



**VANCOUVER ISLAND  
UNIVERSITY**

# Budget Advisory Council Report

DRAFT OPERATING BUDGET PLAN FOR 2025-26

November 2024



The Budget Advisory Council (BAC) was established by the President & Vice-Chancellor in 2024 to advise and make recommendations on budgetary matters. BAC members do not serve as representatives of particular interests and were chosen for their knowledge, individual expertise, and to ensure fair representation of employee groups as well as students.

**The current membership of the Council includes:**

- Co-Chairs
  - Dr. Michael Quinn, Provost & VP Academic
  - Emily Huner, CFO & VP Administration
- Dean and Administrative leaders
  - Eve Stringham, Dean, Science & Tech
  - David Alexander, University Librarian
- Instructional Faculty Members from Senate
  - Kristie Dewald, Faculty of Management
  - Dr. Marian Riedel, Faculty of Education
- Students
  - Leah Vaisanen, VIUSU Indigenous Students' representative
  - Faisal Mahat, International student (grad)
- Employee Representatives (non-instructional)
  - Marika Grabowski - Advancement, Trades & Applied Technology
  - Bryan Tinlin, Student Affairs

**The Council's resource members are:**

- Nikki Klaassen, Director - Strategic Planning & Initiatives
- Kristine Monk, Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic
- Jose Gonzalez, Director – Financial Planning & Analysis
- Dhanya Balachandran, former Manager – Financial Planning & Analysis
- Zareen Jawaid, Controller
- Janette Polson, Executive Assistant - Office of the CFO & VP Administration

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# I. Message from Chief Financial Officer and Vice- President Administration

In October 2023, VIU committed to the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS) to reduce expenditures by 10 per cent (\$18 million) over three years and achieve a balanced budget by April 2026. This commitment aligns with our *Deficit Mitigation Plan (DMP)* and our *Strategic Plan: People, Place, and Potential*, and supports our goal of building a sustainable institution that best serves our students, employees, and community.

In 2023-24, we achieved our first-year target by reducing expenses by \$3.3 million, thanks to the dedication and hard work of many across VIU, from academic to administrative staff. A major step was restructuring multiple student services offices into the new Office of Students, which has streamlined services, reduced costs, and created a more student-centered experience.

However, we face ongoing challenges. Overall spending exceeded the 2023-24 budget by \$1.3 million, and we need to secure an additional \$7 million in savings this fiscal year to stay on track with year 2 of our DMP. Some difficult decisions, including closing The High School, ending our partnership with Elder College, canceling four academic programs, and optimizing academic delivery, were necessary steps toward these savings.

A significant challenge has been the recent regulatory changes to international student study and work permits, leading to a drastic drop in new enrollments. This will greatly impact tuition and fees revenue starting in 2025-26 and will affect our long-term financial planning.

As we navigate these uncertain waters, we must stay committed to fully achieving our deficit mitigation plan of reducing university expenditures by \$18 million by the end of fiscal year 2025-26 while knowing that achieving a balanced budget will now be several more years to come. Investments in areas such as technology, branding and consultants remain critical, despite our current fiscal constraints. Without these, we risk a decline in student experience, inefficiencies in processes, and a lack of data to support sound business decisions. These investments are essential to achieving a more sustainable, student-centered VIU, equipped with the tools and expertise necessary for future success.

The Budget Advisory Council (BAC) is focused on aligning budget decisions with our core values of understanding, commitment, and connection, drawing on input from recent budget surveys, consultation sessions, and our current financial and enrolment realities. The BAC also recognizes that VIU has not yet received specific direction from the Ministry of PSFS in the wake of the recent regulatory changes to international student study and work permits, including what our 2025-26 Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) allocation for international students will be. These important factors will be considered in the final version of the 2025-26 Operating Budget Plan report that will be released to the VIU community after Board approval in March 2025.

While the road ahead is challenging, I am confident that by making the right strategic decisions today, we can position VIU for a brighter, more sustainable tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Emily Huner, CPA, CMA, MBA (she/her)  
Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President Administration

## II. Introduction

The Budget Advisory Council (BAC) advises and makes recommendations to the President & Vice-Chancellor on operating budget matters that will be considered in the development of the Operating Budget Plan at Vancouver Island University (VIU).

To ensure the development of a responsible and effective budget, the Budget Advisory Council adheres to the following guiding principles:

### Transparency and Reliability

*We commit to an open and transparent budgeting process that provides clear and accurate information to all stakeholders.*

*Budget decisions will be based on reliable data and thorough analysis, ensuring that all financial information is presented in a way that everyone, regardless of their financial background, can easily understand.*

### Accountability

*We will hold ourselves accountable for the budget recommendations we will make to the President & Vice-Chancellor on prudent management of resources and ensuring that funds are used efficiently and effectively to achieve institutional goals.*

*Regular monitoring and reporting will be implemented to track budget performance and adjust as necessary to meet fiscal responsibilities.*

### Alignment with Deficit Mitigation Plan and Strategic Enrollment Plan

*Our budget will be closely aligned with the Deficit Mitigation Plan to address and reduce financial shortfalls.*

We will support the Strategic Enrollment Plan by allocating resources that enhance both student recruitment and retention, thereby strengthening our financial sustainability.

Robust budget principles allow institutions to tackle immediate pressures and anticipate future financial challenges. These principles enhance understanding and support from campus stakeholders, streamline resource allocation, and offer a more concrete and effective framework for strategic planning. Unlike broad and all-encompassing strategic plans that are common in higher education, budget principles provide more concrete direction with funds and incentives to accomplish institutional priorities.

As higher education institutions contend with climbing operational expenses due to a climate of persistent inflation, increasing materials and utility costs, wage pressures (both union and non-union), deferred maintenance, and continued enrollment uncertainty resulting in significant fluctuating tuition revenue, there is considerable strain on institutional budgets.

The Budget Advisory Council (BAC) is committed to contributing to the financial sustainability of VIU by enhancing the professionalism and transparency of financial reporting. This includes implementing best practices in financial management and ensuring that budget processes meet the highest standards of accountability and transparency.

BAC budget recommendations will be grounded in the mandate of our Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (see Appendix B) while working within the constraints of the current antiquated Ministry funding model. We recognize the importance of aligning our financial strategies with the Ministry's broader goals, even as we navigate the underfunding of the existing provincial structure.

We acknowledge that student behaviour is evolving, with factors both within and beyond our control. These changes must be considered in BAC recommendations to ensure that VIU's budget strategies remain relevant and effective.

By adhering to these principles, the BAC aims to support the operational budget plan with its recommendations by not only addressing immediate financial challenges but also recognizing the long-term strategic objectives of VIU.

The BAC engaged with the VIU community in the development of its recommendations through a budget survey and consultation sessions for staff and students. While there are differing perspectives and opinions on the use of our limited resources as well as approach to community consultation, the discussions are both healthy and helpful (even with constructive conflict) in allowing the BAC to develop this draft Operating Budget Plan for 2025-26.

### III. Background

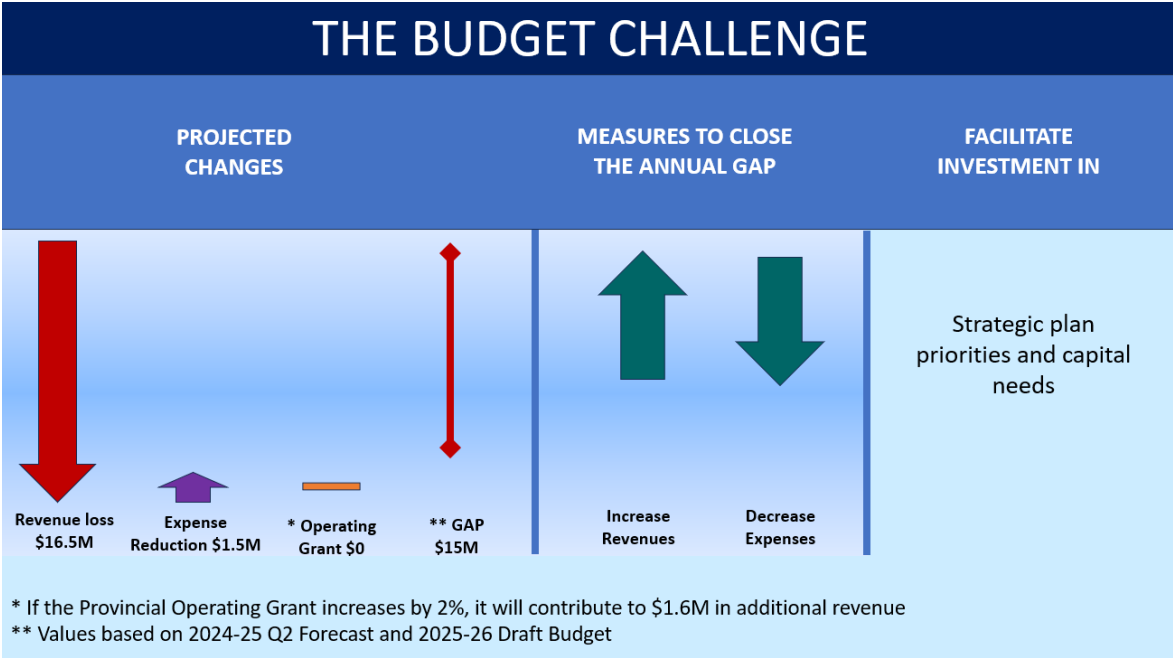
This Operating Budget Plan comprises assumptions and recommendations on the funding sources and expenditures that support the day-to-day operations of the University which include teaching, research, and service to VIU and the broader community. The operating budget makes up 74 per cent of the University’s core operating activity with the remaining 26 per cent relating to cost recovery programs, professional development and training programs, ancillary, and capital. Further background on governance in relation to the budget is provided in Appendix A.

In response to the challenging deficit situation faced by the University due to lower international enrolments and inflation (which increased significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic), the President and Vice-Chancellor together with the Provost and Vice-President Academic and the Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President Administration set a 10 per cent expenditure budget reduction target (\$18M) to be achieved by the end of the 2025-26 fiscal year (details of the reduction provided in the table below). The three-year window was set to allow sufficient time to make required changes in both academic and service units, as well as extensive analysis of business practices across all areas to find ways to become more efficient and effective to progress towards delivering on the commitment to “become a leader in learning for new generations” and return to a balanced budget by 2026-27.

Expenditure reduction target by year	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26
Academic Units	0 per cent	-10 per cent	
Non-academic Units	-5 per cent	-5 per cent	

Even with the full achievement of the Deficit Mitigation Plan target, the BAC now estimates it could be several more years until the University returns to a balanced budget position due to current geo-political issues and changes to the international student study and post-graduate work permit programs impacting our enrolment.

The draft Operating Budget Plan for 2025-26 recognizes the primary budget challenge we now face as a university. **Projected operating costs increase at a faster rate than current government support, creating a gap that must be addressed by increasing revenue and/or adjusting expenditures.** The budget plan also considers how to allocate resources to advance the University’s commitments and strategic priorities. The graphic below summarizes the budget challenges.



## IV. Draft Budget recommendations for 2025-26

The draft operating budget recommendations outlined in this report are intended to contribute to operational and student experience improvements, even within a deficit budget for 2025-26. The following is a high-level summary of the year-over-year change in the budget.

### 1 Overview of Draft Revenues and Expenditures for 2025-26 compared to 2024-25 Budget & Projected Results\*

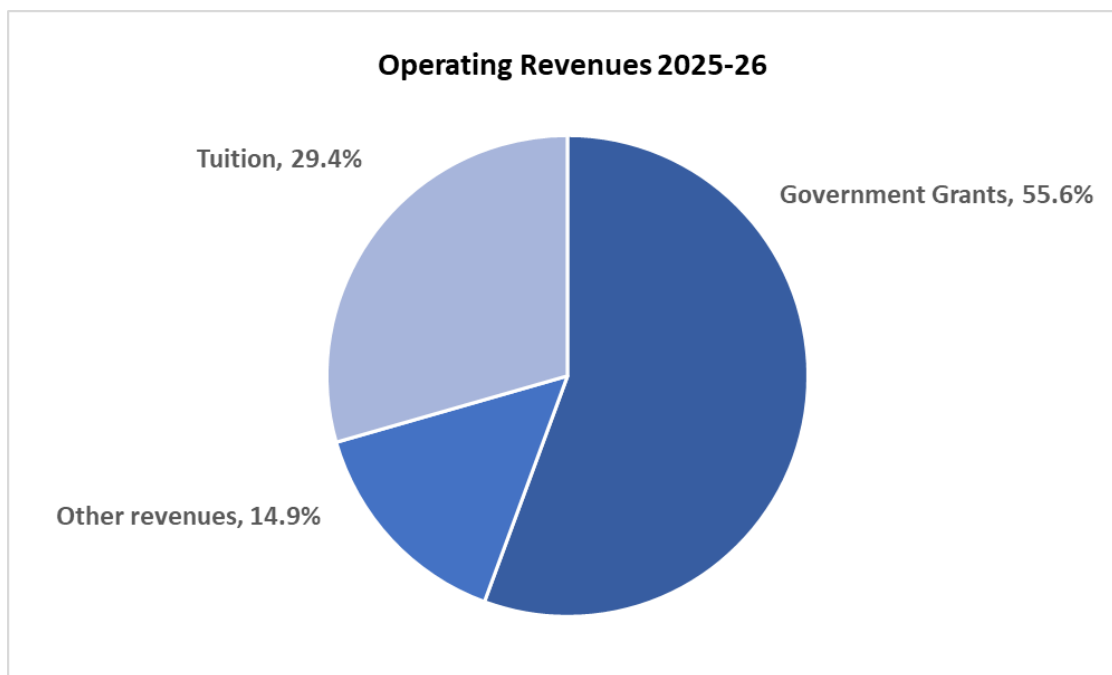
Account group	Activity group	24-25 Approved Budget	24-25 Forecast	25-26 Draft Budget
<b>REVENUE</b>	Provincial Grant- Operating	\$82,176	\$83,750	\$83,750
	Tuition	\$54,669	\$51,843	\$47,343
	Provincial grants- Scholarship/Program Specific	\$8,194	\$10,808	\$9,768
	Deferred Capital Contributions	\$8,565	\$8,561	\$8,903
	Other	\$11,504	\$13,116	\$8,119
	Student Fees	\$5,916	\$5,671	\$4,052
	Federal Research Support Fund Grant	\$3,745	\$2,745	\$2,745
	Investment Income- operating	\$1,241	\$4,209	\$1,112
	Provincial grants- Facilities and Space	\$796	\$796	\$796
	Investment Income- Endowment	\$326	\$318	\$159
<b>REVENUE Total</b>		<b>\$177,133</b>	<b>\$181,816</b>	<b>\$166,747</b>
<b>GENERAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>	Scholarships, Bursaries and Student Assistance	\$4,373	\$4,595	\$5,866
	Energy, Water, Taxes and Insurance	\$2,645	\$2,719	\$2,795
	Accessibility and code Modifications	\$2,470	\$2,429	\$2,596
	Contingency	\$1,169	\$1,519	\$1,500
	Agents commission	\$1,437	\$1,107	\$707
<b>GENERAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES Total</b>		<b>\$12,095</b>	<b>\$12,370</b>	<b>\$13,464</b>
<b>Net Ancillary Expenditure</b>	Ancillary Revenues	\$9,314	\$9,243	\$7,783
	Ancillary Expenditures	\$7,717	\$7,726	\$6,802
<b>Net Ancillary Expenditure Total - Deficit (Surplus)</b>		<b>(\$1,597)</b>	<b>(\$1,517)</b>	<b>(\$980)</b>
<b>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE EXPENDITURES</b>	Academic- Faculty	\$83,980	\$86,152	\$82,672
	Administration	\$50,917	\$50,089	\$52,293
	Academic Support	\$20,455	\$20,768	\$20,297
	Facilities Management	\$7,748	\$7,858	\$7,835
	Student Services	\$7,322	\$7,104	\$7,025
	Academic- Other	\$5,088	\$4,528	\$4,597
<b>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE EXPENDITURES Total - Deficit (Surplus)</b>		<b>\$175,510</b>	<b>\$176,499</b>	<b>\$174,719</b>
<b>Grand Total - Deficit (Surplus)</b>		<b>\$8,875</b>	<b>\$5,536</b>	<b>\$20,455</b>

*\*Projected results for 2024-25 are currently based on first and second quarter actuals and trends.*



## Revenues

Sufficient revenues should be generated to fund the University's operating expenditures. University operating expenditures are largely supported by government grants and tuition which together make up 85 per cent of operating budget revenues.



Outlined below are significant assumptions, estimates, and recommendations on revenues for 2025-26.

1) **Province of British Columbia Grants**

These are grants that come from the various levels of government in the province. Broadly, these grants can be split between the annual core operating grant and other program-specific grants.

**a. Operating Grant:**

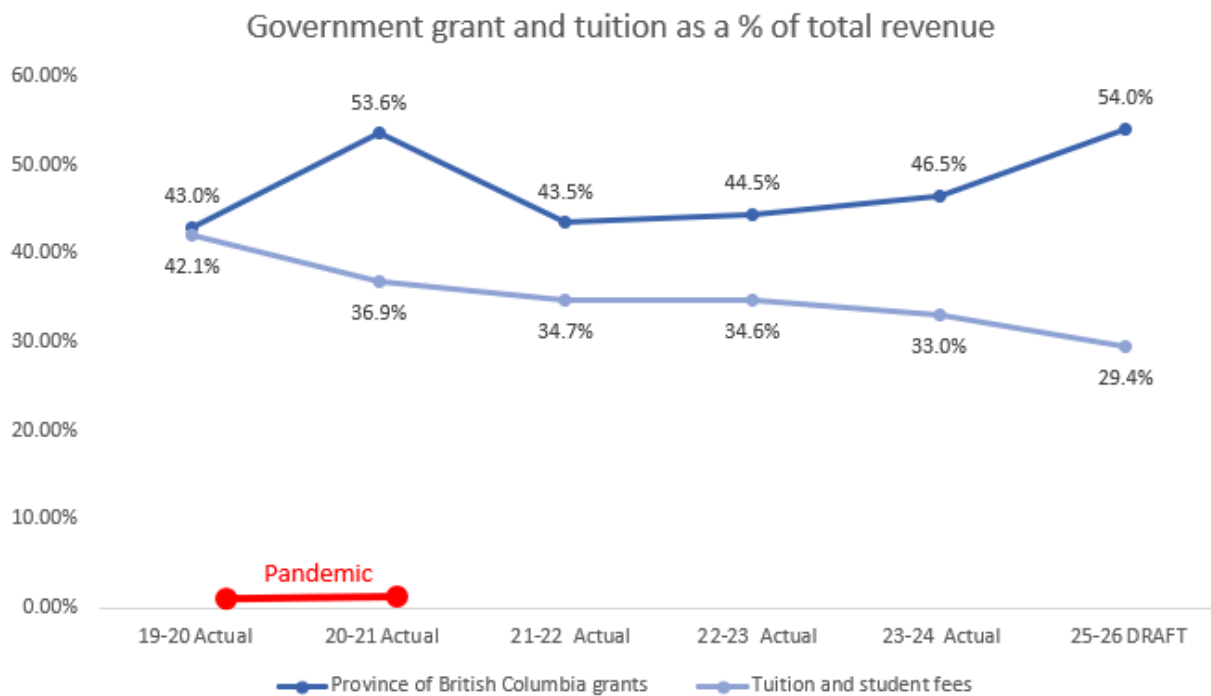
For 2025-26 the core operating grant was kept constant at \$83.7M, which included the latest round of general wage increases stated in the Province's Shared Recovery Mandate. The Ministry does not provide funding within the core operating grant for inflationary costs increases on items such as supplies, materials, utilities, technology, etc.

**b. Program-Specific Grants:**

The University receives several grants from provincial, federal, and other branches of the government that support specific programs and activities (such as research activity). Non-operating program-specific grant revenues will be \$9.8 million in 2025-26.

