

Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

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By



Federation of Post-Secondary Educators

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Introduction

The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators welcomes this opportunity to provide the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services with our recommendations for fiscal priorities in the February 2007 provincial budget. Our organization represents more than 10,000 faculty and staff at BC's post-secondary education institutions. Our experience as both instructors and specialists in post-secondary education has provided us with useful insights on both the value of post-secondary education to our students and our province, and the need to greatly improve fiscal and policy support for post-secondary education.

Recognizing the Value of Post-Secondary Education

As the Legislative Committee assesses fiscal priorities for February's budget, it's useful to remember the strategic importance of our public post-secondary education system. It represents an enormous investment by taxpayers, made over many decades, to ensure that our province has the capacity to support continued education, skills development and research.

Our public post-secondary education system also provides significant individual benefits to every citizen. A post-secondary education is an empowering experience for individual students who are challenged to learn, reason, innovate and collaborate as they work to complete their post-secondary education. These same skills are also the bedrock of an engaged, informed citizenry. The dynamic democracy that we know is critical to sustaining our province and modernizing our economy relies increasingly on the knowledge and skills that are encouraged by post-secondary education.

Post-secondary education has very specific economic benefits. A recent Statistics Canada study (*Does It Pay To Go Back To School?*) confirmed that a post-secondary education had a positive and long-term benefit on the incomes of those who completed that education. While that benefited the individual, it also benefited the public treasury. In fact, a 1999 study by UBC economic Robert

Allen (*The Education Dividend*) showed that the social rate of return from education spending exceeds the costs of public spending on education. As incomes rise because of higher education, our progressive tax structure ensures that, over the lifetime of work, the public treasury benefits significantly from the investments made in post-secondary education.

It's also important to note that post-secondary education helps close the gender wage gap. Allan's work also showed that as education levels increase, the gender wage gap decreases significantly.

A number of studies also show that post-secondary education enhances overall productivity. This is increasingly important for BC as we make the transition from a resource-intensive economy to a knowledge-intensive economy. Part of that productivity improvement comes from the increased labour mobility that post-secondary education provides. With inter-provincially recognized degrees, diplomas, certificates and completed apprenticeships, post-secondary education ensures that individuals are able to move to where their skills and credentials are fully utilized and fairly compensated.

Addressing BC's Skills Shortage

In our presentation to the Standing Committee last year we noted that BC's looming skills shortage is a critical economic and fiscal issue that the provincial government can't afford to ignore. In fact, the skills shortage is one of the very few public policy issues on which business and labour have a shared concern. If ignored, the skills shortage will significantly undermine economic growth, a fact that the Finance Minister's Forecast Council has highlighted as a potential risk to their growth projections.

The dynamics of that shortage are the result of demographic, economic and technological forces that are transforming both our provincial economy and our labour force. The demographic forces are, by far, the most significant. An aging "baby-boom" generation will begin to retire from the labour force this decade. That shift will create one of the most significant changes ever seen in BC's labour

market. By 2010, for example, more people will leave the labour force as a result of retirement than will enter the labour force. The gap between entrants and retirees is expected to be very significant. Various estimates place the gap between 100,000 and 300,000 workers at the peak of this change.

Adding to this situation is the fact that BC's economic profile is also shifting away from a resource-intensive economy to one in which the service sector will play a more significant role. With that shift will come demands for new skills as well as a growing need to replace those skills lost through on-going retirements. The shift will also be affected by the pace of technological change as new processes and innovations transform our workplaces.

Against this backdrop, the need to both replace existing skills and adapt to new demands of changing technology and a changing economy will intensify and increase demands for more post-secondary education skills and training.

Policy and Funding Out of Step with Needs

Although the skills shortage is a complex policy issue, in many respects, it is one of the few outcomes that can be anticipated. Demographic research in the 1990s consistently pointed out that BC needed to take pro-active measures to ensure that we were well-positioned to weather the inevitable demographic shift (an aging baby-boom) and associated demand for replacing the skills lost through retirements. These forecasts were not speculative. They pointed out that every occupational category, whether it was white collar or blue, would be affected by these demographic shifts.

