual counselling sessions were fully booked and delivered. This project was extremely well-received by students, with feedback that just “one session [had] been so beneficial” and that the “experience [had] been life-changing." 100% of student participants reported that the pilot program was extremely important and that they were likely to participate in future programs. This initiative has also been cognizant of the burden that our Black staff and faculty members face when

7 American College Health Association. (2019). (rep.). American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: Canadian Consortium Executive Summary Spring 2019 (pp. 13–16). Silver Spring, MD.
Black students turn to them for support. The Black staff and faculty members’ roles then surpass their quotidian duties at the University as they provide informal support that they may not have the capacity and professional training for.

The UBC Black Caucus has a two-year plan to develop a more complete study to provide ten free one-hour sessions of one-on-one virtual or in-person counselling per year to Black students while engaging with Black Counsellors from Vancouver and the Okanagan Valley. From October 2021 to September 2023, the project plans to deliver 50 hours each month of either virtual or in-person counselling dependent on the student's preference at $60,000 per year ($120,000 of counselling fees over 2 years). Including Project, PhD Student Honoraria, Principal Investigator, and Community Engagement fees, total costs amount to $240,000 over two years (annual funding of $120,000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Mental Wellness Study Annual Budget (Amended 09/17/2021)</th>
<th>Estimated Cost (CAD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling Fees (50 hours per x 12 months)</td>
<td>60,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Lead (0.2 FTE)</td>
<td>15,833.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD Student Honoraria</td>
<td>7,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>4,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Direct Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>87,883.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator Honoraria (in kind)</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management (0.4 FTE - in kind)</td>
<td>30,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total In Kind Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>40,000.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Indirect Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,970.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual Funding Request** 119,853.75

**Total Funding Request (Over Two Years)** 239,707.50

Moreover, due to the Eurocentric approach in mental healthcare, the lack of understanding for unique experiences of Black youth also transcends to other equity-deserving groups. The data from the Black Mental Wellness Pilot Project can serve as a stepping stone to developing similar Mental Wellness programs for all other students in marginalized groups, including those in the LGBTQIA2S+ community, Indigenous students, all students of colour, low-income students, as well as international and graduate students. These programs will help tremendously in identifying and filling in the gaps to achieve a long-term solution for students that may prefer to be matched with a counsellor of similar
backgrounds. Increased funding to refine communication strategies for new and existing mental health resources to students.

2. The adoption of the Mental Health Literacy (MHL) milestones identified by UBC Wellbeing

   a. Implementation of an MHL workplace training for managers and leaders within required workplace training mechanisms;
   b. Develop and implement an engagement strategy to collaborate with affinity groups on mental health literacy training, programs, and campaigns; and
   c. Develop mental health literacy program learning outcomes and competencies for students, staff, and faculty, and create a shared hub for training resources.

Mental health education and training for employees has been shown to reduce stigma and improve the ability to identify and appropriately address symptoms of mental health issues. In light of the return to on-campus activity, as well as the recently developed workplace learning platform that can host the training session, we support the development and implementation of a virtual 45-minute, interactive, and synchronous MHL workplace training. The virtual training will include research-based content and practical examples of enacting the four foundational elements of mental health literacy:

   a. Understanding how to obtain and maintain positive mental health;
   b. Understanding mental disorders and their treatments;
   c. Decreasing stigma related to mental disorders; and
   d. Enhancing help-seeking efficacy.

Those who occupy leadership roles at UBC should be equipped to support not only their own mental health but also the mental health of their colleagues and their direct reports (e.g. staff, faculty, and student staff) to sustain healthy working environments. The University has already put in place mandatory training for employees on a host of topics such as data security, WorkDay, workplace safety, and respectful conduct. In light of these enactments and various organizations (e.g. Bell, BCHydro, and more) having implemented mandatory mental health training, we ask that UBC too, prioritize this initiative.

Ergo, in order to support this work and further initiatives as such, we recommend that the annual funding allocation for the Strategic Initiative Fund be increased from $100,000 to $300,000.

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**Food Insecurity**

Students' experience of food insecurity range from worrying about having enough money for food, compromising the quality of foods consumed, or most severely, skipping meals entirely with severe unintentional weight loss. Food insecurity is strongly tied to low levels of income, and often tuition and housing are fixed costs where food is not. As revealed by the AMS Academic Experience Survey 2021 results, 1 in 3 students are concerned about running out of money to buy food this year. Here at UBC and at campuses across North America, food insecurity is a major issue and it has significant impacts on mental, physical and social wellbeing.