2) **Tuition and Student Fees Revenue**

Tuition revenue is a significant revenue source, contributing 29.4 per cent to support operating budget expenditures. As shown in the graph that follows, government support as a percentage of the operating budget has increased over the past 3 years while tuition and fees have fallen. The increase in provincial support is mostly due to the BC government's Shared Recovery Mandate that has covered salary scale changes and retro pay through new collective agreements, as well as excluded employee group's cost-of-living and salary scale changes, and program changes (one-time or recurring as negotiated).



### Revenue-Sharing Model

For the 2024-25 operating budget, VIU transitioned to a new revenue-sharing model of the operating grant, the Skilled Trades BC (formerly Industry Training Authority) grant, and tuition revenues.

The overarching goals of adopting a revenue sharing model are to:

- Incentivize growth and innovation within our faculties and units,
- Increase visibility into total net costs,
- Provide more clarity to mitigate and target cost reductions, and
- Enhance budget holder accountability for cost control and revenue generation.

The core operating grant and the Skills Trades BC grant are the only grants subject to revenue sharing under the model. 60 per cent of the value of the of the prior year core operating grant would be allocated to Faculty/Unit budgets in the operating fund based on prior year domestic enrolments and utilizes funding bands to enable differential grant allocation to the various types of programs the University offers. The Skilled Trades BC grant would be allocated 90 per cent to the Faculty of Trades and Applied Technology (prior to this model 100 per cent was allocated).

For tuition, the model's intent was to use prior year enrolment numbers with tuition rates for the coming year and allocates 60 per cent of domestic tuition and 55 per cent of international tuition to Faculty/Unit budgets with the balance allocated to the Institutional Revenue budget. Only tuition fees are subject to revenue sharing; all other student fees (such as lab fees) are allocated 100 per cent to Faculty/Unit budgets.

Enrolment in 2023-24 was better than budgeted and the best result for VIU in the last four fiscal years. However, following the methodology of the new revenue-sharing model for 2025-26 (based on previous year's enrollment numbers) could lead to an increased negative impact for the university for the following reasons:

- In early 2024, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced changes to the international student study permit program impacting recruitment and enrolment across the post-secondary sector in Canada for 2024-25. For VIU, although the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills allotted a fair number of the new Provincial Attestation Letters (PAL), only 35% of

the offers from this allocation have been accepted by prospective international students so far in 2024-25. This acceptance rate is consistent amongst BC post-secondary institutions.

- Current international enrollment statistics at VIU show a 60 per cent decrease in new graduate students, a 48 per cent decrease in new undergrad and developmental program students, and an average 7 per cent decline in continuing students). **This equates to 384 less international students.**
- In September 2024, IRCC announced further changes to the international student study permit program that will result in:
  - A further 10 per cent decrease in overall study permits (from 2024)
  - 12 per cent of the total PAL's issued will be set aside for graduate students (who were exempt in 2024-25)
  - Public university graduates will only qualify for a three-year post-graduate work-permit (PGWP) if program length is 24-months.
  - Students taking college or university courses below degree level must now graduate in fields linked to occupations experiencing long-term labour shortages to qualify for a PGWP.
  - Eligibility for spousal work permits will be tightened. Spouses of master's degree students enrolled in programs shorter than 16 months will no longer be eligible for an open work permit.
  - Uncertainty and increasing distrust of international students in the Canadian education experience with prospective students exploring other countries with reduced barriers for post-secondary education.
- A review of VIU's current diploma and certificate programs shows that
  - Six VIU diploma programs do not currently align with IRCC occupation codes eligible for a PGWP.
  - Nine VIU diploma programs align with IRCC CIP Codes eligible for PGWP.
  - Although the Inclusive Education Diploma is aligned; it is 100 per cent online and not eligible for PGWP.

Based on the continued IRCC changes, current enrollment data, and advice from the CFOVPA and their consultation with VIU Executive Leadership, the BAC supports a significantly conservative approach to estimated revenues from forecasted enrolment changes. This is being done to minimize the possibility of further negative budget impacts during the 2025-26 fiscal year and based on the following:

- No NEW international graduate students except for:
  - 1 cohort in Fall and 1 cohort in Spring - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
  - 1 cohort of Master of Education in Educational Leadership (MEDL)
  - Master of Community Planning and Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management programs are stable
  - **TOTAL new graduate headcount is 124**
- No NEW international students in:
  - English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Community Education (CE), or Vocational (VOC) programs
- Undergraduate international tuition:
  - Continuing/returning students consistent with 2024-25 rates
  - **TOTAL new undergraduate headcount is 112 (-45 per cent from 2023-24 actuals)**
- International application fees down by 50 per cent
- Domestic tuition includes a one per cent increase in enrolment on top of a two per cent tuition and fee increase
- International tuition includes a two per cent increase based on the average Consumer Price Index\*, with fees increase of two per cent mirroring domestic students.

*\*September 2024 Consumer Price Index < two per cent, price increase will be minimum of domestic two per cent, maximum of five per cent and will be based on December 31st CPI if between those rates.*

This scenario will result in a **22% percent decrease in overall international tuition (from 2023-24 actuals) and an application fees reduction of 50 percent equating to a \$14.1 million dollar loss in revenues** to the university in 2025-26.

The budget assumptions detailed above are conservative and achievable. If enrolment is higher than budgeted, the additional revenue will support incremental in-year expenditures within relevant faculty or units in 2025-26 and will be factored into the required quarterly analysis reporting to the Ministry.

The Strategic Enrolment Management Plan (SEM) for 2024-29 is one tool VIU will use to address international student recruitment and retention challenges. Although the above enrolment scenario is being used for conservative budgeting purposes, VIU will continue recruitment and retention initiatives to attain and sustain enrolment across domestic and international student markets and increase student persistence in alignment with our SEM Plan. More analysis on the changes in enrolment will be conducted once the university receives its 2025-26 PAL allocation (later this fall) from the province.

Annually, the office of Strategic Planning and Initiatives reviews tuition fees and other comparisons at comparable institutions in the province of BC (refer to Appendix C), summarized from the last ten years as follows:

1. VIU has seen a slight 0.8 per cent increase in the proportional share of the total operating grants going to the comparator group of institutions (based on size) and a 0.3 per cent proportional increase among the regional comparator group.
2. VIU's proportional share of the increase in student FTE target was 0.2 per cent in both comparator groups.
3. On an operating grant per student FTE target basis, VIU is ranked third on the island.

In 2023-24 VIU had the highest domestic annual tuition fees for a Bachelor of Arts full time program when compared to the fees at similarly sized universities in BC. Regionally however, VIU's domestic tuition is lower than the University of Victoria (a larger institution) and higher than the island-based colleges. Looking at the academic year tuition costs for a Bachelor of Arts program for international students in 2023-24 as a point in time comparison, VIU's cost rankings are identical to the domestic rankings (highest tuition costs among comparator group 1 (size) and second highest in comparator group 2 (location)).

Operating costs at VIU are increasing at a rate greater than can be supported by the increase in government funding. Annual increases in tuition fees are necessary to support operating budget cost increases beyond those that can be addressed by expenditure constraints. Without a change in public or government policy with respect to supporting the cost of public education this trend is expected to continue.

**To maintain clarity and transparency for VIU students on their tuition trajectory, the BAC recommends the following for 2025-26:**

- a. A 2.0 per cent general tuition fee increase be applied for domestic tuition across all programs.
- b. For international students, an overall tuition fee increase be applied using an average Consumer Price Index. Currently, the September 2024 Consumer Price Index is < two per cent, price increase will be minimum of domestic two per cent increase; to a maximum of five per cent and will be based on December 31, 2024, CPI if between those rates.
- c. A two per cent increase be applied to mandatory student fees for domestic and international students.

**To further support the university’s operating costs, the BAC recommends the following for 2025-26:**

- d. Additional revenues earned due to higher than budgeted enrolment or other revenue-generating activities across faculties and units, can be allocated to incremental in-year expenditures that supports student experience, student retention, academic programming, or priority investment areas identified in feedback from the fall 2024 budget consultations.
- e. The development of a multi-year budget model (three years out) starting in 2026-27 to align with required financial reporting to the Ministry of Post-Secondary and Future Skills and to better support future operational planning at VIU.

The proposed tuition and mandatory fee schedule for 2025-26 is included in Appendix D.

3) Other Revenue Sources

**Investment & Endowment Income**

University cashflows are invested to generate income that supports university operations. The draft 2025-26 budget includes \$1.27 million of non-endowment investment income based on current forecasts of cashflow. Due to the deficit situation, the University expects to convert its remaining \$9 million of investments to cash before April 1, 2025, to ensure operating cash flows requirements are met. These funds will earn interest while on deposit and the value of this projected interest has been included in the budget.

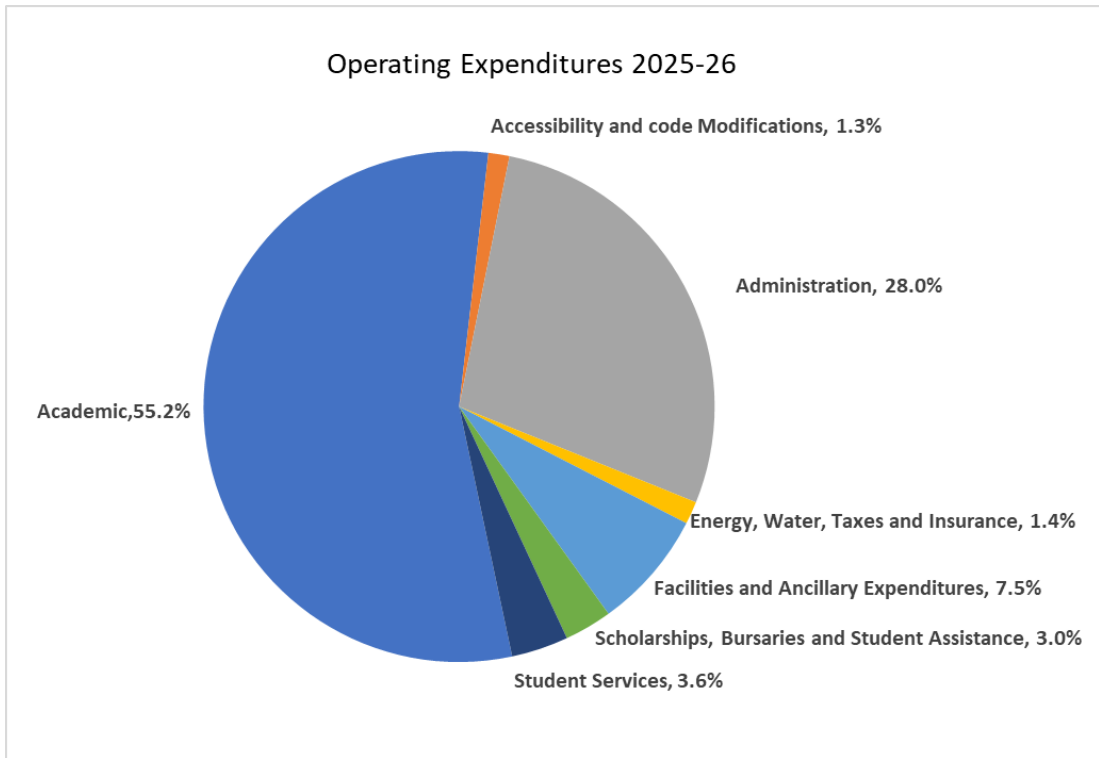
The 2025-26 draft budget allows for \$5.9 million of student awards which is primarily funded by Vancouver Island University Foundation endowments and restricted grants. Prior to 2024-25, the Foundation funded awards were excluded from the University budget as the Foundation is a separate legal entity. To improve transparency, the budget now includes the full value of the student awards, and the offsetting revenue transferred from the Foundation to the University; included as Other Revenue in the budget.

**Capital Contributions**

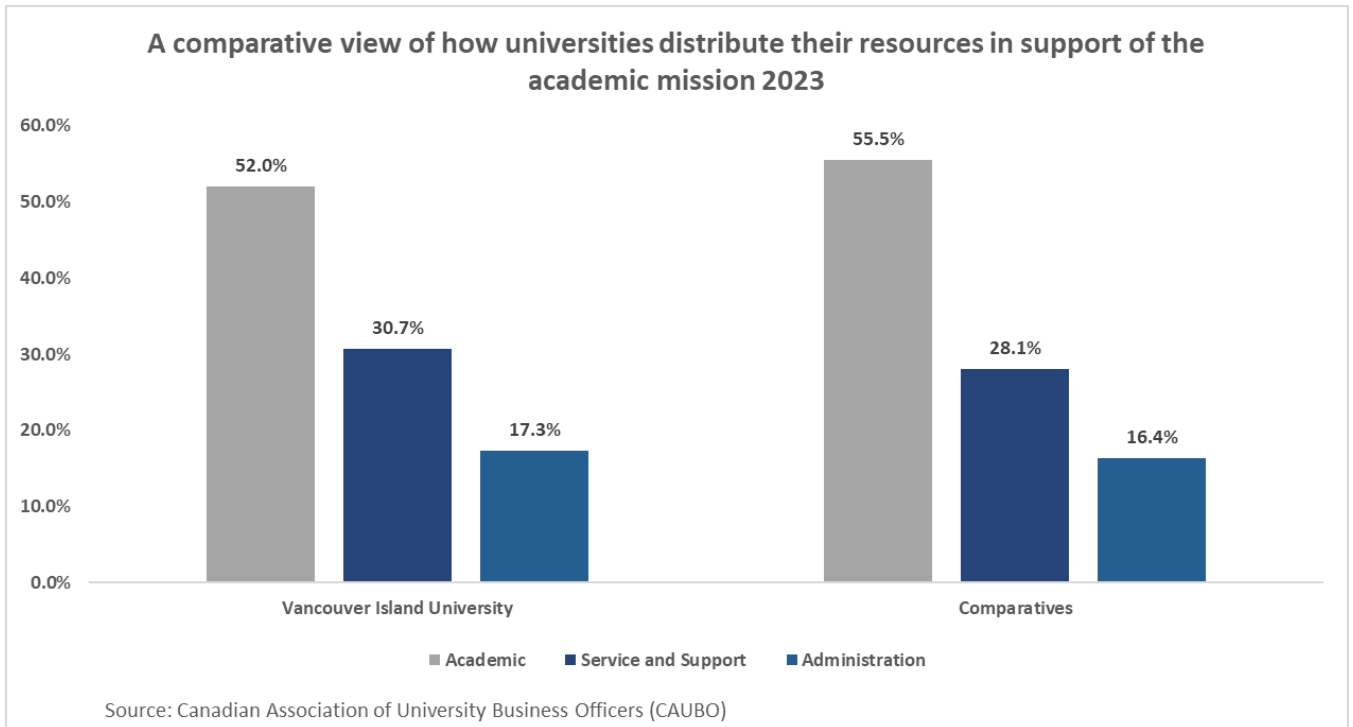
The University receives funding from Province that is restricted for use on capital assets. For accounting purposes, the external revenue is recognized over the useful life of the asset as revenue even though the cash is received and spent during construction/acquisition. In most cases, the University is also required to contribute financially towards the construction or acquisition of the asset(s) from operating funds. The total cost of an asset is recognized as an annual amortization “expense” over its useful life. Although these components of the budget are non-cash items, they are required to be included in VIU’s annual budgeting process by the province. The net expenditure reflects VIU’s investment in capital.

**Expenditures**

Overall, university expenditures for 2025-26 are forecast to decrease by \$0.3 million compared to the 2024-25 budget. In alignment with year three of VIU’s [Deficit Mitigation Plan](#), the 2025-26 draft operating budget plan will include a mandated decrease in expenditures of \$6.2 million in addition to any remaining balance of the 10 per cent DMP targets that have not yet been achieved by budget holders (in respect to the 2023-24 target baseline). The following graph shows the breakdown of the 2025-26 draft budget expenditures after the application of the final year of required deficit mitigation reductions. This section of the report includes a discussion of the assumptions and recommendations for each responsibility area.



The following chart provides a different breakdown of how VIU currently allocates resources vs. comparator institutions: Capilano University, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Thompson Rivers University, University of Victoria, and the University of the Fraser Valley. For more details on comparator institutions, please refer to Appendix C.



CAUBO guidelines on Financial Information of Universities and Colleges provides the following definitions for each category of expenses noted in the previous chart.

### **Academic**

- Instruction and Non-Sponsored Research: Costs related to faculties & academic departments.
- Non-Credit Instruction: Lectures, courses, and non-credit activities typically offered through continuing education.
- Library: library costs, including staff wages and materials.

### **Service and Support**

- Student Services: Includes Student Affairs, counseling, career guidance, student health, athletics, student housing, financial aid administration, grants to student organizations, and other non-teaching services.
- Information and Technology Services: Centralized computing and communications services provided institution wide.
- Physical Plant: Maintenance and operation of facilities, including building upkeep, utilities, security, and related areas.

### **Administration**

- Academic oversight: Vice-president academic/research offices, instructional support, research administration, registrar's office, convocation, co-op administration, and instructional technology.
- Institutional oversight: President and vice-president offices (excluding academic/research), finance, HR, institutional research, risk management, and general university memberships.

Compared with the four comparator institutions, VIU allocates slightly less resources to the Academic areas, slightly more in the Service and Support as well as Administration areas. Each institution operates differently, which accounts for some variability by institution; the size of the institution also has an impact.

Each of the areas noted below is important for the delivery of the academic purpose of the University:

#### **a. Academic – Faculty**

VIU's eight Faculties are included in this grouping. In addition to the academic programming funded, in part, by provincial grants, some Faculties have graduate programming, contract deliveries, and professional development and training activity.

#### **b. Academic – Other**

The Academic – Other grouping includes the two regional campuses, the Deep Bay Research Station, and the Forestry Woodlot. Academic and scholarly activity takes place at these locations in direct support of our academic plan.

#### **c. Academic Support**

Academic support divisions are crucial to the student and faculty experience at VIU. They contribute to educational excellence through services that enhance the academic operations of the University.

#### **d. Student Services**

The Student Services grouping encompasses the budget divisions that support students to learn and grow outside of the classroom by linking in-class and out-of-class learning with events, activities and services intentionally designed to help them develop academically and personally.

#### **e. Operations Support**

The Operations Support grouping represents the administrative service units of the University from governance to senior leadership and all the service departments that support educational and scholarly activity from an end-to-end perspective.

**f. Ancillary Operations**

The Ancillary budget includes the Campus Store, Student Housing, and Food Services (main cafeteria, Starbucks, and catering). These units are expected to cover all operational costs from the revenues they generate.

**f. Capital**

The University needs to take steps in addressing pressures related to the expansion, renewal, and modernization of our core facilities across our campuses — physical infrastructure that is essential to our support for teaching, learning, and research.

VIU's capital infrastructure, both physical and digital, is vital to our teaching, learning and research. The funding received from the Province is insufficient to address pressures related to expansion, renewal, modernization, or deferred maintenance costs. Opportunities to secure funding for capital infrastructure is a significant challenge and results in increasing demands on operating funds to support capital.

The 2025-26 draft budget includes \$8.9 million of deferred capital contributions<sup>1</sup> and \$13.9 million of amortization expense related to the University's tangible capital assets for a net \$5 million of non-cash expenditures. This activity is housed in a separate fund from the operating budget and the University is required to include this activity in its annual budgeting process.

## Key expenditure details

**1. Faculty and Unit Budgets**

Faculties and support units are provided allocations from the University budget to deliver on priorities in support of the University's strategic priorities and to carry out their day-to-day work. The nature of university work in support of teaching, learning and research means that compensation is the most significant cost, at 73 per cent of total University expenditures. The ratified collective agreements for all three union groups and the increases for excluded employee salary and benefits are entirely funded by an increase in the provincial operating grant.