One of the obvious solutions to addressing this problem is to ensure that we do everything possible to increase the supply of skills that demographic forecasts tell us we will need in the future. The skills that we will need are the very same skills that the public post-secondary education system provides.

Unfortunately, BC's funding and policy choices in post-secondary education have not supported the outcomes that our province needs today. Over the last five years, the provincial government

has opted for changes which have placed more barriers to accessing post-secondary education and greatly diminished the affordability to post-secondary education. In effect, at a time when forecasts tell us we should be making it easier for students to acquire the education and skills we know we would eventually need, the provincial government did the exact opposite.

The government's funding and policy choices undermined access and affordability in two ways. Affordability was diminished when the government decided to deregulate tuition fees in 2002. The policy change allowed tuition fees to skyrocket. Since 2001, tuition fees have doubled. For many programs the rate of increase has been even higher.

The impact on students has been punitive. Higher fees have meant higher debt. The average student debt has now climbed to over \$25,000. Even more troubling, higher fees have forced many students to shift from full-time to part-time so that they can accommodate more paid work to offset the cost of higher tuition. The result is that students are taking longer to complete their education.

Access to post-secondary education has been undermined by chronic underfunding from the provincial government. Although the Ministry of Advanced Education has seen a modest increase in its budget since 2001 – their annual budget has increased by 9.6% between 2001 and 2006/07 – the rate of inflation over that same period is 12.9%.

On a per student basis, the funding crunch in post-secondary education shows just how much access and course offerings have suffered. In current dollars, per-student funding to the post-secondary education system has fallen every year since 2001/02. In fact, it won't be until 2007/08 that per-student funding will actually exceed 2001 levels.

However, even that number does not take into account the steady erosion of inflation that we noted earlier. If you looked at per-student funding in constant 2001 dollars, even the modest increases anticipated in the Ministry's Service Plan for 2007-2009

don't bring per-student funding back to the level recorded in 2001 when the BC Liberals first took office. In fact, in constant 2001 dollars per-student funding will have dropped from \$8920 in 2001 to \$8315 in 2008/09.

These funding shortfalls have translated into fewer programs, less contact time with students, long wait lists to access preferred programs and courses and a wholesale abandonment of critical student support services such as counseling, Developmental Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

Every one of these changes has limited the ability of individual institutions to provide the courses and programs that we know will benefit both individual students and the province as a whole. Developmental Education programs, for example, open the door for thousands of potential students who might otherwise never consider accessing or completing post-secondary education. When those opportunities are lost, we unwittingly make the skills shortage worse rather than better.

Similar outcomes can be found in ESL programs where chronic underfunding has meant fewer opportunities to provide these quality courses in our public system. For a province like BC, where cultural and language diversity is increasing, those losses are a significant set back.

Public Supports Better Funding

Our organization contracted with Ipsos Reid in July 2006 to survey the public's views on post-secondary education issues. The results were significant and this Committee should carefully consider this opinion research as it finalizes its recommendations for the February 2007 budget.

We have included the full results of the poll as an appendix to this submission. We draw the Committee's attention to a summary of the key findings which we have detailed below.

British Columbians are very concerned about access and affordability issues in our public post-secondary education system.

- **62%** agree that tuition fees at BC's colleges, universities and training institutes are too high. This same question has been asked in previous polls. In 2003, **43.8%** said tuitions were too high. In 2005, the number climbed to **55%**.
- **70%** agree that high tuition fees are preventing young people from getting the degrees and diplomas they need to get ahead.
- **74%** agree that many young people can't get the courses or programs they need to complete their post-secondary education.
- **74%** think that students in colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions are taking on an unfair burden of debt to pay for their education.
- **81%** agree that student debt is making it harder for students to complete post-secondary education and training.

British Columbians think that the provincial government needs to do more to ensure that post-secondary education is more affordable and accessible for all.

