



November 14th, 2022

Re: Campus Vision 2050 and Housing Action Plan 10-Year Review

Dear members of the UBC Board of Governors,

This submission is being made on behalf of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) of UBC Vancouver in regards to the Housing Action Plan (HAP) 10-Year Review, as part of the Campus Vision 2050 process.

According to the [2022 Academic Experience Survey \(AES\)](#), 57% of undergraduate and 75% of graduate students experience financial hardship related to the cost of housing. Students are acutely affected by the current affordability crisis, facing factors such as the housing crisis, skyrocketing inflation, rising tuition, and a possible recession. The University has a responsibility to ensure students have safe and stable accommodation during their time at UBC, and the housing crisis is creating a precarious financial situation for students. For example, students in Vancouver [spend over half of their income on housing](#), with Canadian students earning on average \$20,000 or less annually. We hope Governors take this context, as well as the below recommendation, into consideration when making decisions on Campus Vision 2050 and the HAP.

Currently one of the policy directions in the HAP review for Student Housing is to “support affordability with a portion of student housing revenues.” We urge the University to consider directing all of this income, after covering operating costs, to student services and student financial aid. The importance of our student services has been increasingly more evident since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Student Affordability Taskforce (SATF) recommendations demonstrate the need for funding affordability measures going forward, such as sustainable funding for food security programs. Campus Vision 2050’s recent public engagement summary has also highlighted the calls from the community for the University to address student affordability concerns.

The Student Housing and Community Services (SCHS), as an ancillary operation, regularly contributes to the overall operating budget of the University. For example, in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, there was a projected \$33M of business revenue contribution to the UBC Vancouver operating budget. A substantial part of this contribution comes from student housing and hospitality. For example, in the 2020-2021 fiscal year SCHS was projected to contribute \$78,543,000 to the operating budget. Currently a portion of business revenue contributions also flow to the faculties, along with tuition through the Tuition Allocation Model (TAM).



This is a crucial time for funding for student services and it is ridiculous that the VP Students portfolio, under which the majority of student services are operated, is the very portfolio experiencing 2% budget cuts in response to pandemic related cost pressures. This redirection of funding will address the need for resourcing recommendations outlined in the SATF and ensure the University continues to offer robust support concerning financial aid, counselling services, career development, etc. One of the Board of Governors' four priorities for Campus Vision is to grow the academic endowment through land development and investment priorities; student services are vital to the academic mission and the faculties can benefit from substantial investments into services such as career development. If the University truly wishes to be ambitious and innovative in the Campus Vision 2050 process, this will be one of the primary ways to make progress and be thought leaders in this area.

As representatives of over 56,000 students at UBC, we hope that the Board of Governors thoughtfully considers the recommendations made in this submission and appreciate the University's engagement with us thus far in the Campus Vision 205 process.

Sincerely,

Dana Turdy
VP Academic and University Affairs
Alma Mater Society

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President
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