Compensation costs (salary and benefits) are estimated to decrease by \$1.2 million to \$141.4 million compared to the 2024-25 budget. The draft 2025-26 operating budget does not include estimates for step increases, related pension and benefit increases and wage increases for all employee groups. However, it does include the dollar impact of lay-offs and retirements implemented in 2024-25 and planned for 2025-26. The draft budget also includes a \$4 million provision for severance and retirement incentives in the 2025-26 fiscal year.

In the Faculty and Research budgets, the relevant portion of salaries and benefits that are tied to endowed chairs, research projects, or assisted leaves have been updated according to the commitments associated with these activities and are not available for reduction as part of the deficit mitigation plan.

In addition, Deans and Unit leaders are responsible to manage the gap between expected expenditures and available resources provided to them through their operating budget allocation. For example, Faculties and Units are required to address the gap between funding allocated and inflationary expenditure increases not provided for in the budget adjustments. In future budget cycles, when the University has stabilized its financial position, inflationary increases for non-salary items such as teaching supplies and equipment may be provided for in a budget adjustment.

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<sup>1</sup> These revenues are deferred when received and brought into income over the useful life of capital assets and expensed over the same period. As such, these revenues do not represent in-year cash transactions.



## 2. **Ancillary Operations**

The Ancillary budget is housed in a separate fund and includes the Campus Store, Student Housing, Starbucks, the Print Shop, and Food Services (cafeteria and catering). These units are expected to cover all costs of their operations, from the revenues they generate. However, with lower student enrollment, a new student housing project expected to be operational in fall of 2027 with the doubling of the number of students living on campus; the Ancillary budget should be reviewed for further university investment in staffing and student support infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing and diverse student community.

## 3. **Energy, Water, Taxes, and Insurance**

The budgeted cost for energy, water, insurance, and taxes for 2025-26 is and is based on estimated consumption and projected pricing for utilities, taxes, and insurance.

## 4. **Accessibility and Code Modifications**

The budget includes \$2.6 million in 2025-26 for expenditures related to enhancing physical spaces for accessibility and code modifications. Currently, this activity is managed by the Campus Development team. The management and scope of this activity will evolve as part of the implementation of federal and provincial legislation for Accessibility.

## 5. **Contingency Fund**

The draft 2025-26 budget includes \$1.5 million for general contingency items. The budget, and the use of these funds, is controlled by the President, the Provost and Vice-President Academic, and the Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President Administration. It is important to note that this funding is reported for budgeting purposes only, it is not part of any university cash reserves. Over the coming years, the University will seek to increase the size of this fund to provide a larger financial cushion against volatility.

## 6. **Deficit Mitigation Plan**

In October 2023, VIU committed to the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills that we would reduce expenditures by 10 per cent (\$18 million) over three years and return to a balanced budget by April 2027. The expenditure reductions are a critical target, not just from a financial perspective, but because they represent our commitment to building a sustainable institution that can better serve our students, employees, and community in the years ahead. To achieve this goal, we are guided by our [Deficit Mitigation Plan \(DMP\)](#), which aligns with our strategic priorities outlined in our [Strategic Plan: People, Place, and Potential](#).

In 2023-24, we successfully achieved our first-year target, cutting \$3.3 million in expenses despite the financial pressures both internal and external. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and hard work of many across VIU, from academic to administrative staff.

Among the significant steps taken was the amalgamation of the Office of Future Students, the Office of the Registrar, the Division of Student Affairs, and VIU International into the new Office of Students. This restructuring not only resulted in cost savings but, more importantly, positions VIU to create a more student-centered experience. We are now better able to streamline services and address student needs more effectively.

While we did meet our targeted DMP expense reduction goals in 2023-24, overall spending exceeded our budget by \$1.3 million. At this point in time, there is an \$11.9 million shortfall towards achieving VIU's full deficit mitigation plan by the end of the 2025-26 fiscal year. This amount is currently made up of a \$7 million gap in reaching year two of the DMP expense reduction target and a \$4.9 million gap in year three expense reductions.

	A	B	C = A - B	D	E = C - D
Deficit Mitigation Summary	Expenses Baseline (Q1 2023-24)	Total 3-year DMP Expense Reductions Target	Year 3 Expense Required DMP	25-26 Draft Expense Budget	(1) Exceeded (Shortfall) vs Target
Operations Support	\$60,268	(\$3,602)	\$56,666	\$63,392	(\$6,726)
Academic- Faculty	\$88,589	(\$10,102)	\$78,488	\$82,334	(\$3,847)
Student Services	\$22,852	(\$2,501)	\$20,351	\$22,013	(\$1,662)
Academic - Support	\$14,749	(\$961)	\$13,789	\$14,892	(\$1,103)
Academic - Other	\$4,958	(\$449)	\$4,509	\$4,230	\$279
Ancillary	\$8,454	(\$475)	\$7,979	\$6,814	\$1,166
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$199,871</b>	<b>(\$18,090)</b>	<b>\$181,781</b>	<b>\$193,675</b>	<b>(\$11,894)</b>

Once VIU's Finance, Audit, and Facilities committee as well as the Board review and provide feedback on the 2025-26 draft operating budget plan (November and December 2024), further discussions between budget holders and VIU Executive leadership will occur on the abovementioned DMP gaps when budget templates are released in January 2025.

We have already made some difficult but necessary decisions including closing The High School, ending our partnership with Elder College, canceling four academic programs as well as improving efficiency in academic program delivery—we can celebrate our achievement of the year one DMP, while keeping in mind that VIU still faces critical challenges.

We must stay committed to fully achieving our original deficit mitigation plan of reducing university expenditures by \$18 million by the end of fiscal year 2025-26 while knowing that achieving a balanced budget will now be several more years to come. This will result in VIU Executive Leadership conducting important conversations with our Ministry throughout late fall and early spring to discuss a revised approach to the university's deficit mitigation plan as well as future core business planning.

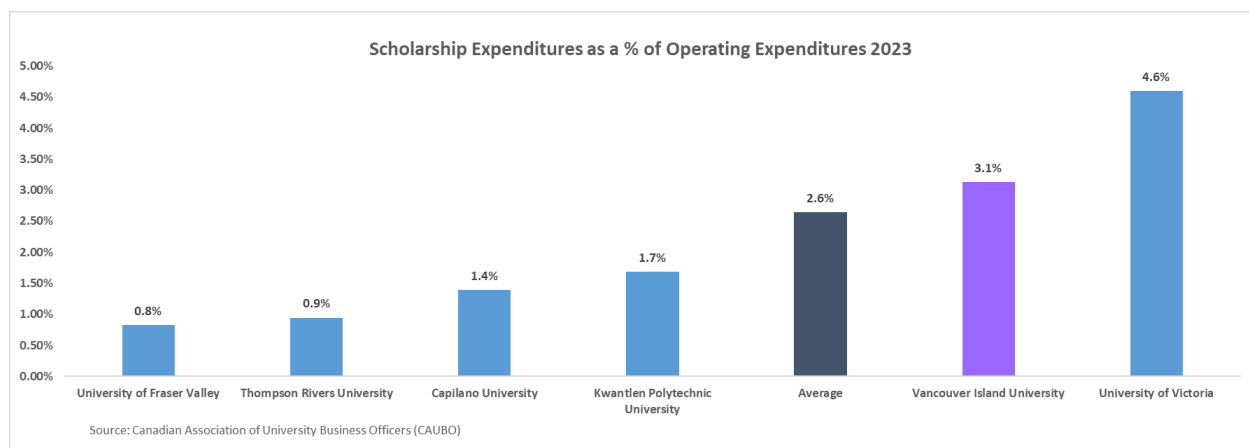
**The BAC makes the following recommendations for Faculty and Unit budgets for 2025-26:**

- a. Faculties and Units address any gap between 2025-26 budget allocations and costs in alignment with their individual achievement of the balance or full 10 per cent required in Deficit Mitigation Plan expense reduction targets for their areas.
- b. The Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President Administration review student housing operations and investigate potential for new base budget funding for investment in staffing and student support infrastructure starting in the 2026-27 fiscal year.
- c. That VIU Executive Leadership investigates a potential fundraising campaign for much needed capital investment that the current Ministry funding cannot sustain or critical projects that may not meet the criteria for Ministry funding eligibility.

## 7. Student Assistance

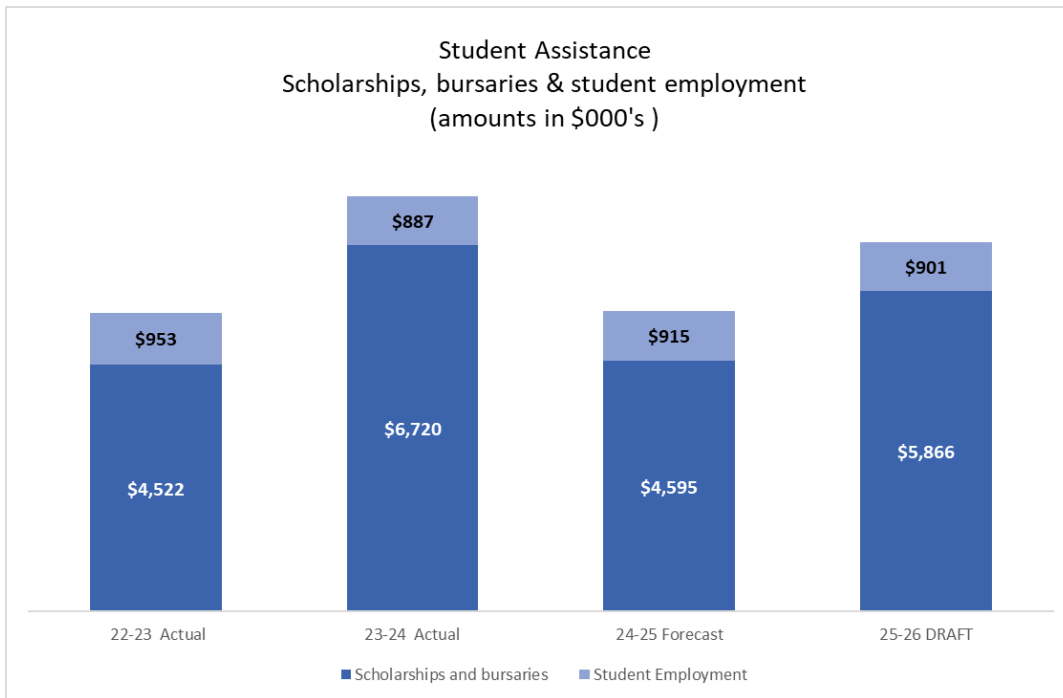
Through student assistance, the University seeks to attract and retain a diverse mix of outstanding students, reward high academic achievement, and support students in historically and currently underrepresented groups. The University continues to review its financial assistance programs to provide support for students for whom the financial cost of education is a challenge.

VIU spends 3.1 per cent of total operating expenditures on scholarships and bursaries compared to an average of 2.0 per cent at comparable institutions (based on the most recent available comparative data). VIU will also spend \$7 million on direct student support services in 2025-26, or the equivalent of 15 per cent of tuition revenues.



The 2025-26 budget allows for \$5.9 million of student awards of which \$1.4 million is funded from university operations and \$4.5 million is funded by Vancouver Island University Foundation endowments and restricted grants. Prior to 2024-25, the Foundation funded awards were excluded from the University budget as the Foundation is a separate legal entity. To improve transparency, the 2024-25 budget began including the full value of the student awards and the offsetting revenue transferred from the Foundation to the University; included as Other Revenue in the budget.

As shown in the chart on the next page, the average annual student financial assistance from operating and endowment funds as well as student employment is \$6.8 million.



## 8. Information Technology Services

The draft budget includes \$10.5 million in 2025-26 for expenditures related to staffing, equipment, networks, and systems infrastructure as well as service support.

As the University continues to build out its digital network and infrastructure, there is a need to invest in cybersecurity. The threat landscape has continued to evolve, and the global and information-based nature of universities like VIU has made them growing targets for ransomware, data theft, and other cybersecurity issues. Additional resources are needed to increase our capacity to monitor and defend against cyber threats while still supporting critical research and teaching activities.

## 9. Priority Investments

Even though the University continues to face immense financial challenges, a key area that is often misunderstood is investment during financial crisis. Why would we spend money on investments such as technology improvements, external reviews, additional staffing in key areas, branding, or even consultants when we are facing such challenges? The answer is simple: without these investments, we risk even greater long-term harm to VIU.

The costs of inaction are clear: a decline in student experience, continued inefficiencies in manual processes, and a lack of comprehensive data to support better business decisions. Our students deserve more. To become more student-centric and provide the kind of education that prepares them for the future, we need to transition into a more sustainable institution, and this requires hiring experts in their fields and utilizing guidance of external partners who can help us get there. We must recognize the gaps in our current capacity. To move forward, we need internal and external expertise to help us navigate these complex challenges, transform our operations, and position VIU as a leader in student and employee success. Investments in areas such as technology, data analytics, and strategic branding are not just expenses—they are critical enablers of our transformation into the next best version of VIU while living our values of **People, Place & Potential**.

In these challenging financial times, the most important work of the new BAC is seeking input from our VIU community on priority areas to consider for investment as well as hearing

feedback on areas for potential divestment or reduction (see detailed report in Appendix E). Budget consultations through October 2024 revealed the following on setting priorities and suggested areas of reductions within the draft 2025-26 operational budget:

- **Employees' top three priorities for investment**
  - Student recruitment and retention efforts
  - Expanding in-demand courses and program offerings
  - Employee health, well-being, and benefits
  
- **Students' top three priorities for investment**
  - Expanding in-demand courses and program offerings
  - Student services supports (career, financial aid, housing, wellness centre)
  - Student academic supports (Accessibility Services, Advising Centre, Centre for Experiential Learning, Peer Supported Learning)
  
- **Employees' top three areas for reduction**
  - Research and scholarly activity
  - Physical Infrastructure (room & building improvements, lab space and equipment, additions, or modernizations)
  - Employee professional development and training opportunities
  
- **Students' top three areas for reduction**
  - Student recruitment and retention efforts
  - Student services supports (career, financial aid, housing, wellness centre)
  - Physical Infrastructure (room & building improvements, lab space and equipment, additions, or modernizations)

Students were also asked to review the current percentage allocation of their student fees, suggest percentage re-allocation, and provide comments.

- **Student Services Fee**
  - 16 per cent less allocation to experiential learning and education, including co-curricular
  - 2 per cent less allocation to health and wellness
  - 13 per cent more allocation to technology (computer labs, wi-fi, loaner equipment)
  - 4 per cent increase to "other" with examples such as
    - Parking expansion
    - Accessibility & DEI
    - Establishing a walk-in clinic and improving dental care
    - Hiring more staff for maintenance of facilities
    - Improving costs of meal plans and cafeteria food
    - Increased library hours and study spaces
    - Increased co-op and work experiences
  
- **Student Activity Fee**
  - 30 per cent less allocation to Mariners Athletics
  - 3 per cent more allocation to recreation, gym, intramurals, fitness
  - 24 per cent more allocation to institutional activities (exams, convocation, career fairs, etc.)
  - 4 per cent increase to "other" with examples such as
    - More non-sports activities (clubs, outdoor recreation) and concerns about prioritizing Mariners teams
    - Suggestion that mariner athletes pay a higher fee to support their teams

- Wellness activities outside of VIU (i.e. discounts on external fitness/gyms)
- Funding for student research opportunities

Knowing that the University has limited ability at this time to support all priority areas noted by students and staff for investment, the CFOVPA shared with the BAC three separate pools of funding that could be considered:

- 1. Contingency Fund**  
The 2025-26 draft budget includes \$1.5 million for general contingency items. The budget, and the use of these funds, is controlled by the President, the Provost and Vice-President Academic, and the CFOVPA.
- 2. Sale of VIU's former educational space in Parksville**  
Late this fall or early in 2025, VIU will complete the sale of its 1/18th share of a municipal building in Parksville that was most recently used for Elder College and the Esthetics program. The expected sale will result in \$2.2 million for the university for which approximately \$500 thousand has already been committed to the Nanaimo campus renovations in moving the Esthetics program from Parksville.
- 3. Routine Capital**  
The University receives an annual funding allocation from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills for Routine Capital to improve physical asset conditions and maintenance and ongoing upkeep. The Ministry releases funding one year at a time with two additional years of notional funding. This approach enables planning for projects that may span fiscal years and typically allows more projects to be underway simultaneously. VIU must stay within its annual allocated funding envelope and can identify and prioritize capital projects under the following categories: major and minor maintenance and rehabilitation, upgrades and renovations, and linear infrastructure (such as underground utilities and outdoor lighting). The Ministry has specified eligibility criteria for capital funding and will check to ensure that the submitted projects comply.

**Based on feedback received during budget consultations on priority areas for investment (as well as key expenditure areas identified within this report) and the available pools of funding, the BAC makes the following recommendations for 2025-26:**

- a. 50 per cent of the contingency fund (\$750 thousand) be allocated towards initiatives within the following priority areas**
  - Student recruitment & retention efforts through the Strategic Enrollment management Plan
  - Enhanced student services and access to supports (career, financial aid, housing, health & wellness centre, etc.)
  - Expanding in-demand courses and program offerings
  - Employee health and well-being
  - Resources to ensure the use of cybersecurity best practices, according to industry standards, and to follow recommended practices in cybersecurity for higher education.
  - Strategic initiatives in supports or programming for Indigenous students as well as VIU's reconciliation efforts.
  - Infrastructure and people resources in campus safety, accessibility (students and employees), data analytics capabilities, DEHR (diversity, equity, and human rights), and space planning.
  - Consultants, external reviews, tools, frameworks, or technology to support implementation of enhanced operational efficiencies.
  - Strategic initiatives to support VIU's regional campuses.

- b. That the remaining profit (after Nanaimo Esthetics program renovations costs are deducted) from the sale of the Parksville education space be wholly dedicated to the following areas for one-time initiatives**
  - Student academic support (Accessibility Services, Advising Centre, Centre for Experiential Learning, Peer Supported Learning)
  - Teaching and learning space improvements such as classroom upgrades (renovations, technology, audio visual, furniture and equipment)
  
- c. That the CFOVPA work with the Strategic Advisor for Facilities Services and Campus Development to better align utilization of the annual Ministry capital funding with critical physical infrastructure needs that are essential to support teaching and learning, as well as core business activities.**
  - Until such time that the university has financial capacity to make base budget allocations towards capital projects.
  - Use opportunities as may be presented by either greater than budgeted revenues, or less than budgeted expenditures for pressing one-time capital investments.

**Based on feedback received during budget consultations on potential areas for reductions that could enable further dedicated resources to priority investments, the BAC makes the following recommendation for 2025-26:**

- a. That the CFOVPA work with the President, Provost and VP Academic, VP Students, and AVP Human Resources, to further explore areas of operations reduction as indicated in the fall 2024 budget consultations.

**Based on feedback received from students on the current allocation of the Student Services and Student Activity fees, the BAC makes the following recommendation for 2025-26:**

- a. That the CFOVPA work with the VP Students, as well as other relevant university stakeholders, to better align utilization of the Student Services and Student Activity Fees to support VIU student recommendations received through the fall 2024 budget consultations as well as increased access to student services.
  
- b. That VIU engage in further student consultations on potential outcomes of student fees re-distribution.

## V. Feedback and next steps

In Fall 2024, budget advice related to priorities was received through a survey of students, faculty, and staff (791 responses). This feedback has been considered in developing these recommendations and is included in Appendix E.

An additional short survey will be released to students, staff, and faculty in January 2025 to offer the opportunity to provide feedback on this draft operating budget plan. The BAC also welcomes written feedback from the VIU community through the [budgetfeedback@viu.ca](mailto:budgetfeedback@viu.ca) email, to gather input to the recommendations and budget plan contained in this draft report.

Feedback received before January 31, 2025, will be considered before this report is released in final form, and before the budget recommendations go to the Board for final approval in March.

As stated previously in this report, we must stay committed to fully achieving our original deficit mitigation plan of reducing university expenditures by \$18 million by the end of fiscal year 2025-26 while knowing that achieving a balanced budget will now be several more years to come. VIU Executive Leadership will be conducting important conversations with our Ministry throughout late fall and early spring to discuss a revised approach to the university's deficit mitigation plan as well as future core business planning.