- **90%** agree that one of the best ways to solve BC's current skills shortage is for the provincial government to invest more in public colleges, universities and training institutes.
- **80%** support the idea of reducing tuition fees.
- **84%** think that the provincial government should increase public funding to post-secondary institutions to support more course options and higher enrolments.
- **87%** support an increase in student grants.

What's significant about this research is the very strong consensus that the public has about the government's policy and funding choices in post-secondary education. The public sees tuition fee de-regulation as exclusionary and expensive: higher fees have hurt middle and low income families. Chronic underfunding has made access more difficult and reduced the opportunity to seriously tackle the current skills shortage.

Conclusion

The February 2007 budget provides an important opportunity for the government to positively address problems in our post-secondary system. We recognize that there are competing fiscal demands on the current budget surplus. However, we believe that a decisive funding improvement is needed. We also believe that a \$200 million increase in the Ministry's budget would not only signal the government's commitment to better funding, but would also be well within the fiscal capacity of the province's overall budget.

We recommend that the Committee incorporate the following six priorities into their final report to the Minister of Finance:

- 1. Increase post-secondary institution operating grants to ensure that our public post-secondary education system has the programs and options necessary to support higher enrolments.**
- 2. Make all Adult Basic Education delivered in our post-secondary system tuition-free for all. As well, use targeted funding to support publicly delivered ESL programs for adult learners.**
- 3. Reduce tuition fees. We support a proposal advanced by the Canadian Federation of Students who are calling for a 10% reduction in current tuition fees.**
- 4. Fund and use the capacity of the existing public post-secondary education system to deliver both entry-level and apprenticeship training.**
- 5. Improve the student grant program so that students are not forced to take on more debt to access or complete their post-secondary education.**
- 6. Enable and fund colleges and university-colleges to provide lower cost university transfer programs in their areas.**

**FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS
TELEPHONE SURVEY* CONDUCTED BY IPSOS REID
QUESTIONNAIRE AND DATA TABLES**

*This set of questions was fielded on the July wave of the BC Reid Express telephone omnibus. The fieldwork was conducted July 6th to July 11, 2006. Survey results based on 800 responses are considered accurate to within $\pm 3.5\%$, 19 times out of 20. Higher margins of error apply to subsets of the total sample.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Now I have a few questions about post secondary education in BC.

FP1. Do you feel that tuition fees for BC's colleges, universities and training institutes are generally too high, too low or about right?

Too high
Too low
About right

FP2. I'm going to read you a series of statements regarding post-secondary education in BC. For each statement, please tell me whether you would agree or disagree with the statement. The first statement is [RANDOMIZE AND INSERT STATEMENT]. Would that be strongly or somewhat? The next statement is [INSERT NEXT STATEMENT]

High tuitions fees in BC's colleges, universities or other post-secondary institutions are preventing young people from getting the degrees or diplomas they need for their future

Many young people can't get the courses or programs they need in their communities to complete their post-secondary education.

Students in colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions are taking on an unfair burden of debt to pay for their education.

Student debt is making it harder for students to complete post-secondary education and training.

One of the best ways to solve BC's current skills shortage is for the provincial government to invest more in our public colleges, universities and training institutes.

Agree strongly
Agree somewhat
Disagree somewhat
Disagree strongly

FP3. Now, I'm going to read you a series of suggestions people have made to make post-secondary education more accessible to all. For each, please tell me whether you would support or oppose the suggestion. The first suggestion is [RANDOMIZE AND INSERT STATEMENT]. Would that be strongly or somewhat? The next statement is [INSERT NEXT STATEMENT]

Reduce tuition fees

Increase student grants

Assist students in paying off their student debts

Provide free tuition for the first two years of post-secondary education

Increase public funding to post-secondary institutions to support more course options and higher enrolments.

Strongly support
Somewhat support
Somewhat oppose
Strongly oppose

DATA TABLES

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp1. Do you feel that tuition fees for BC's colleges, universities and training institutes are generally...

