

MEDIA RELEASE

CUFA BC review of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services' recommendations to the 2022 provincial budget on advanced education

For Immediate Release – Vancouver, BC, December 8, 2021 – The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) says the recommended guidance leaves the post-secondary sector without critically needed supports.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services released their report to Government on November 15 following extensive consultations across the province. For the post-secondary sector the report summarizes the needs well, but generally ignores faculty, abandoning students to large classes with overwhelmed faculty. Further, the Committee missed the opportunity to drive the pandemic recovery with critically needed research supports.

“The Committee’s recommendations fall short of supporting faculty teaching, research, and working conditions at BC’s research universities,” says Dr. Dan Laitsch, President of CUFA BC. “It’s not a matter of doing more with less, it is the experience of faculty to do less with less as our calls are ignored for significant investment in the human infrastructure behind advanced education.”

While students remain the default audience for advanced education policy makers, the simplistic focus on student funding and housing needs at the expense of instructional capacity means that student learning will suffer over the longer term. Over the past decade, increases in enrolments at BC’s research universities have not resulted in an increase in the full-time faculty complement, resulting in larger classes, increased workloads, and a strained instructional system pushed to the brink by the ongoing pandemic. Once again, faculty are asked to teach larger classes and conduct more research with fewer supports from Government and institutions. Reliance on asking faculty to maintain unsustainable workloads is devastating, as faculty face burnout, deteriorating health, and mental health outcomes related to chronic stress.

Advanced education is incredibly valuable to the province through its role in building an educated and skilled society. Investment in the human infrastructure driving high-quality teaching and research should be a top priority for this Government as it responds to the pandemic and looks to the future. Predictable, stable, and strategic investment in the human infrastructure and research programmes at BC’s post-secondary institutions is critically needed but missing in the Committee’s recommendations.

Read CUFA BC’s full analysis [here](#).

For further information or comment please contact CUFA BC Executive Director Annabree Fairweather at 604-367-5856 or executive.director@cufa.bc.ca.

CUFA BC represents over 5,500 faculty members, including professors, professional librarians, lecturers, instructors, and other academics at the five research-intensive universities in British Columbia, which include University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, Royal Roads University and University of Northern British Columbia. CUFA BC [celebrates fifty years](#) of working closely with the member Faculty Associations at each institution. Our purposes are to support high-quality post-secondary education and research in British Columbia and to advocate for the interest of our members.