## University roles and responsibilities in relation to the operating budget

The President and Vice-Chancellor is responsible to the Board for the University operating budget. Through its reports, the Budget Advisory Council will make recommendations to the President on the operating budget that reflect the current priorities of the University. The BAC deliberations are grounded in the context of the medium and longer - term objectives of the University's Strategic Directions.

The BAC process started in June 2024 and through the office of the Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President Administration, is responsible for engaging with faculty, staff, and students to better understand their perspective on priorities and the impact of budget choices on those priorities. The role of the BAC is then to balance the benefits and burdens of budget choices and make recommendations to the President that will enable progress on our shared goals.

Faculty deans and service unit heads are accountable to meet their budget targets by finding efficiencies, increasing revenue, reviewing programs and other means to achieve their plans within the context of the University Strategic Priorities.



February 20, 2024

Honourable Lisa Beare  
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Beare:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.
- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.



- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

Building a strong, secure, and sustainable economy that works for everyone means ensuring British Columbians have the inclusive, accessible, and future-focused post-secondary, skills, and trades training system they will need to succeed. Whether at a college, university, or any of the apprenticeship programs across B.C., our government needs to ensure everyone has a chance to upgrade their skills and learning to provide opportunities for good-paying jobs that support communities, families, and economic resiliency.

We will not succeed by leaving people behind. Ensuring newcomers to British Columbia can put their training and abilities to work as quickly as possible is essential. Too often, artificial barriers to working in their fields limit new immigrants from contributing right away to help build our province to the full extent of their abilities. Responding to this challenge will make people feel welcome in their new home province, build our economy, and attract more skilled workers from around the world to help create a strong future for all British Columbians.

Ensuring that international students have a positive experience in British Columbia is important. Whether they choose to stay here and build a new life or return home to put the skills they have learned here to work in their home community, the experiences of international students will inform their view of and relationship with British Columbia and Canada for their entire lives. Fair treatment and rapid response to issues and challenges are key to ensuring positive experiences and will help us build our international reputation and continue development of economic, cultural, and personal links with countries around the world.

Indigenous education opportunities across the system need to be promoted and enhanced. Offering culturally responsive and safe environments for Indigenous learners, regardless of their area of study, will help make our province stronger by building diversity across our professions, businesses, and governments, and will support Indigenous students in enhancing the resilience and success of their home communities and our entire province.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Supporting students to succeed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, including new supports for mental health.
- Providing more student housing, with nearly 8,000 new units open or underway across the province.
- Expanding training opportunities for early childhood educators, health care workers and other in-demand jobs.

As you continue to make progress on items in the previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Recognizing the global trend of labour shortages, deliver StrongerBC's Future Ready Action Plan with clear actions to continue expanding access to affordable, accessible, and relevant training so British Columbians have the skills they need for the jobs of the future.
- Continue to advance work to launch B.C.'s second medical school in Surrey.
- Meet or exceed the Homes for B.C. Plan target of 8,000 new student housing units to build even more homes to support students and take pressure off local rental markets and explore innovative agreements to develop and build more student rental housing.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Labour, help more people to choose jobs in the trades, including by continuing the implementation of Skilled Trades Certification and building on its success through considering other trades that could be included.
- To reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education, continue work to expand the BC Access Grant by increasing eligibility to ensure that people can access the skills they need for the jobs of the future.
- Lead work to recruit and retain people to build a skilled and flexible workforce in B.C.'s changing economy, and support career paths for skilled immigrants and services that give immigrants and refugees a strong start.
- Strengthen resources for the evaluation of skilled immigrants' credentials, including the Credential Assessment Improvement Fund.
- Take steps to ensure our government is able to respond quickly if private institutions promote or offer sub-standard education to international students and develop protections for international students that support their fair treatment across the sector.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, and in partnership with post-secondary institutions, student leadership, and Indigenous partners across B.C., develop and deliver on an action plan related to preventing and responding to sexualized violence at post-secondary institutions.
- Advance work on a Traditional Chinese Medicine degree program for our province.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for International Credentials. You will work closely together and ensure

your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on the priorities outlined in the mandate letter issued to them.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the Members' Conflict of Interest Act. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC  
Premier

# Vancouver Island University

## INSTITUTIONAL COMPARISONS

### Comparators

There are four British Columbia universities that VIU considers to be comparator institutions based on similarity of size and mandate, they are:

- Capilano University
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Thompson Rivers University
- University of the Fraser Valley

There are also three other institutions on Vancouver Island, and these are comparators based on regional location, they are:

- Camosun College
- North Island College
- University of Victoria

### Operating Grants

All public post-secondary institutions in BC receive an operating grant from the Provincial government. The annual operating grant allocation from the government is like a block-funding transfer. The total grant amount will change for funded items like collective bargaining and for program changes (one-time or recurring as negotiated) but there isn't a consistent formula or funding amount used across all institutions. Looking at the last 10 years we see that VIU has seen a slight 0.8 per cent increase in the proportional share of the total operating grants going to the comparator group of institutions (based on size) and a 0.3 per cent proportional increase among the regional comparator group.

#### Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)

##### Operating Grants

Comparator Group 1 (size)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	\$ 64,161	\$ 65,178	\$ 66,884	\$ 68,912	\$ 73,437	\$ 75,961	\$ 78,469	\$ 80,754	\$ 98,891	\$105,628
Thompson Rivers University	\$ 63,402	\$ 64,070	\$ 65,788	\$ 67,906	\$ 72,766	\$ 75,302	\$ 78,409	\$ 79,499	\$ 98,098	\$103,560
Vancouver Island University	\$ 49,289	\$ 49,798	\$ 51,430	\$ 52,812	\$ 56,506	\$ 58,764	\$ 60,947	\$ 64,397	\$ 78,120	\$ 83,723
University of the Fraser Valley	\$ 51,924	\$ 52,699	\$ 54,031	\$ 55,407	\$ 58,856	\$ 60,838	\$ 62,656	\$ 64,520	\$ 76,819	\$ 80,980
Capilano University	\$ 36,305	\$ 36,729	\$ 37,804	\$ 38,859	\$ 41,389	\$ 42,957	\$ 44,258	\$ 45,624	\$ 54,771	\$ 58,486
<b>Total Operating Grants</b>	\$265,081	\$268,474	\$275,937	\$283,896	\$302,954	\$313,822	\$324,739	\$334,794	\$406,699	\$432,377
<b>VIU % of Comparator Total</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>
								<i>10 year proportional change</i>		<i>0.8%</i>
Comparator Group 2 (location)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
University of Victoria	\$173,751	\$176,736	\$181,311	\$187,315	\$205,101	\$215,483	\$225,349	\$222,958	\$269,498	\$289,137
Vancouver Island University	\$ 49,289	\$ 49,798	\$ 51,430	\$ 52,812	\$ 56,506	\$ 58,764	\$ 60,947	\$ 64,397	\$ 78,120	\$ 83,723
Camosun College	\$ 47,632	\$ 48,234	\$ 49,834	\$ 51,575	\$ 55,396	\$ 57,480	\$ 59,533	\$ 63,598	\$ 75,961	\$ 80,958
North Island College	\$ 21,046	\$ 21,620	\$ 22,054	\$ 22,368	\$ 23,592	\$ 24,588	\$ 25,179	\$ 26,625	\$ 30,957	\$ 32,803
<b>Total Regional Operating Grants</b>	\$291,718	\$296,388	\$304,629	\$314,070	\$340,595	\$356,315	\$371,008	\$377,578	\$454,536	\$486,621
<b>VIU % of Regional Total</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>
								<i>10 year proportional change</i>		<i>0.3%</i>

Source: BC Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, 2024  
Published 2024

<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/operating-grants-at-b-c-public-post-secondary-institutions>

## Student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Targets

Each institution has a target number of full-time equivalent students to deliver each fiscal year. The target is for domestic students in non-SkilledTradesBC programs. The target is set by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. Again, looking at the last 10 years we can see that VIU's proportional share of the increase in student FTE target has been 0.2 per cent in both comparator groups. The increase in operating grant funding has come with an increase in student FTE target for VIU.

Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)										
Student FTE Targets										
Comparator Group 1 (size)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	9,077	9,077	9,077	9,097	9,117	9,149	9,183	9,249	9,290	9,431
Thompson Rivers University	8,013	7,996	7,981	8,033	8,056	8,136	8,245	8,221	8,326	8,347
Vancouver Island University	6,549	6,496	6,393	6,381	6,434	6,530	6,526	6,609	6,688	6,858
University of the Fraser Valley	6,678	6,676	6,676	6,688	6,720	6,716	6,736	6,737	6,761	6,794
Capilano University	5,449	5,449	5,450	5,484	8,494	5,519	5,534	5,563	5,669	5,606
<b>Total Student FTE Target</b>	<b>35,766</b>	<b>35,694</b>	<b>35,577</b>	<b>35,683</b>	<b>38,821</b>	<b>36,050</b>	<b>36,224</b>	<b>36,379</b>	<b>36,734</b>	<b>37,036</b>
<b>VIU % of Student FTE Total</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
								<b>10 year proportional change</b>		<b>0.2%</b>
Comparator Group 2 (location)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
University of Victoria	16,240	16,023	15,863	15,918	16,105	16,265	16,418	16,498	16,573	16,745
Camosun College	7,049	7,073	7,049	7,174	7,105	7,066	7,173	7,207	7,231	7,262
Vancouver Island University	6,549	6,496	6,393	6,381	6,434	6,530	6,526	6,609	6,688	6,858
North Island College	2,208	2,258	2,248	2,302	2,315	2,393	2,373	2,373	2,385	2,412
<b>Total Regional Student FTE Target</b>	<b>32,046</b>	<b>31,850</b>	<b>31,553</b>	<b>31,775</b>	<b>31,959</b>	<b>32,254</b>	<b>32,490</b>	<b>32,687</b>	<b>32,877</b>	<b>33,277</b>
<b>VIU % of Regional Target Total</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
								<b>10 year proportional change</b>		<b>0.2%</b>

Source: Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Post-Secondary Finance Unit: <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/full-time-equivalent-enrolment-targets-at-public-post-secondary-institutions>

## Operating Grant per Student FTE Target

Although the government does not allocate operating grant funding on a per student FTE basis we can compute a high-level operating grant per student FTE value for comparison purposes. When you compare the rankings of institutions in the comparator groups on this basis versus based on just the operating grant or just the student FTE target, you see changes in ranking. For example, Kwantlen receives the

Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)										
Operating Grant per Student FTE Target										
Comparator Group 1 (size)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Thompson Rivers University	7,912	8,013	8,243	8,453	9,033	9,255	9,510	10,285	11,782	12,407
Vancouver Island University	7,526	7,666	8,045	8,276	8,782	8,999	9,339	10,323	11,681	12,208
University of the Fraser Valley	7,775	7,894	8,093	8,285	8,758	9,059	9,302	10,136	11,362	11,919
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	7,068	7,181	7,368	7,575	8,055	8,303	8,545	9,248	10,645	11,200
Capilano University	6,663	6,740	6,937	7,086	4,873	7,783	7,997	8,699	9,661	10,433
Comparator Group 2 (location)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
University of Victoria	10,699	11,030	11,430	11,767	12,735	13,248	13,726	14,196	16,261	17,267
North Island College	9,532	9,575	9,811	9,717	10,191	10,275	10,611	11,691	12,980	13,600
Vancouver Island University	7,526	7,666	8,045	8,276	8,782	8,999	9,339	10,323	11,681	12,208
Camosun College	6,757	6,819	7,070	7,189	7,797	8,135	8,300	9,362	10,505	11,148

Source: Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Post-Secondary Finance Unit  
Published 2024  
<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/operating-grants-at-b-c-public-post-secondary-institutions>  
e2-student-fte-enrolment-targets.csv



largest operating grant in dollars and has the highest student FTE target in the size comparator group, but on an operating grant per student FTE target basis, it ranks 4th.

When we look at the regional perspective, VIU is ranked second in terms of operating grant value and has the third largest total student FTE target. On an operating grant per student FTE target basis, VIU is ranked third on the island. North Island College has the smallest grant and student FTE target, however, on a grant per student FTE target basis they are ranked second, and this finding may reflect a geographic scale/cost factor. Additionally, the University of Victoria is a research-intensive university and their higher operating grant per student FTE target may reflect the higher costs associated with their mandate.

## Actual Student FTEs Delivered

Looking at the ministry domestic non-SkilledTradesBC student FTEs delivered by institution in the comparator groups shows that VIU has improved proportionally in both comparator groups over the last nine years.

Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)										
Student FTE Actual										
Comparator Group 1 (size)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Thompson Rivers University	8,463	8,367	8,561	8,755	8,834	8,241	8,010	7,432	7,659	
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	8,931	8,932	8,670	8,490	8,212	7,615	7,013	6,793	7,010	
University of the Fraser Valley	6,656	6,514	6,441	6,505	6,628	6,819	6,609	6,274	6,630	
Vancouver Island University	<b>5,885</b>	<b>5,817</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,901</b>	<b>5,966</b>	<b>5,749</b>	<b>5,786</b>	<b>5,649</b>	<b>5,947</b>	
Capilano University	4,372	4,161	4,055	3,886	3,787	3,814	3,759	3,605	3,473	
<i>Total Student FTE</i>	34,307	33,791	33,683	33,536	33,427	32,238	31,178	29,752	30,719	-
<i>VIU % of Student FTE Total</i>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	
							<i>9 year proportional change</i>		<b>2.2%</b>	
Comparator Group 2 (location)										
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
University of Victoria	16,691	16,922	16,767	16,796	16,817	16,869	17,417	17,151	17,537	
Vancouver Island University	<b>5,885</b>	<b>5,817</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,901</b>	<b>5,966</b>	<b>5,749</b>	<b>5,786</b>	<b>5,649</b>	<b>5,947</b>	
Camosun College	6,447	6,341	6,194	6,107	5,814	5,452	5,321	4,946	5,085	
North Island College	1,617	1,606	1,535	1,509	1,476	1,451	1,653	1,510	1,395	
<i>Total Regional Student FTE</i>	30,640	30,686	30,452	30,313	30,073	29,521	30,178	29,256	29,964	-
<i>VIU % of Regional Student FTE</i>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	
							<i>9 year proportional change</i>		<b>0.6%</b>	

Source: Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Post-Secondary Finance Unit: <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/full-time-equivalent-enrolments-at-b-c-public-post-secondary-institution>  
Data includes Full-time Equivalent Enrolments funded by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills only. Data excludes international education (except the international graduate students from the research universities: Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, University of Northern British Columbia, and University of Victoria), and Full-time Equivalent Enrolments funded by the SkilledTradesBC.

## Student FTE Delivery Rates

The actual number of student FTEs each fiscal year is reported annually by all institutions. Fiscal 2024/25 is in progress, however, if we look at the previous nine fiscal years we can see and compare student FTE delivery rates for our comparator groups. In the size group, we see that Thompson Rivers, Kwantlen Polytechnic and Capilano have all had downward trending delivery rates, while VIU and Fraser Valley have been more stable. From 2022/23 to 2023/24 only Capilano had a decline in delivery rate. On the island, the colleges have had declining trends, and the universities have been stable.



Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)

Student FTE Delivery Rates

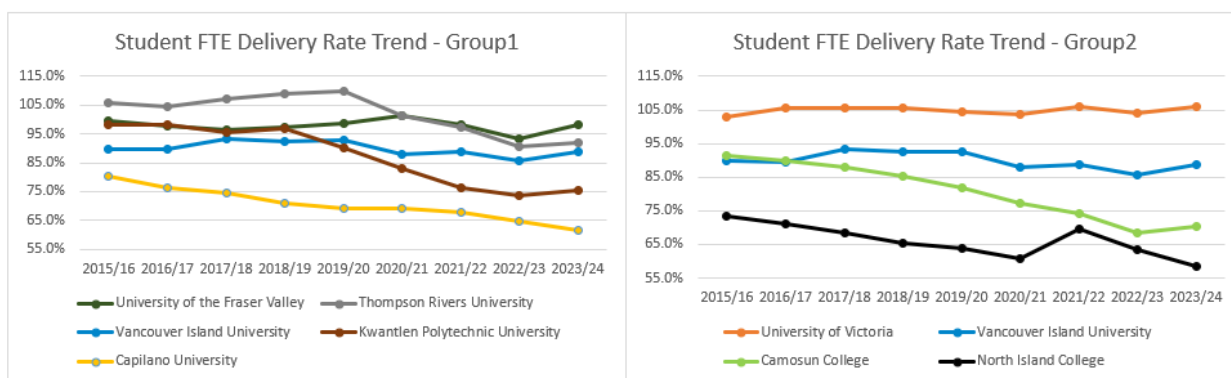
Comparator Group 1 (size)

Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
University of the Fraser Valley	99.7%	97.6%	96.5%	97.3%	98.6%	101.5%	98.1%	93.1%	98.1%	
Thompson Rivers University	105.6%	104.6%	107.3%	109.0%	109.7%	101.3%	97.1%	90.4%	92.0%	
Vancouver Island University	89.9%	89.5%	93.2%	92.5%	92.7%	88.0%	88.7%	85.5%	88.9%	
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	98.4%	98.4%	95.5%	96.8%	90.1%	83.2%	76.4%	73.4%	75.5%	
Capilano University	80.2%	76.4%	74.4%	70.9%	68.9%	69.1%	67.9%	64.8%	61.3%	

Comparator Group 2 (location)

Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
University of Victoria	102.8%	105.6%	105.7%	105.5%	104.4%	103.7%	106.1%	104.0%	105.8%	
Vancouver Island University	89.9%	89.5%	93.2%	92.5%	92.7%	88.0%	88.7%	85.5%	88.9%	
Camosun College	91.5%	89.7%	87.9%	85.1%	81.8%	77.2%	74.2%	68.6%	70.3%	
North Island College	73.3%	71.1%	68.3%	65.5%	63.8%	60.6%	69.7%	63.6%	58.5%	

Source: Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Post-Secondary Finance Unit: <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/full-time-equivalent-enrollments-at-b-c-public-post-secondary-institution>



## Operating Grant per Actual Student FTE Delivered

The government has not clawed back operating grant funding where institutions have not met their student FTE target. If we compute the value of operating grant per actual student FTE delivered, we can see

the amount of provincial funding that institutions had available to support each student FTE counted (remembering that international and Skilled Trades BC student FTEs are excluded). As compared to the operating grant per student FTE Target view, looking at grant per actual student FTE we see that institutions who under deliver student FTE have more provincial funding available to support the costs of delivering education to those students.

Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)									
Operating Grant per Student FTE Actual									
Comparator Group 1 (size)									
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Capilano University	8,304	8,827	9,323	10,000	10,930	11,263	11,773	13,426	15,768
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	7,184	7,297	7,714	8,117	8,942	9,975	11,188	12,592	14,107
Vancouver Island University	<b>8,375</b>	<b>8,561</b>	<b>8,635</b>	<b>8,949</b>	<b>9,471</b>	<b>10,221</b>	<b>10,534</b>	<b>12,078</b>	<b>13,137</b>
Thompson Rivers University	7,492	7,657	7,685	7,756	8,237	9,138	9,789	11,377	12,808
University of the Fraser Valley	7,801	8,090	8,389	8,518	8,880	8,922	9,480	10,884	11,587

Comparator Group 2 (location)									
Institution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
North Island College	13,016	13,462	14,367	14,825	15,980	16,951	15,228	18,371	22,193
University of Victoria	10,410	10,444	10,814	11,152	12,196	12,774	12,938	13,655	15,367
Camosun College	7,388	7,607	8,046	8,445	9,528	10,542	11,188	13,641	14,937
Vancouver Island University	<b>8,375</b>	<b>8,561</b>	<b>8,635</b>	<b>8,949</b>	<b>9,471</b>	<b>10,221</b>	<b>10,534</b>	<b>12,078</b>	<b>13,137</b>

## International Student FTEs

The government does not set targets for international student FTEs but will, beginning 2024/25, set a cap of 30 per cent of an institution's total FTE to be made up of international students. Looking at the last three years we can see that although VIUs total international student FTE has been increasing, we have not increased as much as other institutions in either comparator group.

Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)			
International Student FTE			
Comparator Group 1 (size)			
Institution	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	4,811	6,425	5,913
Thompson Rivers University	3,345	4,305	4,725
Capilano University	1,707	2,192	3,702
University of the Fraser Valley	1,218	1,460	2,159
Vancouver Island University	<b>1,042</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>1,233</b>
<i>Total International Student FTE</i>	12,123	15,522	17,732
<i>VIU % of International FTE Total</i>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>

Comparator Group 2 (location)			
Institution	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
University of Victoria	3,363	1,907	2,710
Camosun College	1,153	1,541	2,003
Vancouver Island University	<b>1,042</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>1,233</b>
North Island College	280	409	605
<i>Total Regional International FTE</i>	5,838	4,997	6,551
<i>VIU % of Regional International FTE</i>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>

Source: Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Post-Secondary Finance Unit: 2023-24 FTE Enrolment Summary.xlsx

## Skilled Trades BC Student FTEs

Skilled Trades BC (STBC) provides grant funding to institutions who deliver authorized programming. Student FTEs associated with this funding stream are reported by institutions. In the comparator groups, Capilano University and the University of Victoria do not offer STBC programs. We can see that the share of STBC student FTEs delivered by VIU has remained stable in the last three fiscal years.

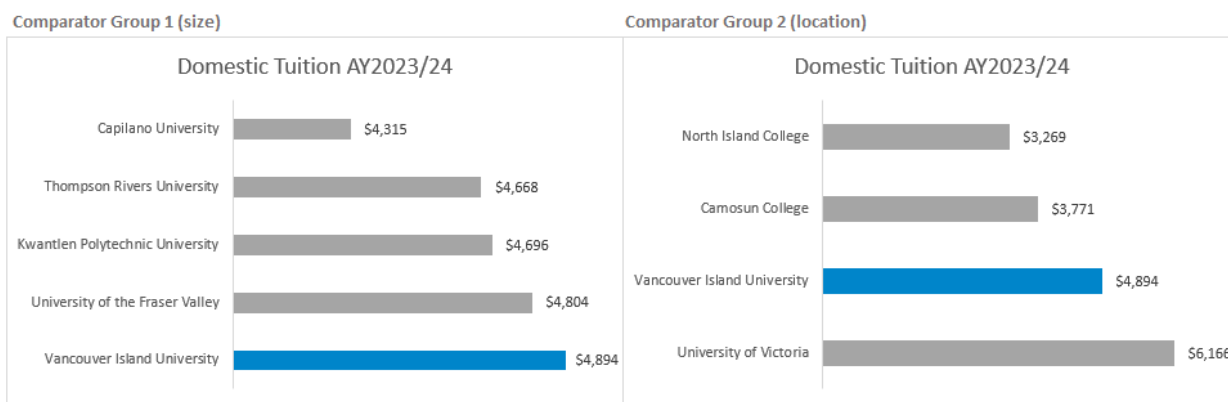
Institutional Comparisons (Fiscal Year)			
Skilled Trades BC Student FTEs			
Comparator Group 1 (size)			
Institution	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Thompson Rivers University	1,457	1,570	1,802
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	1,144	1,176	1,266
Vancouver Island University	994	1,075	1,132
University of the Fraser Valley	775	773	736
Capilano University	-	-	-
<i>Total STBC Student FTE</i>	4,370	4,594	4,936
<i>VIU % of STBC FTE Total</i>	22.7%	23.4%	22.9%
Comparator Group 2 (location)			
Institution	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Camosun College	2,223	2,174	2,377
Vancouver Island University	994	1,075	1,132
North Island College	649	751	775
University of Victoria	-	-	-
<i>Total Regional STBC FTE</i>	3,866	4,000	4,284
<i>VIU % of Regional STBC FTE</i>	25.7%	26.9%	26.4%

Source: Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Post-Secondary Finance Unit: 2023-24 FTE Enrolment Summary.xlsx

## Tuition Rates

All institutions' domestic tuition is capped at a maximum annual increase of 2.0 per cent. We note that among group 1 (size) VIU has the highest annual tuition fees for a Bachelor of Arts full time program. Regionally, VIU's domestic tuition is lower than the University of Victoria and higher than the colleges.

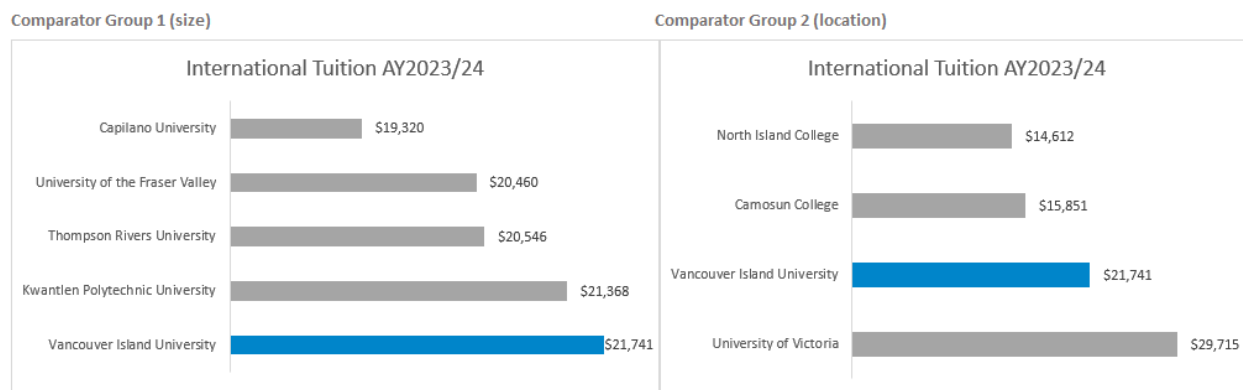
## Domestic Tuition



Annual Tuition Fees for Arts Program - Full-Time Domestic Students by Economic Development Region  
 Source: Data submissions from BC public post-secondary institutions to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, 2023  
<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/tuition-fees-for-arts-programs-at-b-c-public-post-secondary-institutions>

## International Tuition

International tuition rates are not capped by the provincial government and institutions can change their rates annually. Looking at the academic year tuition costs for a Bachelor of Arts program for international students in 2023/24 as a point in time comparison, VIU's cost rankings are identical to the domestic rankings (highest tuition costs among comparator group 1 (size) and second highest in comparator group 2 (location)).



Annual International Tuition Fees for Arts Program - Full-Time International Students by Economic Development Region  
 Source: Data submissions from BC public post-secondary institutions to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, 2023  
<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/international-tuition-fees-at-public-post-secondary-institutions-by-economic-development-region>

# Vancouver Island University

## Proposed Tuition and Fees for 2025-26

(Once approved in two readings by the Board of Governors, effective April 1, 2025, unless otherwise noted)

NOTICE TO READER: Tuition fees are assessed according to the tuition and fee schedule).

## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

### Domestic Students

Approved by the Board April 1, 2025  
Effective Date

***Fees:***

Course/Program Area	Fees
Application fee for Undergraduate programs	\$ 46.06
Application fee for Graduate programs	\$ 119.47
Graduation and Alumni Fee	\$ 59.73
Student Activity Fee	\$ 20.37 per month
Student Services Fee	\$ 22.49 per month
Adult Basic Education Activity Fee	\$ 46.60 per semester
Adult Basic Education Student Services Fee	\$ 51.65 per semester
English as a Second Language Activity Fee	\$ 15.53 per half semester (6.5 weeks)
English as a Second Language Student Services Fee	\$ 17.22 per half semester (6.5 weeks)

***Tuitions:***

- \* These fees are wholly or partially cost recovery in nature. Responsibility for the initial establishment and publication of wholly or partially cost recovery fees is delegated to the President.
- \*\* Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.
- \*\*\* Student activity, student services, and mandatory lab and supply fees for international students are assessed at the same rate as those listed for domestic students. Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition
Adult Basic Education	Tuition eliminated Sept. 1, 2017 per government directive
Co-op Education Fees	\$ 737.13 per semester
Credit Based Undergraduate Programs (includes career and technical programs)	\$ 169.73 per credit
English as a Second Language Programs	Tuition eliminated Sept. 1, 2017 per government directive
Literacy	Tuition eliminated Sept. 1, 2017 per government directive
Trades & Applied Technology Programs	Full-Time: \$ 509.18 per month Part-Time: \$ 305.53 per month Apprenticeship Programs: \$ 117.53 per week
<i>Note: See individual program listing for other fees if applicable</i>	

### Programs for Which Differential Tuition and/or Other Mandatory Fees Apply\*:

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
Activity Assistant Certificate	\$ 2,933.95 per program	
Advanced Diploma in Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	\$ 368.86 per credit	
Adventure Tourism and Recreation Certificate (ATRM)		\$ 5,858.30 lab fee
Animal Care Aide Certificate	\$ 2,933.95 per program	

\* These fees are wholly or partially cost recovery in nature. Responsibility for the initial establishment and publication of wholly or partially cost recovery fees is delegated to the President.

\*\* Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

\*\*\* Student activity, student services, and mandatory lab and supply fees for international students are assessed at the same rate as those listed for domestic students. Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
Automotive Service Technician		\$ 182.86 supply fee
Bachelor of Interior Design		Year 1: \$ 158.17 lab fee Year 2: \$ 187.46 lab fee Year 3: \$ 181.61 lab fee Year 4: \$ 199.18 lab fee
Bachelor of Science in Nursing		Year 2: \$ 91.42 lab fee Year 3: \$ 91.42 lab fee
Bachelor of Social Work	60 credits at \$ 461.82 per credit	
Business Fundamentals for Indigenous Communities Certificate	\$ 242.46 per credit	
Carpentry		\$ 487.59 supply fee
Community Mental Health Work Certificate	\$ 8,871.36 per program	
Cooperative Entrepreneur Training Program	\$ 244.00 per credit	\$ 225.23 lab fee
Culinary Arts Management Diploma Year 2		\$ 435.18 lab fee
Culinary Arts – Professional Cook Level 1		\$ 627.89 lab fee
Culinary Arts – Professional Cook Level 2		\$ 285.98 lab fee
CYC 212 Introduction to Activity Based Child and Youth Care Practice		\$ 121.90 lab fee

\* These fees are wholly or partially cost recovery in nature. Responsibility for the initial establishment and publication of wholly or partially cost recovery fees is delegated to the President.

\*\* Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

\*\*\* Student activity, student services, and mandatory lab and supply fees for international students are assessed at the same rate as those listed for domestic students. Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.



## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
CYC 391 Therapeutic Applications of Wilderness Programming	\$ 1,361.77 per course	\$ 984.82 lab fee
Dental Hygiene Program	\$ 254.92 per credit Year one – 39 credits Year two – 37.5 credits	Material Fee: Year one – \$ 4,618.18 Year two – \$ 3,958.43
ECEC 110, 111, & 130	\$ 645.53 per course	
EDEL 500, 501, 502, 503, 504	\$ 296.90 per credit	
EDPB 501 Introduction to Visual Arts in Education		\$ 54.85 supply fee
EDTE 417 Curriculum and Instruction: Visual Arts		\$ 54.85 supply fee
EDUC 201 Intro to Visual and Performing Arts for Non-specialists		\$ 42.67 supply fee
EDUC 203 Sustainability & Teacher Identity		\$ 57.43 lab fee
Electrician Apprentice (Levels 1-4)		\$ 62.17 lab fee
Electrician Entry-Level Certificate		\$ 329.88 lab fee
Esthetics and Spa Therapy Certificate	\$ 14,621.84 per program	
First Nations Housing Manager Certificate	\$ 1,308.63 per course	

\* These fees are wholly or partially cost recovery in nature. Responsibility for the initial establishment and publication of wholly or partially cost recovery fees is delegated to the President.

\*\* Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

\*\*\* Student activity, student services, and mandatory lab and supply fees for international students are assessed at the same rate as those listed for domestic students. Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
Fundamentals of Forest Harvesting Practices Certificate	\$ 11,824.70 per program	
Hairstylist Foundation Certificate Program		\$ 389.78 supply fee \$ 478.03 lab fee
Health Care Assistant	\$ 509.18 per month	
HCAS 170 Healing 3: Personal Care and Assistance		\$ 42.67 lab fee
Heavy Equipment Operator Foundation	\$ 899.44 per 4-week program	
Heavy Equipment Operator Specialized Machine Training	\$ 2,111.17 per week	
Heavy Equipment Operator Technician	\$ 799.16 per 5-week program	
Heavy Mechanical Trades Foundation		\$ 182.86 lab fee
HHED 100 Introduction to End of Life Doula	\$ 461.82 per credit	
Horticulture		\$ 182.86 supply fee
HOSP 120 Accounting Principles		\$ 30.47 lab fee
HOSP 130 Lodging, Organization and Operations		\$ 60.96 lab fee
HOSP 133 Beverage Theory		\$ 30.47 lab fee
HOSP 240 Principles of Food Production		\$ 97.51 lab fee

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## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
HOSP 241 Food Service Management		\$ 30.47 lab fee
Indigenous Protected & Conserved Areas Planning Advanced Certificate	\$ 424.48 per credit	\$ 2,122.42 for IPCA 407 for Field Component
Information Technology and Applied Systems		\$ 121.90 lab fee
Introduction to Construction Essentials	\$ 4,481.59 per program	
Jazz Studies Diploma	Private Tuition: 1. Primary instrument private tuition courses (2 credits each) - \$ 407.08 per credit 2. Secondary instrument private tuition courses (1 credit each) - \$ 798.65 per credit	
KIN 118 Outdoor Activities, Summer		\$ 58.58 lab fee
KIN 142 Introduction to Paddle Sports		\$ 60.96 lab fee
KIN 222 Physical Activity and Local Food Production		\$ 46.87 lab fee
KIN 270 Introduction to Leadership of Outdoor Pursuits		\$ 60.96 lab fee
KIN 280 Physical Growth and Motor Development		\$ 54.85 lab fee
KIN 370 Outdoor Education, Interpretation and Adventure Programming		\$ 60.96 lab fee
KIN 401 Injury Management of Physical Activity		\$ 57.43 lab fee

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## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
KIN 461 Applied Leadership in Physical Activity		\$ 60.96 lab fee
KIN 491 Scholarship in Sport, Health and Physical Education		\$ 54.85 lab fee
Management Skills for Supervisors Certificate	\$ 411.71 per credit	
Medical Device Reprocessing Technician Certificate	\$ 10,187.59 per program	
Medical Office Assistant Certificate	\$ 5,395.84 per program	
MGMT 146 Team Building Skills		\$ 79.59 supply fee
MGMT 252 The Wine Industry		\$ 29.28 supply fee
MGMT 352 Wine Appreciation		\$ 111.31 supply fee
NRCF 001 Strategic Business Planning	\$ 1,061.21	
NRCF 002 Project Management	\$ 1,061.21	
NRCF 003 Financial Resource Management	\$ 1,061.21	
NRCF 004 Human Resources	\$ 1,061.21	
NRCF 005 Informed Decision Making	\$ 1,061.21	
NRCF 006 Fisheries Operations	\$ 1,061.21	
Nursing Unit Assistant Certificate	\$ 5,395.84 per program	
Office Administration		\$ 121.90 supply fee

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## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
Power Engineering/Process Operator 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	\$ 10,158.29 per program	\$ 497.34 lab fee
Practical Nursing Diploma	\$ 226.37 per credit	
PRNU 106/116/126		\$ 73.14 lab fee per course
PRNU 206/216		\$ 73.14 lab fee per course
Professional Baking and Pastry Arts		\$ 487.78 lab fee
Professional Indigenous Lands Management Certificate	\$ 427.27 per credit	\$ 165.61 per course
Science and Technology courses with compulsory lab		\$ 24.38 lab fee per course
Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language Certificate	\$ 2,814.28 per program	
Trades Discovery	\$ 1,792.63 per program	
Welder Fitter	\$ 3,108.42 per program	\$ 182.86 supply fee
Welder Foundation		\$ 371.19 lab fee
Workplace Essential Skills & Training (WEST)	\$ 4.90 per contact hour	Module 7: \$ 124.34 lab fee Module 8: \$ 124.34 lab fee Module 9: \$ 248.68 lab fee Module 10: \$ 248.68 lab fee

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\*\* Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

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## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

### *Tuition and Fees for Graduate Courses and Programs\*:*

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
EXTN 500 – Extended Research	\$ 914.24 per course	
Graduate Certificate in Business	\$ 473.04 per credit	
Graduate Diploma in Gerontology: Active Aging	\$ 452.76 per credit	
Graduate Diploma in Hospitality Management	\$ 613.76 per credit	
Graduate Diploma in International Trade	\$ 613.76 per credit	
Graduate Diploma in Project Management	\$ 613.76 per credit	
Inclusive Education (Special Education) Graduate Diploma	\$ 453.08 per credit	
Literacy, Language, and Learning Graduate Diploma	\$ 452.76 per credit	
Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management	\$ 15,174.02 per program	\$ 1,036.15 field school fee
Master of Business Administration	\$ 30,322.39 per program	
Master of Community Planning	\$ 362.64 per credit	\$ 1,243.37 one-time field studies fee \$ 1,492.05 one-time thesis/major project fee
Master of Education in Educational Leadership	\$ 462.14 per credit	
MEDL 600		\$ 52.02 lab fee
Master of Education in Special Education	\$ 462.14 per credit	

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## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition	Fees
Master of Geographic Information System Applications	Year 1: \$ 368.86 per credit Year 2: \$ 495.95 per credit	
Psychedelic-assisted Therapy Graduate Certificate	\$ 546.53 per credit	\$ 530.60 lab fee
Urban and Regional Planning Extension Program	\$ 165.60 per course	

### International Students

Approved by the Board

April 1, 2025

Effective Date

#### **Fees:**

Course/Program Area	Fees
Application fee	\$ 153.00

#### **Tuitions:**

- \* These fees are wholly or partially cost recovery in nature. Responsibility for the initial establishment and publication of wholly or partially cost recovery fees is delegated to the President.
- \*\* Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.
- \*\*\* Student activity, student services, and mandatory lab and supply fees for international students are assessed at the same rate as those listed for domestic students. Fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

Course/Program Area	Tuition**
Adult Basic Education	\$ 2,447.30 per course
Advanced Diploma in GIS Applications	\$ 655.45 per credit
Co-op Education	\$ 2,447.30 per semester
English as a Second Language Programs	\$ 5,738.48 Full Semester (13 weeks) \$ 2,869.24 Half Semester (6.5 weeks) \$ 2,334.78 Short Term (4 weeks) \$ 1,940.96 Short Term (3 weeks)
EXTN 500 – Extended Research	\$ 1,376.45 per course
Graduate Certificate in Business	\$ 781.09 per credit
Graduate Diploma in Hospitality Management	\$ 781.09 per credit
Graduate Diploma in International Trade	\$ 781.09 per credit
Graduate Diploma in Project Management	\$ 781.09 per credit
Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management	\$ 854.08 per credit
Master of Business Administration	\$ 771.12 per credit
Master of Education in Educational Leadership	\$ 704.62 per credit
Master of Education in Special Education	\$ 704.62 per credit
Master of Geographic Information System Applications (MGISA)	\$ 655.45 per credit
Master's in Community Planning	\$ 587.17 per credit
Mental Health Care Assistant	\$ 749.20 per credit

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## Tuition and Fee Schedule #021

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Course/Program Area	Tuition**
Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy Graduate Certificate	\$ 781.09 per credit
Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language Certificate	\$ 2,811.85 per program
Trades and Applied Technology Programs	\$ 2,447.30 per month
Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Programs	\$ 815.77 per credit

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## 2025-26 Budget Consultations

Each year the Budget Advisory Council, through the office of the Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President Administration (CFOVPA), will engage the VIU community to provide input to guide recommendations to the President and Vice-Chancellor for the university's annual operating budget. Consultations are designed to gather information to inform the BAC with feedback for annual budget planning.