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Too high	493 62%	276 60%	91 62%	125 64%	213 54%	280 68%	208 74%	134 61%	147 50%	136 71%	215 64%	137 51%
Too low	16 2%	9 2%	5 3%	2 1%	13 3%	4 1%	5 2%	5 2%	6 2%	3 2%	7 2%	6 2%
About right	249 31%	154 34%	44 30%	51 26%	150 38%	98 24%	56 20%	73 33%	118 40%	39 20%	98 29%	112 42%
(DK/NS)	42 5%	18 4%	8 5%	16 8%	16 4%	27 7%	12 4%	9 4%	21 7%	14 7%	16 5%	12 5%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp2_1. I'm going to read you a series of statements regarding post-secondary education in BC. For each statement, please tell me whether you would agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the statement. [High tuitions in BC's colleges, universities or other post-secondary institutions preventing young people from getting degrees or diplomas]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
High tuitions in BC's colleges, universities or other post-secondary institutions preventing young people from getting degrees or diplomas												
Agree strongly	334 42%	193 42%	64 43%	77 40%	141 36%	193 47%	112 40%	101 45%	120 41%	98 51%	143 42%	91 34%
Agree somewhat	228 28%	133 29%	35 24%	60 31%	115 29%	112 28%	98 35%	58 26%	70 24%	47 24%	104 31%	74 28%
Disagree somewhat	134 17%	77 17%	26 17%	32 16%	68 17%	66 16%	43 15%	33 15%	57 20%	28 14%	47 14%	59 22%
Disagree strongly	95 12%	50 11%	20 13%	25 13%	59 15%	36 9%	28 10%	26 12%	40 14%	18 9%	36 11%	40 15%
(DK/NS)	10 1%	5 1%	3 2%	1 1%	9 2%	1 0	2 1%	4 2%	3 1%	2 1%	6 2%	3 1%
Summary												
Top2Box - Agree strongly/ somewhat	561 70%	326 71%	99 67%	137 70%	256 65%	305 75%	209 74%	159 72%	190 65%	145 75%	247 74%	165 62%
Low2Box - Disagree somewhat/ strongly	229 29%	127 28%	45 31%	57 29%	127 32%	102 25%	71 25%	59 27%	97 33%	46 24%	83 25%	99 37%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp2_2. I'm going to read you a series of statements regarding post-secondary education in BC. For each statement, please tell me whether you would agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the statement. [Many young people can't get the courses or programs they need in their communities to complete their post-secondary education]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Many young people can't get the courses or programs they need in their communities to complete their post-secondary education												
Agree strongly	279 35%	157 34%	42 28%	80 41%	118 30%	160 39%	80 29%	86 39%	110 38%	79 41%	119 35%	78 29%
Agree somewhat	314 39%	176 39%	62 42%	76 39%	165 42%	149 37%	136 48%	73 33%	102 35%	66 34%	133 39%	114 43%
Disagree somewhat	136 17%	82 18%	30 20%	25 13%	65 17%	72 18%	50 18%	45 20%	41 14%	34 18%	53 16%	49 18%
Disagree strongly	36 4%	20 4%	5 4%	10 5%	22 6%	14 3%	8 3%	9 4%	18 6%	9 5%	14 4%	13 5%
(DK/NS)	35 4%	22 5%	9 6%	4 2%	22 6%	14 3%	7 3%	7 3%	20 7%	4 2%	18 5%	13 5%
Summary												
Top2Box - Agree strongly/ somewhat	593 74%	334 73%	103 70%	156 80%	283 72%	310 76%	217 77%	159 72%	212 73%	145 75%	251 75%	192 72%
Low2Box - Disagree somewhat/ strongly	172 21%	102 22%	36 24%	35 18%	87 22%	85 21%	57 20%	54 25%	59 20%	43 22%	67 20%	62 23%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp2_3. I'm going to read you a series of statements regarding post-secondary education in BC. For each statement, please tell me whether you would agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the statement. [Students in colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions are taking on an unfair burden of debt to pay for their education]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Students in colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions are taking on an unfair burden of debt to pay for their education												
Agree strongly	374 47%	216 47%	61 41%	97 50%	168 43%	206 50%	136 49%	106 48%	127 44%	92 48%	165 49%	113 43%
Agree somewhat	220 27%	129 28%	42 28%	49 25%	110 28%	109 27%	94 34%	51 23%	74 25%	56 29%	93 28%	70 26%
Disagree somewhat	127 16%	69 15%	27 18%	31 16%	64 16%	63 15%	36 13%	39 18%	51 17%	30 16%	47 14%	50 19%
Disagree strongly	69 9%	36 8%	17 12%	15 8%	45 11%	24 6%	13 5%	22 10%	34 12%	13 7%	25 8%	30 11%
(DK/NS)	10 1%	7 2%	1 1%	3 1%	4 1%	6 2%	1 0	3 1%	6 2%	2 1%	6 2%	3 1%
Summary												
Top2Box - Agree strongly/ somewhat	594 74%	345 75%	102 69%	146 75%	279 71%	315 77%	231 82%	157 71%	201 69%	148 77%	258 77%	184 69%
Low2Box - Disagree somewhat/ strongly	196 24%	105 23%	45 30%	46 24%	109 28%	87 21%	49 18%	61 27%	84 29%	43 22%	72 21%	80 30%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp2_4. I'm going to read you a series of statements regarding post-secondary education in BC. For each statement, please tell me whether you would agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the statement. [Student debt is making it harder for students to complete post-secondary education and training]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Student debt is making it harder for students to complete post-secondary education and training												
Agree strongly	406 51%	227 50%	69 47%	110 57%	172 44%	233 57%	157 56%	112 51%	132 46%	100 52%	183 54%	119 45%
Agree somewhat	241 30%	148 32%	52 35%	40 21%	131 34%	109 27%	87 31%	67 30%	85 29%	60 31%	92 27%	88 33%
Disagree somewhat	103 13%	59 13%	16 11%	29 15%	58 15%	46 11%	28 10%	27 12%	47 16%	18 9%	40 12%	44 17%
Disagree strongly	43 5%	22 5%	9 6%	12 6%	26 7%	17 4%	6 2%	14 7%	22 8%	11 6%	18 5%	14 5%
(DK/NS)	7 1%	2 0	2 1%	4 2%	4 1%	4 1%	2 1%	1 0	5 2%	3 2%	3 1%	1 0
Summary												
Top2Box - Agree strongly/ somewhat	646 81%	375 82%	121 82%	150 77%	304 78%	343 84%	245 87%	179 81%	217 75%	160 83%	275 82%	207 78%
Low2Box - Disagree somewhat/ strongly	146 18%	80 18%	25 17%	41 21%	84 21%	62 15%	35 12%	42 19%	69 24%	30 15%	58 17%	58 22%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp2_5. I'm going to read you a series of statements regarding post-secondary education in BC. For each statement, please tell me whether you would agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the statement. [One of the ways to solve BC's current skills shortage is for provincial government to invest more in public colleges, universities and training institutes]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
One of the ways to solve BC's current skills shortage is for provincial government to invest more in public colleges, universities and training institutes												
Agree strongly	487 61%	282 62%	96 65%	109 56%	216 55%	271 66%	176 63%	142 64%	166 57%	125 65%	206 61%	151 57%
Agree somewhat	230 29%	132 29%	34 23%	63 33%	119 30%	111 27%	89 31%	55 25%	86 29%	50 26%	96 29%	84 31%
Disagree somewhat	45 6%	29 6%	6 4%	10 5%	30 8%	15 4%	9 3%	14 6%	22 8%	7 4%	20 6%	18 7%
Disagree strongly	31 4%	13 3%	8 6%	10 5%	22 6%	9 2%	8 3%	7 3%	16 5%	8 4%	13 4%	10 4%
(DK/NS)	6 1%	1 0%	3 2%	2 1%	4 1%	2 0%	0 -	3 1%	2 1%	2 1%	2 0%	3 1%
Summary												
Top2Box - Agree strongly/ somewhat	717 90%	415 91%	131 88%	172 88%	335 86%	383 94%	264 94%	197 89%	251 86%	175 91%	302 90%	235 88%
Low2Box - Disagree somewhat/ strongly	77 10%	42 9%	14 10%	21 11%	52 13%	24 6%	17 6%	21 10%	38 13%	16 8%	32 10%	29 11%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp2. Top2Box Summary:

