



Student Society
of UBC Vancouver

Submission to the UBC Board of Governors regarding the General Tuition and Fees Increases for 2019-2020 November 9th, 2018

Dear Board of Governors,

This submission is being made on behalf of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) of UBC Vancouver in response to the consultation opened on October 3rd, 2018 on the general tuition and fees increases for the 2019-2020 academic year.

The proposed tuition increases include a 2% increase for all new and continuing domestic students' tuition, a 4% increase for new international undergraduate students' tuition, a 3% increase for continuing international undergraduate students' tuition, a 2% increase for new and continuing international graduate research students' tuition, and between a 2% and 4% increase for international professional graduate students' tuition. The proposed increase for all mandatory fees is 2%. All the proposed increases will take effect in the 2019-2020 academic year.

We appreciate that the University has taken efforts to improve the annual consultation process this year. We support the enhanced level of information provided by the University online regarding the allocation of tuition and student fees. This information, however, does not give an accurate representation of the effect international tuition increases will have on students in higher cost programs. The University continues to selectively pick lower cost programs for the "Impact on Students" section.

We hope that the University will recognize the magnitude of student comments this year regarding personal finances and the fairness regarding continuing tuition increases. If the University is going to have continuing tuition increases every year, they need to be openly advertised to students when they initially apply to UBC. Furthermore, UBC needs to review the effect that annual increases can have on higher cost programs where a 2-4% increase is a significant additional burden placed on the student. These were comments that we raised last year for the general tuition and fees increases consultation, and there continues to be little progress to no progress. The issue of rising tuition costs is only getting worse according to the 2018 AMS Academic Experience Survey (AES) where data indicates there has been a statistically significant increase compared to 2017 (7% increase) in the number of students who experience financial hardship related to their tuition and other expenses (43% in total).

If the University is going to have annual tuition increases, the University must commit to continued development and improvement of the services and supporting resources that a student may access. If tuition increases are necessary to develop and improve the quality of education that we offer our students, they should be able to recognize how these increases have improved their education. Additionally, there should be a formal process to update students on these developments and improvements on an annual basis. Again, these were comments that we raised last year and there continues to be little to no progress. The lack of progress is especially alarming when data from the 2018 AES indicates that only 22% percent of students agreed that the university cares about what students think about the cost of education compared to 51% who disagree with the statement.



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We hope to work with the University to ensure that we explore new avenues to prioritize student affordability. Every year the University, including the Board of Governors, has the same conversation about affordability and it is typically centered on this consultation. Although the AMS is happy to see these conversations are happening, from observation so far it is clear that little is being done to address the broader issue of affordability for students. When 16% of undergraduate students and 23% of graduate students in the 2018 AES indicate that they might need to abandon their studies at UBC due to financial reasons, it is time to address the problem and to start a serious conversation about affordability. This conversation cannot just be about tuition and fees, and it cannot just happen during the general tuition and fees increases consultation. Students expect the University to show continued commitment and action in understanding and alleviating issues of affordability beyond tuition consultation.

The University continues to justify tuition increases as a necessity due to inflationary pressures and other increased costs. The AMS does not doubt that these pressures exist and are a reality the University needs to seriously address, however, there seems to be a lack of effort to address the opposition to tuition increases. Also, it is difficult for the AMS and students to understand how the University can accurately calculate the revenue needed for next year and for future years when there continues to be no public long-term enrolment plan for the University. The AMS hopes the University will also address how over enrolment affects both the quality and the cost of education at UBC.

Since the AMS has seen little progress by the University to seriously address the issues of affordability and the lack of information shared with us, we oppose all the proposed increases to tuition and fees. The AMS was unable to receive materials that detail how the faculties' and university's budgets would be affected by the increase and what the budget model would look like without an increase. The AMS hopes that this detail has at least been shared with the Board of Governors, if not we are even more supportive of the Board of Governors to oppose this increase without the information about how this will affect the budget.

We want to thank the Board of Governors for their continued commitment to ensuring that all student voices are heard at the Board of Governors and throughout the University. We hope to see this continue and we look forward to working with UBC to make education affordable and accessible to all current and future UBC students.

Sincerely,

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