The fall budget survey was administered to faculty, staff and students in October 2024 and provided an opportunity for feedback on VIU's budget priorities. In addition, staff, faculty, and students were provided with an opportunity to attend facilitated, in-person sessions that were focused on the same question themes as the budget survey.

The second phase of the consultation process will include the Planning and Priorities Committee of Senate, and a spring term survey for faculty, staff, and students to provide feedback on the draft 2025-26 operating budget plan contained within this report.

A summary of the fall 2024 survey and budget consultation sessions are provided in the following pages.





# Fall 2024 Budget Survey & Consultation Report

Strategic Planning and Initiatives

October 2024

## 1 Survey summary

Drawing from the January [2024 budget survey](#), this version of Vancouver Island University (VIU)'s Budget Survey was created by the office of the Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President Administration (CFOVPA), with consultation and administrative support from the Office of Strategic Planning and Initiatives as well as VIU's Budget Advisory Council (BAC). The survey aimed to gather feedback from staff and students to inform BAC and to be considered within recommendations to the President for 2025-26 budget planning. BAC's recommendations on annual operations and future projections will be released in a comprehensive plan that will accompany the draft 2025-26 budget for review by the Facilities, Audit & Finance Committee and the VIU Board at the end of the fall semester to ensure the university can meet its financial obligations by optimizing expenditures, increasing revenues, and continuing to support students, faculty, and staff.

On October 1, 2024, the survey was distributed via an email from University Relations on behalf of the CFOVPA, containing an anonymous link to encourage voluntary participation. Two reminder emails were sent before the survey closed on October 11, 2024, at 11:59 PM PST.

## 2 Respondent characteristics

Comparative values for questions repeated from the January 2024 survey have been included in the commentary where relevant.

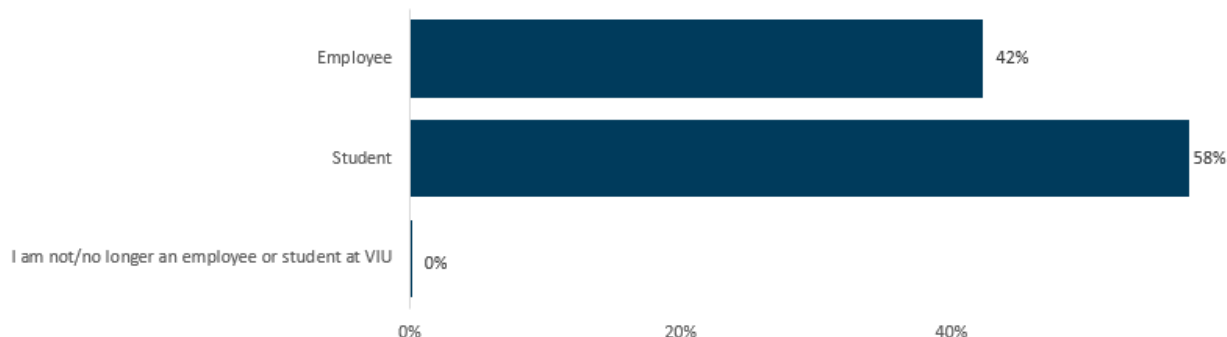
### 2.1 All responses (n = 791)

Survey participants were asked to identify themselves as either an employee or a student at VIU. Those who belonged to both groups were advised to choose the role they considered primary and to respond to the rest of the survey from that perspective.

A total of 791 responses were received for the October 2024 budget survey, down from 1,070 in the January 2024 survey. Responses by respondent type were consistent between the two surveys with October 2024 having 42 per cent (n=335) saying they were employees (January 2024 = 41 per cent) and 58 per cent (n=455) indicating they were students (January 2024 = 58 per cent). A small percentage of respondents indicated they were not/no longer an employee or student at VIU (October 2024 = less than one per cent, January 2024 = one per cent) and their survey was terminated due to ineligibility.

**Figure 1**

*Percentages of survey responses by respondent type*



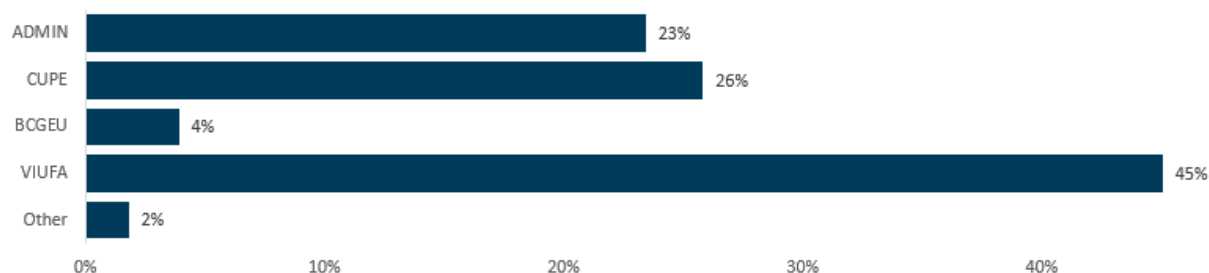
## 2.2 Employee characteristics (n = 333)

Employee respondents were asked which VIU employee group they belonged to. They were instructed to make their selection based on what they felt was their primary employee group if they worked under more than one.

Of the employee respondents, 45 per cent (n = 150) belonged to VIUFA (January 2024 = 42 per cent), 26 per cent (n = 86) to CUPE (January 2024 = 29 per cent), 23 per cent to ADMIN (January 2024 = 20 per cent), and four per cent (n = 13) to BCGEU (January 2024 = eight per cent). A small percentage of individuals (October 2024 = two per cent, January 2024 = one per cent) indicated they primarily belonged to an employee group other than these four (e.g. contract employees, project personnel).

**Figure 2**

*Percentages of employee survey responses by employee group*



## 2.3 Student characteristics (n = 444)

Student respondents were asked to indicate the type of program they are taking at VIU. They were instructed to make their selection based on what they felt was their primary program if completing more than one. To assist students with making their selection, each response option provided supplemental information that described the types of programs that fell under each category:

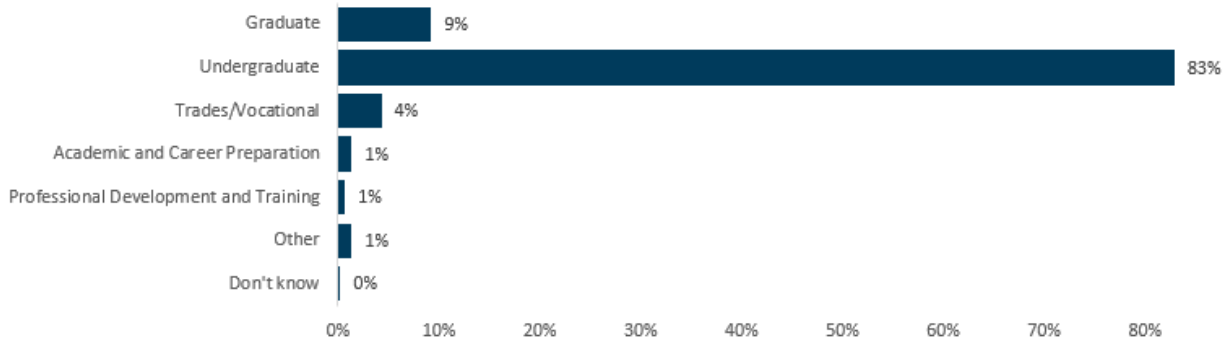
1. Graduate (e.g. master's degree, graduate certificate, graduate diploma)
2. Undergraduate (e.g. bachelor's degree, post-baccalaureate degree, associate degree, certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, post-degree diploma)
3. Trades/Vocational (skilled occupation training, e.g. apprenticeship, skills-related certificate, or diploma)
4. Academic and Career Preparation (pre-university courses, high school equivalency, or workplace training, e.g. Adult Graduation Diploma (Adult Basic Education), Aboriginal University Bridging Program, Canadian University Foundation Year, Employability Skills Program)
5. Professional Development and Training (professional development or general skills courses and programs, e.g. Animal Care Aide, Building Service Worker, Community Mental Health Worker, Master Gardener)
6. Other
7. Don't know

Of the student respondents, the vast majority (83 per cent, n = 368) said they were taking an undergraduate program at VIU (January 2024 = 78 per cent). The remaining students reported 9 per cent (n = 41) reported that they were in a graduate program (January 2024 = 11 per cent), four per cent (n = 19) in a Trades/Vocational program (January 2024 = five per cent), one per cent (n = 6) in an Academic and Career Preparation program (January 2024 = three per cent), and one per cent (n = 6) in some other type of VIU program (January 2024 = three per cent). A very small number of students (less than one per cent in October 2024 and January 2024) indicated that they were taking either a Professional Development and Training program or that they did not know what type of program they were in.



**Figure 3**

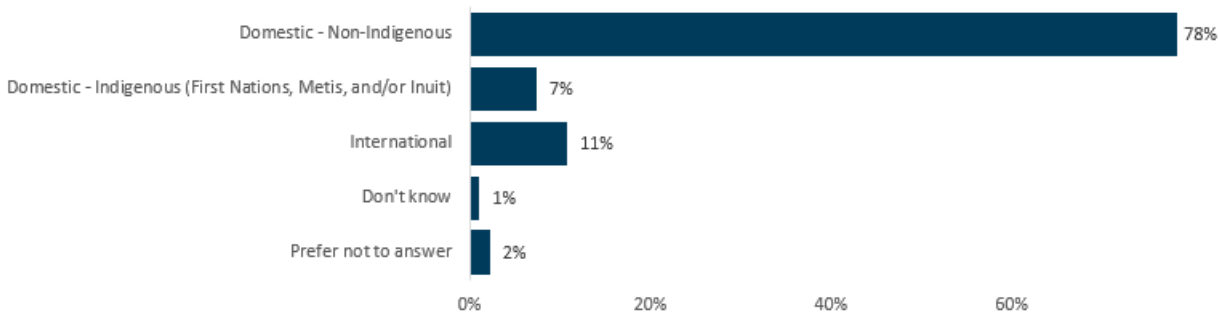
*Percentages of student survey responses by program category*



Student respondents were asked to provide demographic information; 78 per cent (n = 348) reported being Domestic – Non-Indigenous (January 2024 = 76 per cent), seven per cent (n = 33) identified as Domestic – Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, and/or Inuit) (January 2024 = nine per cent), and 11 per cent (n = 48) as International (January 2024 = 14 per cent). Additionally, two per cent (n = 10) preferred not to answer (January 2024 = two per cent) and a small percentage (October 2024 = one per cent, January 2024 = less than one per cent) indicated that they did not know which student category best described them.

**Figure 4**

*Percentages of student survey responses by demographic group*



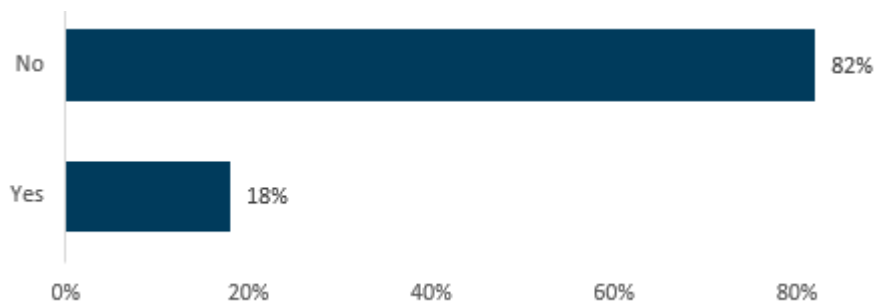
### 3 Remote work or study

Respondents were asked if they are working or attending school remotely and if yes, how many days a week are they on campus. The majority of respondents said their were not working or attending school remotely (82 per cent, n = 642) while a minority of respondents, 18 per cent (n = 141) said they are working or attending school remotely. Of those there was a fairly even distribution for the number of days a week working or attending school remotely; 25 per cent (n = 35) said three days a week, 24 per cent (n = 33) said one day a week, 20 per cent (n = 27) said four days a week, 17 per cent (n = 23) said five days a week, and 14 per cent (n = 20) said two days per week.

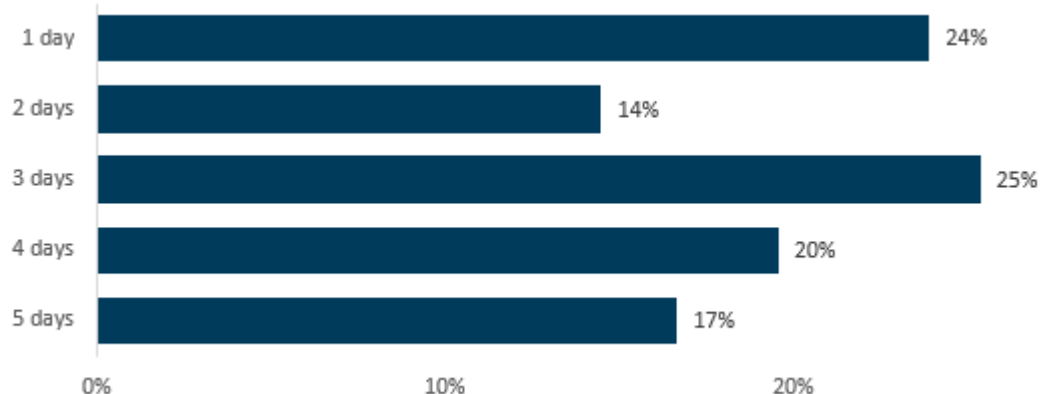


**Figure 5** (n= 783)

*Employees and students were asked if they are working or attending school remotely.*

**Figure 6** (n = 138)

*As a follow-up to the previous question, respondents who answered affirmatively were asked to specify how many days per week they are on campus.*



## 4 Employee resource area prioritization

### 4.1 Employees views on resource area prioritization (n = 319)

As the university enters its third year of the Deficit Mitigation Plan in 2025-26 and there continues to be limited resources, the employees were asked to review the top six priority areas identified in the January 2024 budget survey. The top six areas (in order of importance combined percentage of top three priority rankings from January 2024) were:

- Student recruitment & retention efforts
- Expanding in-demand courses and program offerings
- Student services supports (e.g. Career Studio, Financial Aid and Awards, Housing, Health and Wellness Centre {physical & mental health supports}, sexualized violence support, Indigenous student supports, Immigration Advising, etc.)
- Student academic supports (e.g. Accessibility Services, Advising Centre, Centre for Experiential Learning, Peer Supported Learning)
- Employee health, well-being, and benefits
- Physical infrastructure (e.g. room and building improvements, laboratory space and equipment additions or modernizations)

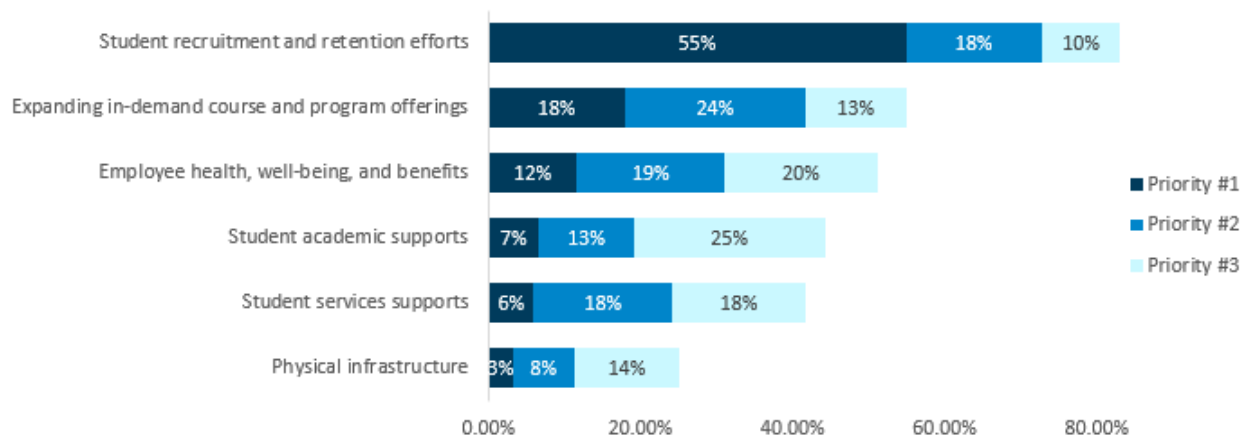
Resource areas were presented in randomized order, and respondents were instructed to click and drag to re-order and prioritize resource areas with "1" being the most preferred of all.



The October 2024 survey results from the employee resource area prioritization question yielded the same top three results viewed by percentage of combined top three or by percentage of #1 ranking. Employees reaffirmed “student recruitment and retention efforts” as the #1 priority (83 per cent, n = 265), “expanding in-demand course and program offerings” as the #2 priority (55 per cent, n = 175). Employees identified “employee health, well-being, and benefits” as the #3 priority (51 per cent, n = 163) which was the #5 priority in the January 2024 budget survey.

### Figure 7

*Employees’ resource area prioritizations (top three) sorted by highest to lowest combined percentage of top three priority ranking selections.*



## 4.2 Employees views on resource area of reduction (n = 305)

Employees were asked to think about their response to the previous question with the knowledge that VIU does not currently have sufficient money to fully fund all resource areas due to its current financial situation. Respondents were provided ten discrete resource areas in random order and were then requested to rank the areas by priority for reduction with “1” being the top choice for reduction. The choices provided were (shown here in alphabetical order):

1. Digital infrastructure (e.g. computer hardware and software upgrades, cloud services, network drives and data centers, website improvements)
2. Employee health, well-being, and benefits
3. Employee professional development and training opportunities
4. Expanding in-demand course and program offerings
5. Faculty teaching and learning supports (e.g. course and curriculum development, creation and mapping of learning outcomes, assistance with learning technologies)
6. Physical infrastructure (e.g. room and building improvements, laboratory space and equipment additions or modernizations)
7. Research and scholarly activity (e.g. securing and providing funding and awards for faculty and student research, promotion of research opportunities and activity)
8. Student academic supports (e.g. Accessibility Services, Advising Centre, Centre for Experiential Learning, Peer Supported Learning)
9. Student recruitment and retention efforts
10. Student services supports (e.g. Career Studio, Financial Aid and Awards, Housing, Health and Wellness Centre, Immigration Advising)

The top two areas for reduction most prioritized by employees if you look at the combined percentage of top three priority selections and just the #1 area for reduction are “research and scholarly activity” (48 per cent of combined (n = 145) or 25 per cent of #1 ranking (n = 76)) and “physical infrastructure” (44 per cent of combined (n = 135) or 20 per cent of #1 ranking (n = 60)). The #3 area for reduction on a combined basis is “employee

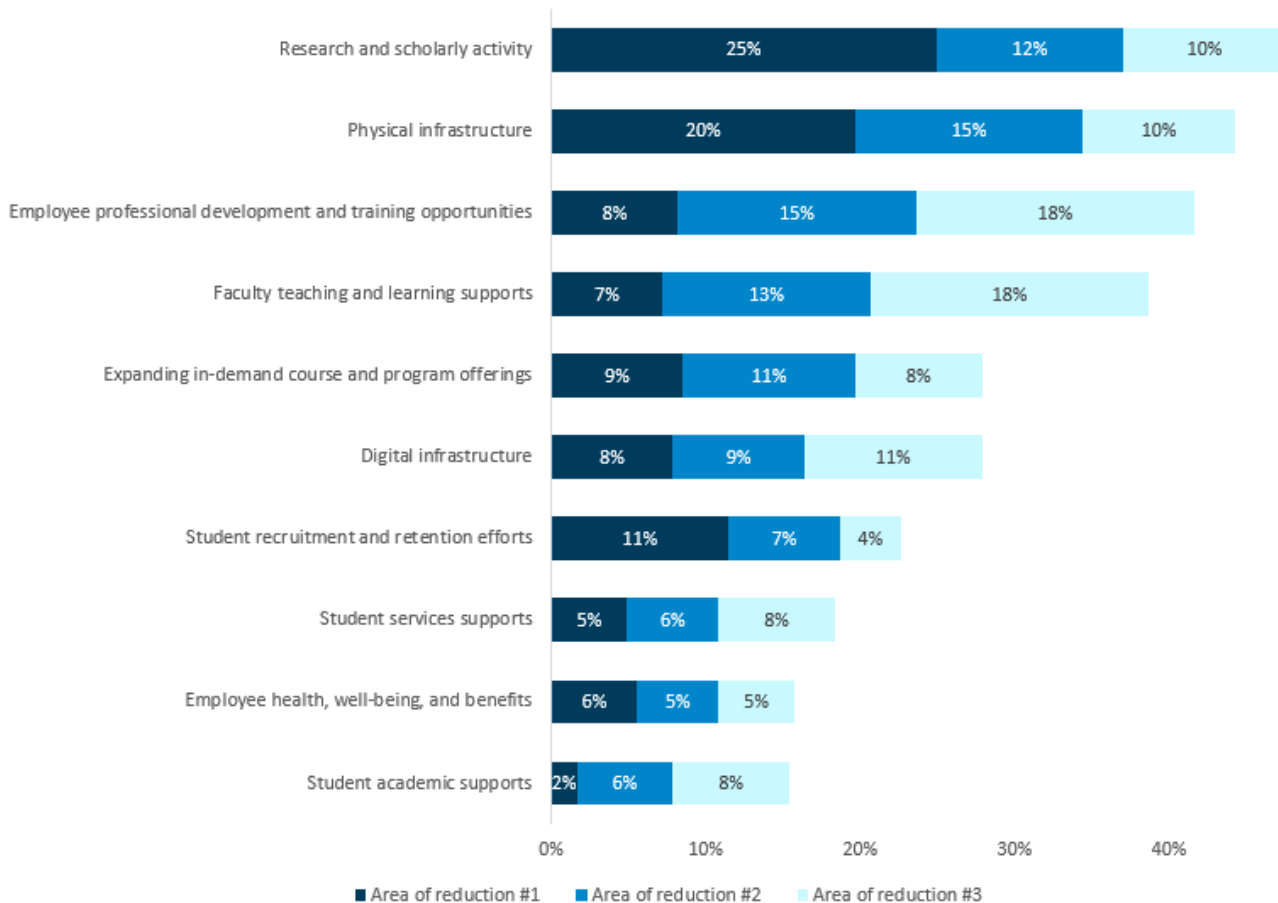




professional development and training opportunities” (42 per cent of combined, n = 118) or “student recruitment and retention efforts” if looking at #1 priority rankings only (11 per cent, n = 35).