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Agree strongly/ somewhat												
One of the ways to solve BC's current skills shortage is for provincial government to invest more in public colleges, universities and training institutes	717	415	131	172	335	383	264	197	251	175	302	235
	90%	91%	88%	88%	86%	94%	94%	89%	86%	91%	90%	88%
Student debt is making it harder for students to complete post-secondary education and training	646	375	121	150	304	343	245	179	217	160	275	207
	81%	82%	82%	77%	78%	84%	87%	81%	75%	83%	82%	78%
Students in colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions are taking on an unfair burden of debt to pay for their education	594	345	102	146	279	315	231	157	201	148	258	184
	74%	75%	69%	75%	71%	77%	82%	71%	69%	77%	77%	69%
Many young people can't get the courses or programs they need in their communities to complete their post-secondary education	593	334	103	156	283	310	217	159	212	145	251	192
	74%	73%	70%	80%	72%	76%	77%	72%	73%	75%	75%	72%
High tuitions in BC's colleges, universities or other post-secondary institutions preventing young people from getting degrees or diplomas	561	326	99	137	256	305	209	159	190	145	247	165
	70%	71%	67%	70%	65%	75%	74%	72%	65%	75%	74%	62%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp2. Low2Box Summary:

	Region			Gender		Age			Education			
	Total	LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Disagree somewhat/ strongly												
High tuitions in BC's colleges, universities or other post-secondary institutions preventing young people from getting degrees or diplomas	229	127	45	57	127	102	71	59	97	46	83	99
	29%	28%	31%	29%	32%	25%	25%	27%	33%	24%	25%	37%
Students in colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions are taking on an unfair burden of debt to pay for their education	196	105	45	46	109	87	49	61	84	43	72	80
	24%	23%	30%	24%	28%	21%	18%	27%	29%	22%	21%	30%
Many young people can't get the courses or programs they need in their communities to complete their post-secondary education	172	102	36	35	87	85	57	54	59	43	67	62
	21%	22%	24%	18%	22%	21%	20%	25%	20%	22%	20%	23%
Student debt is making it harder for students to complete post-secondary education and training	146	80	25	41	84	62	35	42	69	30	58	58
	18%	18%	17%	21%	21%	15%	12%	19%	24%	15%	17%	22%
One of the ways to solve BC's current skills shortage is for provincial government to invest more in public colleges, universities and training institutes	77	42	14	21	52	24	17	21	38	16	32	29
	10%	9%	10%	11%	13%	6%	6%	10%	13%	8%	10%	11%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp3_1. Now, I'm going to read you a series of suggestions people have made to make post-secondary education more accessible to all. For each, please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the suggestion. [Reduce tuition fees]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Reduce tuition fees												
Strongly support	465 58%	262 57%	87 59%	116 59%	193 49%	271 66%	206 73%	126 57%	130 45%	136 71%	193 57%	132 49%
Somewhat support	177 22%	102 22%	28 19%	47 24%	101 26%	76 19%	46 17%	55 25%	75 26%	28 15%	86 26%	63 24%
Somewhat oppose	95 12%	60 13%	20 14%	15 8%	63 16%	32 8%	19 7%	25 11%	49 17%	17 9%	34 10%	43 16%
	12% 8%	13% 7%	14% 8%	8% 8%	16% 9%	8% 7%	7% 4%	11% 7%	17% 12%	9% 6%	10% 7%	16% 10%
Strongly oppose	62 8%	33 7%	12 8%	16 8%	34 9%	28 7%	10 4%	15 7%	36 12%	12 6%	22 7%	28 10%
(DK/NS)	1 0	1 0	0 -	1 0	0 -	1 0	0 -	1 0	1 0	0 -	1 0	1 0
Summary												
Top2Box - Strongly/ Somewhat support	642 80%	364 80%	116 78%	163 84%	295 75%	348 85%	252 90%	180 82%	205 70%	164 85%	279 83%	195 73%