We believe that UBC should prioritize extending resources to provide healthy, low-cost, dignified, and emergency food resources to students (e.g. Meal Share program, Fooood outlets, Acadia Hampers, etc). Concomitantly, the University must also give consideration to initiatives that aim to transition from an emergency model to a community-led sustainable model and demonstrate its commitment to the Food Security Initiative’s (UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework) target of reducing student food insecurity by 2025.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Estimated Cost FY 22/23 (CAD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UBC Food Hub</td>
<td>Space and Equipment (Scoping)</td>
<td>100,000 - 300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 FTE Coordinator (New)</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Student Staff</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthen Existing Programming</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital Food Hub (Launched)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fooood Outlets</td>
<td>2-3 outlets providing $3 meal per day for general student population</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Share Program</td>
<td>Dignified food relief funds direct to student cards</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acadia Hampers</td>
<td>Weekly hampers at Acadia Park offering supplemental food &amp; baby supplies</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agora</td>
<td>Food outlet that offers cheap food to food-insecure students</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprouts</td>
<td>Food outlet that offers cheap food to food-insecure students</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>555,000 - 755,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategic Initiatives

1. Implementation of the Indigenous Strategic Plan

We are greatly appreciative of the Indigenous Strategic Fund that was launched to support the implementation of the 2020 Indigenous Strategic Plan. However, we would like to take this opportunity to relay to you that the Indigenous Strategic Plan is something the Alma Mater Society would like to see embedded in the University’s budget in addition to having a separate fund dedicated to it. As we have an institutional plan committing UBC to Truth and Reconciliation, it is pivotal that our budget is reflective of those efforts and that the endeavour to resource the implementation of this plan and the spirit behind it isn’t limited to the Indigenous Strategic Fund.

2. UBC’s response to the climate emergency

We are enthusiastic about the University’s efforts towards UBC’s Climate Action Plan 2030. The explicit commitment to mitigating “Extended Impact” emissions encourages individual members of the UBC Community to aid the institutional efforts to mitigate direct emissions from heating and operation of buildings and other campus functionalities.

The draft targets have key action items for Campus Operations Emissions (i.e. Academic District Energy System, Buildings, Fleet, Internal Carbon Pricing), Extended Impact Emissions (i.e. Commuting, Business Air Travel, Food Systems, Waste and Materials, Engagement and Outreach Programs, Embodied Carbon), and Complementary Action Areas. The draft targets and emerging direction presented to the Board of Governors in February 2021 and the work done thereafter allow one to feel optimistic in regards to UBC’s climate action.

Considering the distributed leadership model for the implementation of this plan and the accountability framework (units and departments actively measuring progress against specific CAP 2030 actions and being responsible to a committee), we affirm we are confident in the direction this plan is taking to address student concerns about the University’s efforts following the climate emergency declaration. To the best of our knowledge, extending the resources required to operationalize CAP 2030 is already a priority for the University Leadership going into the budgeting process. Thus, we would simply like to take this opportunity to voice the AMS’s support for this plan’s advancement.

Conclusion

The Alma Mater Society wholeheartedly appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the budget of the University. We strove to be as specific as possible in an attempt to provide an accurate insight into student priorities as of date. While the report is quite specific in several areas, I also intend for it to be one that facilitates collaborative conversations regarding the ways the University can distribute funds to impact students in a meaningful manner.

Granted, the University landscape evolves and adjusts as do student priorities. What I do note is that most priorities in this report, if not all, are congruent with UBC’s strategic goals, initiatives, and values as an institution. The budget creation process is one where you all, the University Leadership, often have to choose between what you can and cannot resource. However, this is also an opportunity to recognize and demonstrate to the community that the ultimate goal students and the Administration have in common and work tirelessly towards is the progress of the University and the advancement of those who comprise it.

The allocation of the incremental tuition revenue this academic year has provided students with many helpful bursaries and aid (e.g. textbook bursary, quarantine bursary, emergency aid, and more) and has soft-funded a few initiatives. While the impact of those one-time allocations has been significant, it is cardinal that the University recognizes that the absence of a plan for the continuation of those programs risks forfeiting the successful offshoots.

Additionally, I’d like to point out an imminent theme that prevails time and time again - affordability to attend our university. I envisage that the AMS and the University Leadership are of the same opinion that this issue is best addressed by a multifaceted approach that goes beyond conversations of tuition fees. We are grateful for the Student Affordability Task Force and the opportunity to represent students at that table, and additionally, we are optimistic that the creation of an Affordability Plan will strive to tackle some of the foundational issues that students face.

Lastly, I would like to extend our thanks once again, for your willingness to engage and work with us for the amelioration of students’ lives at our university, and for reading this “laconic” report :)

Please don’t hesitate to reach out in case of any clarifications, feedback, questions, or further conversations.