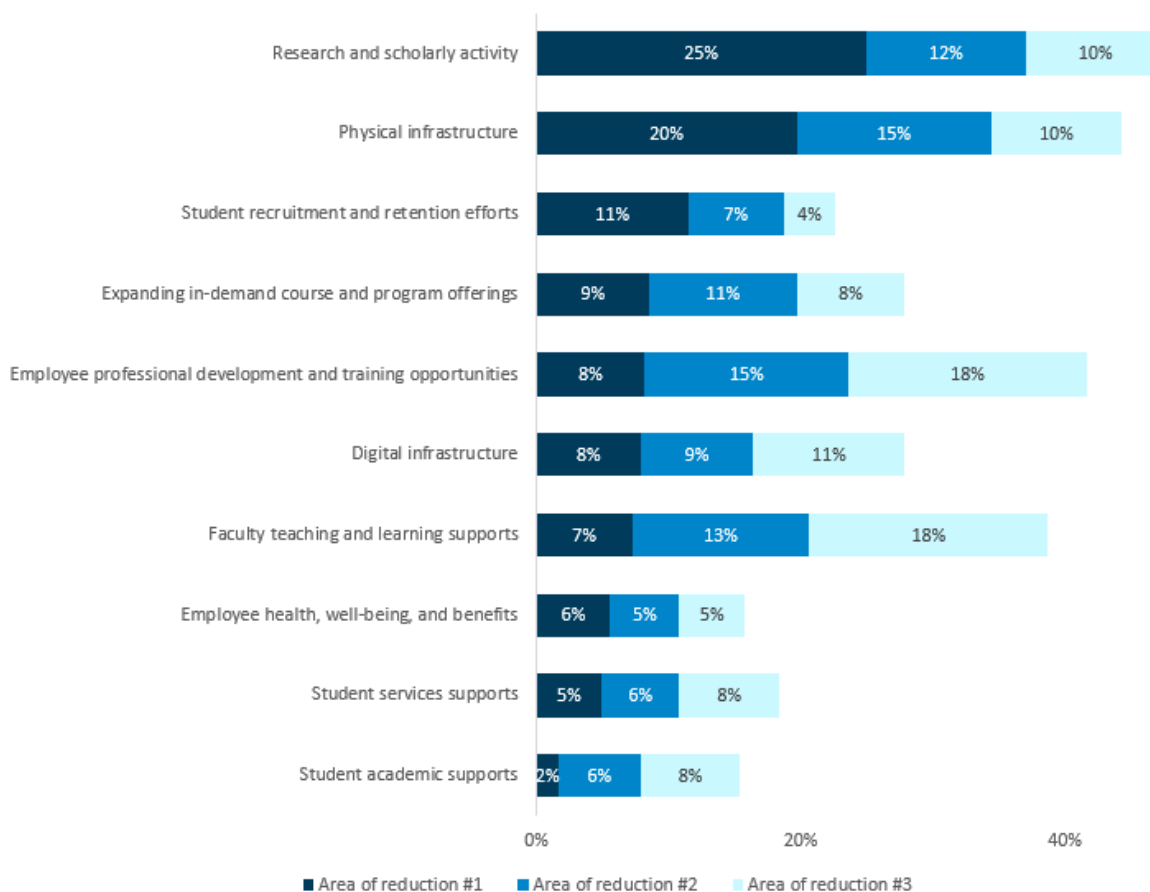
**Figure 8**

*Employees’ resource area of reduction (top three) sorted by highest to lowest combined percentage of top three priority of reduction.*



**Figure 9**

*Employees resource area reduction (top three) sorted by highest to lowest percentage of #1 rankings.*



## 5 Student resource area prioritization

### 5.1 Student views on resource area prioritization (n = 403)

As the university enters its third year of the Deficit Mitigation Plan in 2025-26 and there continues to be limited resources, the employees were asked to review the top five priority areas identified in the January 2024 budget survey. The top five areas (in order of importance combined percentage of top three priority rankings) were:

- Expanding in-demand courses and program offerings
- Student services supports (e.g. Career Studio, Financial Aid and Awards, Housing, Health and Wellness Centre {physical & mental health supports}, sexualized violence support, Indigenous student supports, Immigration Advising, etc.)
- Student academic supports (e.g. Accessibility Services, Advising Centre, Centre for Experiential Learning, Peer Supported Learning)
- Physical infrastructure (e.g. room and building improvements, laboratory space and equipment additions or modernizations)
- Student recruitment & retention efforts

Resource areas were presented in randomized order, and respondents were instructed to click and drag to re-order and prioritize resource areas with "1" being the most preferred of all.

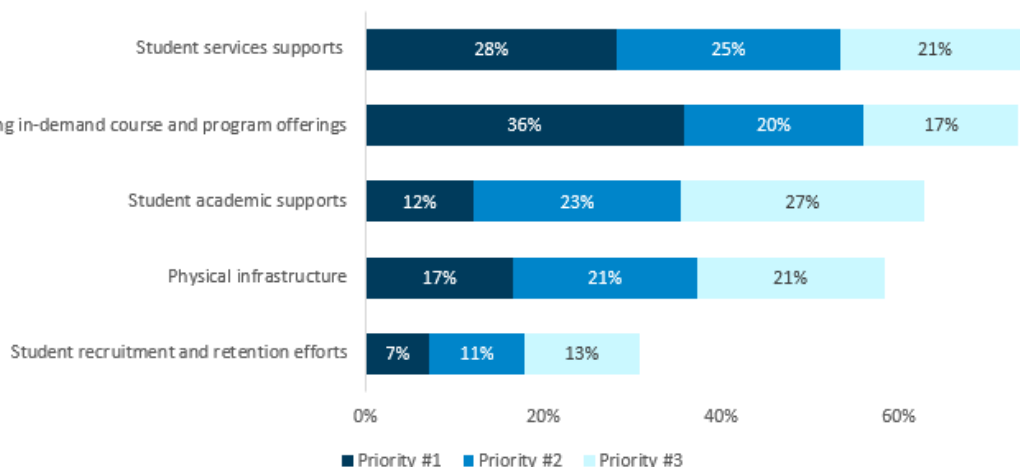
Student prioritization on a combined percentage of top three rankings indicates "student services supports" as the #1 priority with 75 per cent of the combined ranking (n = 301) and "expanding in-demand course and program offerings" as the #2 priority with 73 per cent of the combined ranking (n = 296). Notably these rankings were



reversed on the January 2024 budget survey. Rounding out the top three ranking was “student academic supports” as the #3 priority with 63 per cent of the combined ranking (n = 253) which was also the #3 priority in January 2024.

**Figure 10**

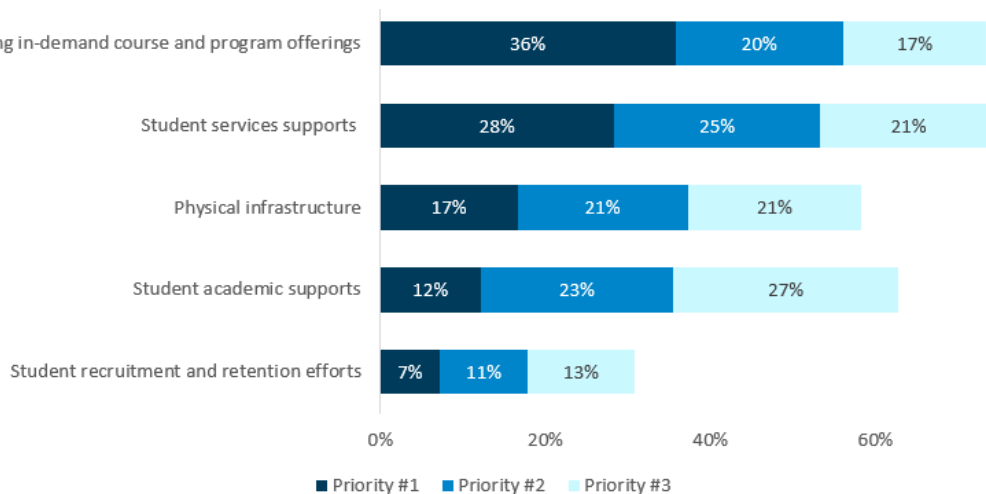
*Students’ resource area prioritizations (top three) sorted by highest to lowest combined percentage of top 3 priority ranking selections.*



Student prioritization results sorted by the #1 priority ranking yields a different selection order than on a combined percentage sort basis. The #1 priority ranked by students is “expanding in-demand course and program offerings” with 36 per cent (n = 144), followed by “student services supports” with 28 per cent (n = 114) and “physical infrastructure” with 17 per cent (n = 67).

**Figure 11**

*Students’ resource area prioritizations (top three) sorted by highest to lowest percentage of #1 rankings.*



## 5.2 Students views on resource area of reduction (n = 318)

Students were asked to think about their response to the previous question with the knowledge that VIU does not currently have sufficient money to fully fund all resource areas due to its current financial situation. Respondents were provided ten discrete resource areas in random order and were then requested to rank the



areas by priority for reduction with "1" being the top choice top choice for reduction. The choices provided were (shown here in alphabetical order):

1. Digital infrastructure (e.g. computer hardware and software upgrades, cloud services, network drives and data centers, website improvements)
2. Employee health, well-being, and benefits
3. Employee professional development and training opportunities
4. Expanding in-demand course and program offerings
5. Faculty teaching and learning supports (e.g. course and curriculum development, creation and mapping of learning outcomes, assistance with learning technologies)
6. Physical infrastructure (e.g. room and building improvements, laboratory space and equipment additions or modernizations)
7. Research and scholarly activity (e.g. securing and providing funding and awards for faculty and student research, promotion of research opportunities and activity)
8. Student academic supports (e.g. Accessibility Services, Advising Centre, Centre for Experiential Learning, Peer Supported Learning)
9. Student recruitment and retention efforts
10. Student services supports (e.g. Career Studio, Financial Aid and Awards, Housing, Health and Wellness Centre, Immigration Advising)

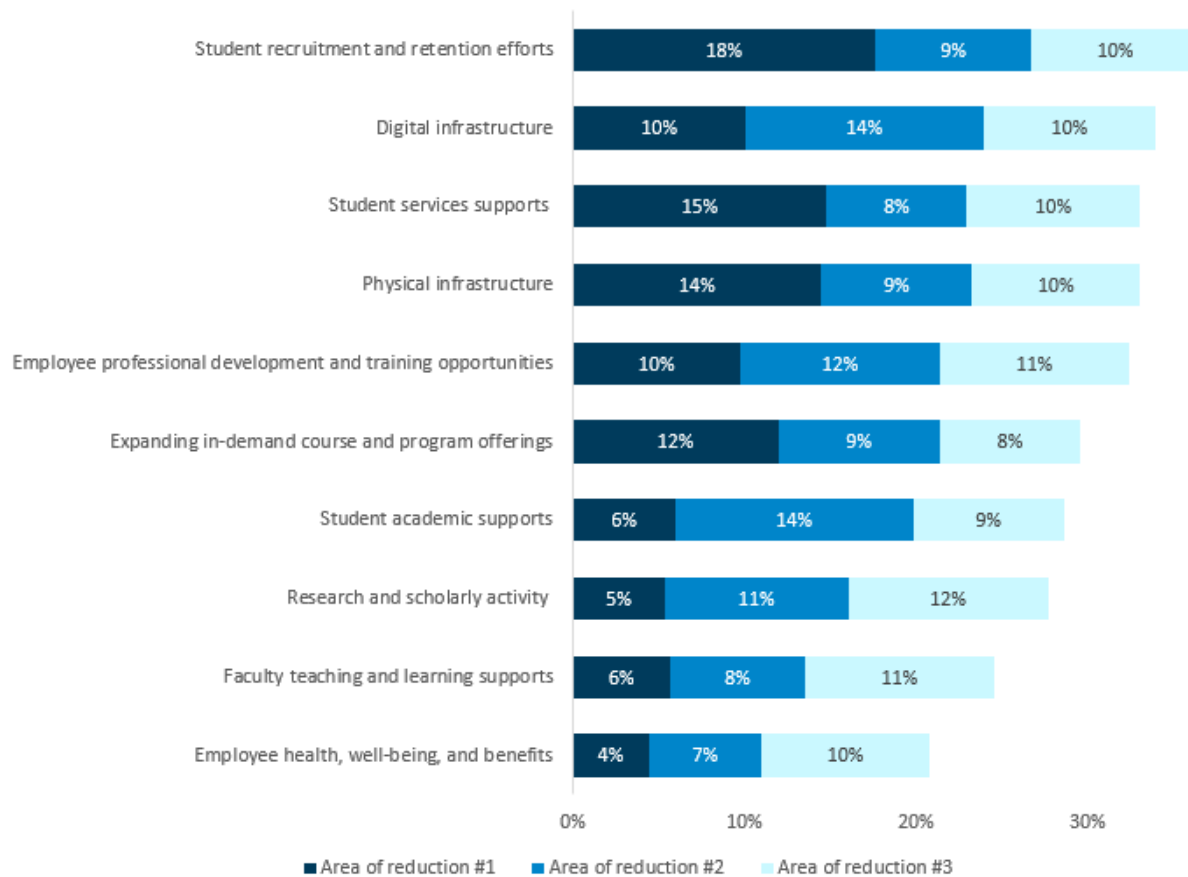
The top area for reduction most prioritized by students if you look at the combined percentage of top three priority selections and just the #1 area for reduction is "student recruitment and retention efforts" with 36 per cent of combined (n = 116) or 18 per cent of #1 ranking (n = 56). It is notable that this category was ranked lowest of the top options for prioritization in the January 2024 survey results and again in the October 2024 survey.

On a combined top three priority ranking perspective, the #2 area for reduction identified by students is a tie between "digital infrastructure" and "student services supports" both with 33 per cent (n = 105). Given students ranked "student services supports" in the top three areas for prioritization there is reason to suspect that students may not have understood that this question of the survey was asking for rankings of areas for reductions.



**Figure 12**

*Students' resource area of reduction (top three) sorted by highest to lowest combined percentage of top 3 priority of reduction.*

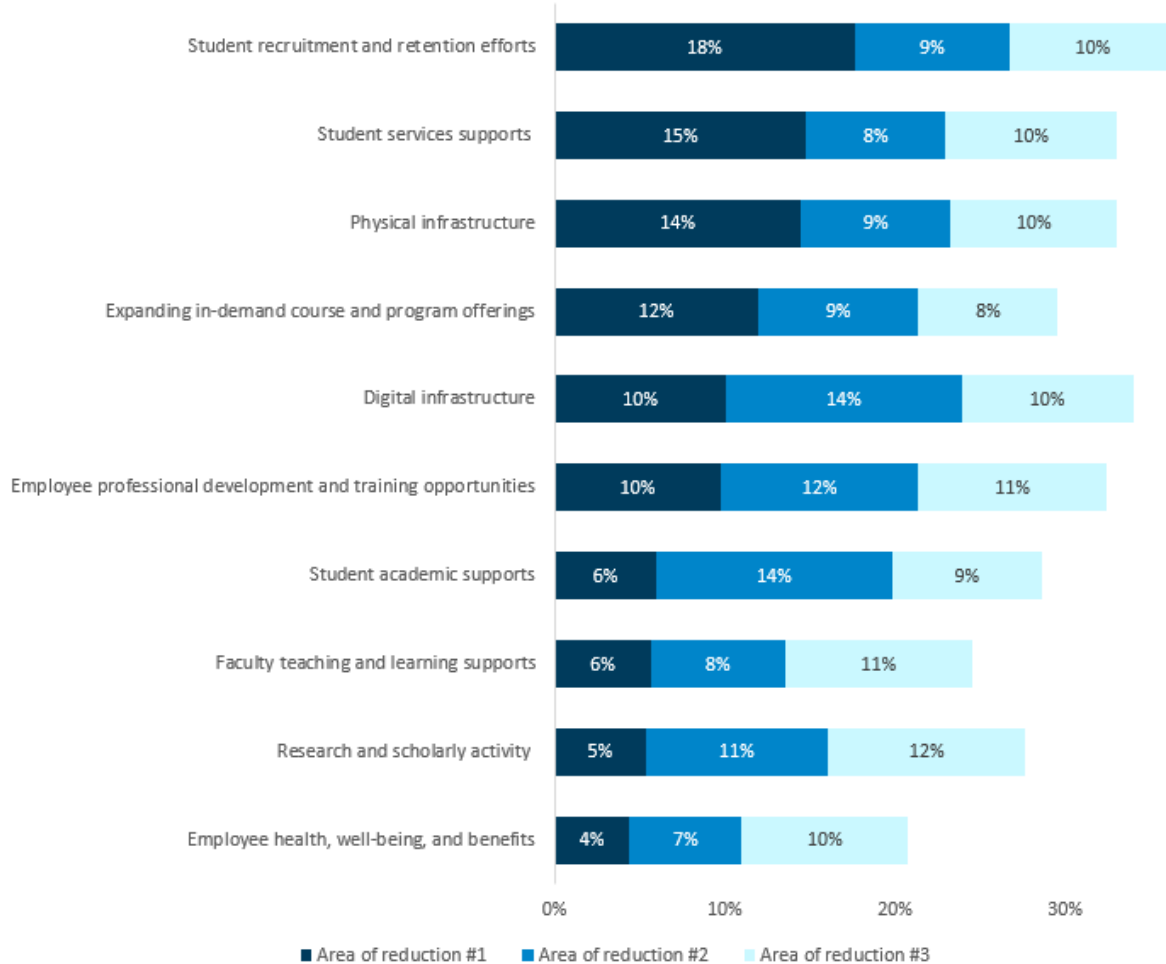


The #1 priority ranking sort order also suggests that student respondents may not have understood the questions instructions clearly as "student services supports" and "physical infrastructure" were ranked in the top three and four for areas of prioritization in the previous question.