Low2Box - Somewhat/ Strongly oppose	156 20%	93 20%	32 22%	31 16%	97 25%	59 15%	29 10%	40 18%	85 29%	28 15%	57 17%	71 27%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp3_2. Now, I'm going to read you a series of suggestions people have made to make post-secondary education more accessible to all. For each, please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the suggestion. [Increase student grants]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Increase student grants												
Strongly support	440 55%	247 54%	77 52%	116 59%	178 46%	262 64%	174 62%	128 58%	133 46%	107 56%	185 55%	144 54%
Somewhat support	253 32%	152 33%	48 32%	53 27%	145 37%	108 27%	80 29%	73 33%	99 34%	61 32%	101 30%	91 34%
Somewhat oppose	56 7%	35 8%	11 7%	10 5%	38 10%	18 4%	12 4%	13 6%	30 10%	9 5%	25 7%	21 8%
Strongly oppose	45 6%	20 4%	11 8%	13 7%	28 7%	17 4%	12 4%	7 3%	25 9%	13 7%	22 7%	9 3%
(DK/NS)	6 1%	3 1%	1 1%	2 1%	2 1%	4 1%	2 1%	1 0	3 1%	2 1%	3 1%	1 0
Summary												
Top2Box - Strongly/ Somewhat support	693 87%	399 87%	125 84%	169 87%	323 83%	370 91%	255 91%	200 91%	233 80%	169 88%	286 85%	235 88%
Low2Box - Somewhat/ Strongly oppose	101 13%	55 12%	22 15%	23 12%	66 17%	34 8%	24 9%	20 9%	55 19%	22 11%	47 14%	30 11%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp3_3. Now, I'm going to read you a series of suggestions people have made to make post-secondary education more accessible to all. For each, please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the suggestion. [Assist students in paying off their student debts]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Assist students in paying off their student debts												
Strongly support	324 40%	171 37%	60 40%	92 47%	128 33%	195 48%	146 52%	81 37%	94 32%	87 45%	137 41%	98 37%
Somewhat support	255 32%	159 35%	48 32%	49 25%	135 34%	121 30%	92 33%	82 37%	80 27%	58 30%	106 32%	89 33%
Somewhat oppose	120 15%	72 16%	21 14%	27 14%	68 17%	52 13%	27 9%	26 12%	65 23%	26 14%	51 15%	42 16%
Strongly oppose	92 11%	49 11%	19 13%	23 12%	57 14%	35 9%	16 6%	29 13%	46 16%	20 10%	37 11%	34 13%
(DK/NS)	10 1%	7 1%	0 -	3 2%	4 1%	6 1%	1 0	3 1%	5 2%	1 1%	5 1%	4 1%
Summary												
Top2Box - Strongly/ Somewhat support	579 72%	330 72%	107 73%	141 73%	263 67%	316 77%	238 85%	163 74%	174 60%	145 75%	243 72%	187 70%
Low2Box - Somewhat/ Strongly oppose	212 26%	121 26%	40 27%	50 26%	125 32%	87 21%	42 15%	55 25%	112 38%	46 24%	88 26%	76 28%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp3_4. Now, I'm going to read you a series of suggestions people have made to make post-secondary education more accessible to all. For each, please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the suggestion. [Provide free tuition for the first two years of post-secondary education]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Provide free tuition for the first two years of post-secondary education												
Strongly support	241	141	50	50	100	142	109	59	70	74	100	66
	30%	31%	34%	26%	25%	35%	39%	27%	24%	38%	30%	25%
Somewhat support	178	109	30	40	87	92	67	45	66	44	83	50
	22%	24%	20%	20%	22%	22%	24%	20%	23%	23%	25%	19%
Somewhat oppose	184	102	28	54	88	95	60	60	62	37	78	66
	23%	22%	19%	28%	23%	23%	21%	27%	21%	19%	23%	25%
Strongly oppose	193	104	39	51	115	78	45	55	91	37	72	84
	24%	23%	26%	26%	29%	19%	16%	25%	31%	19%	22%	31%
(DK/NS)	4	2	1	1	2	2	0	1	2	0	3	1
	0	0	1%	0	0	1%	-	1%	1%	-	1%	0
Summary												
Top2Box - Strongly/ Somewhat support	419	250	80	90	186	233	176	105	136	118	183	116
	52%	55%	54%	46%	48%	57%	63%	47%	47%	61%	54%	43%
Low2Box - Somewhat/ Strongly oppose	377	205	67	104	203	173	105	115	153	74	150	150
	47%	45%	45%	54%	52%	42%	37%	52%	53%	39%	45%	56%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp3_5. Now, I'm going to read you a series of suggestions people have made to make post-secondary education more accessible to all. For each, please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the suggestion. [Increase public funding to post-secondary institutions to support more course options and higher enrolments]