**Figure 13**

*Students' resource area of reduction (top three) sorted by highest to lowest percentage of #1 rankings.*



## 6 Employee and student view on in-demand courses (n = 617)

The results of the January 2024 budget survey identified that both employees and students viewed "expanding in-demand courses and program areas" as a priority area for VIU. October 2024 respondents were reminded of this viewpoint and were asked their opinion on if this should be accompanied by a reduction in VIU's current course and program areas?

The responses were almost evenly split with 53 per cent (n = 330) saying "no" and 47 per cent (n = 287) saying "yes" an expansion of courses and program areas should be accompanied by a reduction in current course and program areas.



**Figure 14**

*Employees and students were asked if they an expansion of in-demand courses and program areas should be accompanied by a reduction in current course and program areas.*



Employees and students were provided space to add any comments to the course and program areas question. A total of 227 text entries were received, and the following common themes were observed:

1. **Prioritize In-Demand Programs & Reduce Underperforming Ones** was the most dominant theme, with strong support for expanding programs aligned with current labor market needs and reducing those with low enrollment or outdated curricula. Subtopics include:
  - **Data-Driven Decisions:** Many respondents emphasize the need for data analysis (enrollment rates, cost per student, job market demand) to inform decisions, expressing frustration with past cuts seemingly made without sufficient data or transparency. The sentiment is a mixture of urgency and skepticism towards the current decision-making process.
  - **Defining "In-Demand":** There's debate on how to define "in-demand." Some focus solely on immediate job market needs, advocating for vocational training and trades programs. Others argue for a broader definition, emphasizing the importance of a well-rounded education and the long-term value of arts and humanities, even if not immediately lucrative. The sentiment here is divided, highlighting a fundamental disagreement on the university's role.
  - **Strategic Program Reduction:** While there's agreement on reducing underperforming programs, there's concern about the method of reduction. Some respondents fear a drastic reduction that could harm the university's reputation and ability to attract students. Others suggest merging or combining programs to minimize negative impacts. The sentiment is cautious, with a preference for a gradual, strategic approach.
2. **Concerns about Financial Sustainability and Resource Allocation.** Many comments address the financial challenges facing VIU and suggest ways to improve resource allocation. Subtopics include:
  - **Administrative Costs:** Several respondents criticize high administrative costs, suggesting that reducing administrative salaries and positions could free up funds for academic programs. The sentiment is strongly critical of administrative spending.
  - **Investment in Successful Programs:** There's a consensus that resources should be invested in successful, high-enrollment programs to maximize return on investment. The sentiment is pragmatic and focused on efficiency.
  - **Government Funding:** Some suggest seeking increased government funding to avoid program cuts, expressing concern about the impact of cuts on student learning and the ability of graduates to contribute to the economy. The sentiment is hopeful but also acknowledges the difficulty of securing additional funding.
3. **Impact on Student Experience and Recruitment:** The potential negative effects of program cuts on student experience and recruitment are a major concern. Subtopics include:



- **Course Availability and Program Completion:** Students express frustration with full courses, delaying program completion. This highlights the need to offer sufficient course sections to meet student demand. The sentiment is negative, expressing frustration and concern about the impact on their education.
  - **Negative Impact on Recruitment and Retention:** Many respondents warn that program cuts could damage VIU's reputation and deter prospective students, leading to a downward spiral. The sentiment is worried and emphasizes the long-term consequences of hasty decisions.
  - **Student Mental Health:** Several comments highlight the importance of student mental health and suggest investing in mental health support services. The sentiment is concerned and emphasizes the importance of student well-being.
4. **The Value of Arts and Humanities:** There's significant pushback against the potential elimination of arts and humanities programs, emphasizing their importance for a well-rounded education and their contribution to the community. The sentiment is strongly defensive of the value of these programs.
  5. **Transparency and Communication:** A lack of transparency and effective communication from university leadership is a recurring criticism. Respondents demand more data, clearer explanations for decisions, and greater faculty involvement in the decision-making process. The sentiment is distrustful and critical of the university's communication strategies.
  6. **University's Identity and Mission:** There's a fundamental debate about VIU's identity and mission. Some advocate for focusing primarily on vocational training and programs directly linked to the job market, while others emphasize the importance of maintaining a broader range of programs to provide a comprehensive university education. The sentiment is divided, reflecting a lack of clarity regarding the university's long-term goals.

## 7 Students views on the Student Services Fee allocation (n = 258)

Students were provided with a chart that indicated the 2023-24 allocation of the **Student Services Fee**. They were asked to indicate the percentage they feel each area should have and were also given a new row called "other" they could use to suggest new areas for allocation of the fee. Students entered numbers between 0 and 100 for each category, ensuring the total equaled 100.

The current areas of spending are:

1. Experiential Learning & Education (e.g. Office of Co-Curricular Engagement and Learning in the Centre for Experiential Learning)
2. Access to Technology (e.g. student computer labs, Wi-Fi, and student loaner equipment)
3. Health and Wellness (e.g. Health Clinic Medical Office Assistant, Nurse Practitioner(s), and Mental Health Strategist)

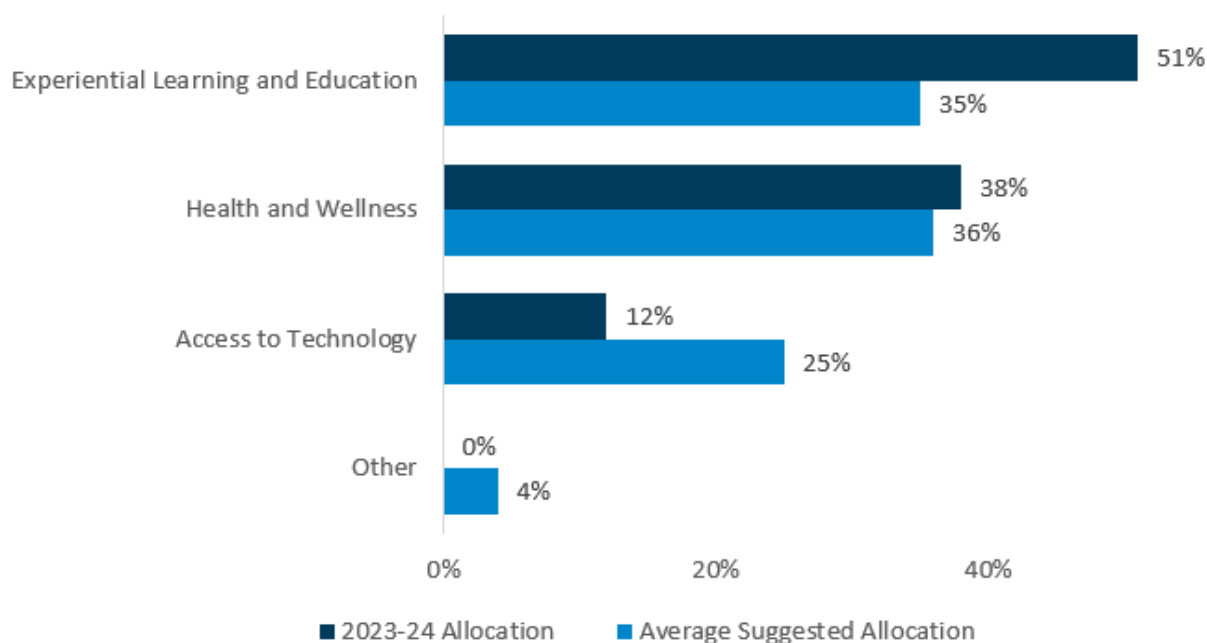
Whereas the bulk of the current Student Services Fee is currently allocated to support Experiential Learning and Education, students, on average, indicated a preference for a more balanced allocation with 35 per cent for "experiential learning & education", 36 per cent for "health & wellness", 25 per cent for "access to technology", and four per cent for "other."





**Figure 15**

*Comparison of 2023-24 allocation of the Student Services Fee to the October 2024 student respondent average suggested allocation.*



Students were provided with a row called “Other” that they could allocate a percentage to and were asked to describe what they would like this fee spent on. A total of 36 text entries were received, and the following common themes were observed:

1. **Parking and Transportation**
  - Need for more parking spaces due to new buildings.
  - Better overall parking facilities.
2. **Student Services and Support**
  - More comprehensive student support services.
  - Enhancing Accessibility Services and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives.
  - Establishing a walk-in clinic and improving the dental plan.
  - Providing childcare services.
3. **Academic and Career Opportunities**
  - Funding for research opportunities and conferences.
  - Increasing co-op work experiences and career opportunities.
  - Adding beneficial new classes and enhancing existing programs.
4. **Campus Facilities and Life**
  - Increasing the number of study spaces.
  - Keeping the library open 24/7.
  - General improvements in campus life, including student pub discounts and free food services.
5. **Financial Management and Flexibility**
  - Making the meal plan more cost-effective.
  - Reducing cafeteria costs.
  - Recording and reallocating remaining funds to areas in need.
6. **Staffing and Maintenance**
  - Hiring more staff and ensuring fair pay.
  - Regular maintenance of campus facilities



## 8 Student Views on the Student Activity Fee Allocation (n = 258)

Students were provided with a chart that indicated the 2023-24 allocation of the **Student Activities Fee**. They were asked to indicate the percentage they feel each area should have and were given a new row labelled "Other" that they could use to suggest new areas for allocation of the fee. Students entered numbers between 0 and 100 for each category, ensuring the total equals 100.

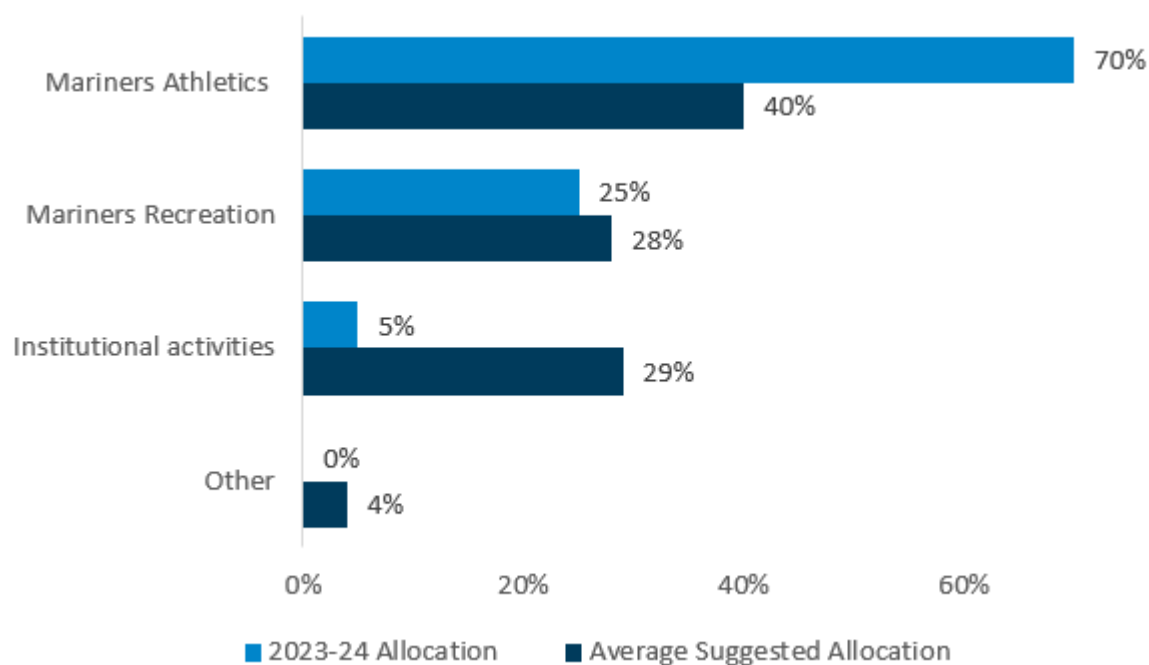
The existing areas receiving are:

1. Mariners Athletics (e.g. Team Operations, Travel, Scholarships, Coaching, Game Day Operations, Free Student Admission)
2. Mariners Recreation (e.g. Gym Management, Weight Room, Intramurals and Fitness, Community Rentals)
3. Institutional activities (e.g. Exams, Convocation, Career Fairs, Supporting Academic Classes)

Most of the current spending of the Student Activity Fee is currently allocated to support the Mariner Athletics. Although student respondents still prioritize Mariner Athletics their responses indicate a preference for increased spending in the other areas. Students, on average, indicated that 40 per cent should be used for "Mariners Athletics", 28 per cent for "Mariners Recreation", 29 per cent for "Institutional activities", and four per cent for "other."

**Figure 16**

*Comparison of 2023-24 allocation of the Student Activity Fee to the October 2024 student respondent average suggested allocation.*



Students were provided with a row called "Other" that they could allocate a percentage to and were asked to describe what they would like this fee spent on. A total of 22 text entries were received, and the following common themes were observed:

### 1. Student Activities and Recreation

- Clubs, recreational arts programs, and other non-sports activities.
- Activities like climbing, WildPlay events, and hiking groups.
- Integrating different activities into the semester.



2. **Financial Concerns and Allocation**
  - Concerns about student fees funding activities not relevant to all students.
  - Preference for reducing semester costs and questioning the financial priority of sports teams.
  - Suggesting that student athletes should pay more for activity fees.
3. **Health and Wellness**
  - Emphasis on mental health services and childcare.
  - Wellness activities outside of VIU, such as discounted memberships and fitness classes.
4. **Academic and Career Opportunities**
  - Funding for student research opportunities.
  - Recognition for students participating in high-level sports not supported by VIU.

## 9 General Feedback from Employees and Students:

Employees and students were asked to provide additional feedback on future budget planning at VIU and how it might affect their work/study experience at the university. A total of 236 text entries were received, and the following common themes were observed:

### 9.1 Budget and Resource Allocation

- **Disproportionate Cuts:**
  - Certain departments, like Earth Science and Geography, have faced larger budget cuts, impacting their ability to offer upper-level courses. This has led to concerns about the long-term viability of these programs.
  - The Outdoor Recreation program was cut, disappointing students who chose the university for this offering.
- **Administrative Costs:**
  - Criticism surrounds maintaining high-paid administrative roles at a time when faculty positions are being reduced. This includes the controversial decision to pay two presidents' full salaries simultaneously.
  - Staff and students question the necessity of multiple Vice President positions when academic roles are being cut.
- **Infrastructure vs. Programs:**
  - Investment in infrastructure like bike racks is seen as misplaced when academic programs are being reduced. Stakeholders feel academic offerings should be prioritized.
  - Example: New residences are being built, yet there are complaints about insufficient funding for existing programs.
- **Transparency in Decision-Making:**
  - There is a strong demand for clear communication regarding budget decisions. Stakeholders were surprised by a costly rebranding initiative amidst budget cuts.
  - Students and staff expressed frustration over a lack of consultation before major financial decisions are made.

### 9.2 Student and Employee Well-being

- **Employee Treatment:**
  - Employees report feeling overworked due to layoffs, with some doing the jobs of multiple people. There are calls for fair compensation and improved working conditions.
  - Staff members mention working without breaks and being unable to afford basic necessities due to reduced hours.
- **Student Support and Experience:**
  - Enhancing student experiences through programs like study abroad and guest lectures is seen as crucial. Poor experiences can negate marketing efforts aimed at recruitment.
  - Example: Students highlight the need for more field trips and guest speakers to enrich their education.



- Mental Health and Well-being:
  - Calls for better mental health support services to aid student well-being, including more accessible counseling and wellness programs.
  - Students express the need for increased access to mental health resources, especially during exam periods.

### 9.3 Academic Programs

- Course Offerings:
  - Reduction of smaller programs, like Outdoor Recreation, raises concerns about delayed education and limited academic opportunities.
  - Students are worried about the potential cuts to niche programs that attracted them to the university in the first place.
- Focus on High-Demand Programs:
  - Suggestions to prioritize courses that lead to high employment rates post-graduation. This aligns with industry needs and enhances the university's reputation.
  - Increasing co-op opportunities in fields like biology to better prepare students for the job market.
- Transferability and Flexibility:
  - Desire for more transferable courses to other institutions and flexible scheduling options. This would accommodate diverse student needs and improve accessibility.
  - Example: Students request more evening classes and transfer agreements with other universities.

### 9.4 Athletics and Facilities

- Athletics Funding:
  - Athletics play a key role in fostering school spirit and community pride. Student athletes emphasize the importance of financial support for sports programs.
  - Funding cuts to athletic programs could diminish school spirit and reduce recruitment of talented athletes.
- Facility Improvements:
  - Requests for updated gym equipment and more inclusive workout spaces to enhance student well-being. Poor facility conditions can deter use.
- Parking and Campus Services:
  - Parking is described as a "nightmare," with calls to replace the current provider, Indigo, and improve availability. The cafeteria is criticized for expensive and limited options, with suggestions for more affordable offerings.
  - Example: Students report arriving hours early to find parking.

### 9.5 Online and Distance Learning

- Request for More Online Classes:
  - Increased online course options are needed to support distance learners and offer flexibility for those who cannot attend in person. Those distance learners struggle with limited online offerings, impacting their ability to complete programs.
- Technology and Accessibility:
  - Suggestions for improved online learning platforms and resources, such as adopting user-friendly systems like Blackboard or Canvas. Both students and faculty find current systems cumbersome and time-consuming to navigate.



## 9.6 Community and Culture

- Arts and Humanities:
  - Preserving arts programs is vital for cultural enrichment and community well-being. Cutting these first during budget reductions is seen as short-sighted.
  - Arts programs are often the first to face cuts, despite their role in fostering critical thinking and creativity.
- Cultural and Political Issues:
  - Criticism of the university's handling of political matters, such as protests, affecting its reputation. Calls for greater sensitivity and inclusivity.
  - Example: The handling of the Palestinian solidarity encampment was seen as mishandled, leading to distrust among students.



**Notes from the October 17, 2024, Budget Consultation Session**

- Are these questions based on last year's budget priorities, or are they focused on the most critical future priorities that the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) is considering?
- The questions need to be more adaptable; the current approach isn't working. It feels like the questions are leading us to predetermined answers.
- Senior management should be present in these discussions. The absence of the CFO or President feels like a significant oversight.
- How are we supposed to prioritize without sufficient information? It feels intellectually disrespectful to be asked to do so. We need concrete information—relying solely on feelings won't resolve the situation. Is this session merely an exercise to "check off" the community consultation box?
- What are we doing differently this time? How can we express our values in a way that's distinct from past efforts, such as strategic planning, employee surveys, and branding exercises?
- The session invitation should provide clear details about what to expect so participants can come prepared.
- Can we share these questions with members of the community who weren't able to attend today?
- Is this list exhaustive, or are there other priorities that BAC is considering?
- We need something tangible. As faculty, we've had plenty of opportunities to express our views, such as through Provost meetings. What we need now is concrete information.
- Some priorities are too broadly listed. We need further clarification and in-depth conversations around what these priorities mean.
- That this was booked at a time when people couldn't make it, how are their voices being heard.
- This is a check box exercise for senior management.
- Senior management isn't here to hear the discussions.
- There doesn't appear to be coordination between leaders in collecting this information (Provost collected it for the Provost Council, President did for the strategic plan, CFO did for budgeting, Marketing for branding)
- The calendar entry was misleading.
- Real concern about what is happening.
- Provost Circle, much of the same information has been collected here.
- Getting concrete next steps.
- Town halls being canceled.
- We need to understand BAC's specific plans. Without more context, we don't feel equipped to prioritize effectively. For example, if I knew that cutting the Music Program was under consideration, it would affect how I assess the priorities.