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Increase public funding to post-secondary institutions to support more course options and higher enrolments												
Strongly support	396	236	77	83	171	226	155	120	118	99	163	130
	50%	52%	52%	43%	44%	55%	55%	54%	41%	51%	49%	49%
Somewhat support	279	146	51	83	142	137	101	74	101	71	121	87
	35%	32%	34%	42%	36%	34%	36%	33%	35%	37%	36%	33%
Somewhat oppose	78	54	10	14	49	29	19	15	44	7	36	35
	10%	12%	7%	7%	13%	7%	7%	7%	15%	3%	11%	13%
Strongly oppose	42	18	10	14	29	13	6	12	23	14	15	13
	5%	4%	7%	7%	7%	3%	2%	5%	8%	7%	4%	5%
(DK/NS)	4	3	0	1	1	4	0	1	4	2	1	1
	1%	1%	-	0	0	1%	-	0	1%	1%	0	1%
Summary												
Top2Box - Strongly/ Somewhat support	675	381	128	166	313	363	256	194	220	170	284	217
	84%	83%	86%	85%	80%	89%	91%	88%	76%	88%	85%	81%
Low2Box - Somewhat/ Strongly oppose	120	73	20	28	78	42	25	27	67	21	51	48
	15%	16%	14%	14%	20%	10%	9%	12%	23%	11%	15%	18%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp3. Top2Box Summary:

	Region			Gender		Age			Education			
	Total	LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Strongly/ Somewhat support												
Increase student grants	693 87%	399 87%	125 84%	169 87%	323 83%	370 91%	255 91%	200 91%	233 80%	169 88%	286 85%	235 88%
Increase public funding to post-secondary institutions to support more course options and higher enrolments	675 84%	381 83%	128 86%	166 85%	313 80%	363 89%	256 91%	194 88%	220 76%	170 88%	284 85%	217 81%
Reduce tuition fees	642 80%	364 80%	116 78%	163 84%	295 75%	348 85%	252 90%	180 82%	205 70%	164 85%	279 83%	195 73%
Assist students in paying off their student debts	579 72%	330 72%	107 73%	141 73%	263 67%	316 77%	238 85%	163 74%	174 60%	145 75%	243 72%	187 70%
Provide free tuition for the first two years of post-secondary education	419 52%	250 55%	80 54%	90 46%	186 48%	233 57%	176 63%	105 47%	136 47%	118 61%	183 54%	116 43%

FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS

fp3. Low2Box Summary:

	Region			Gender		Age			Education			
	Total	LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Strongly/ Somewhat oppose												
Provide free tuition for the first two years of post-secondary education	377	205	67	104	203	173	105	115	153	74	150	150
	47%	45%	45%	54%	52%	42%	37%	52%	53%	39%	45%	56%
Assist students in paying off their student debts	212	121	40	50	125	87	42	55	112	46	88	76
	26%	26%	27%	26%	32%	21%	15%	25%	38%	24%	26%	28%
Reduce tuition fees	156	93	32	31	97	59	29	40	85	28	57	71
	20%	20%	22%	16%	25%	15%	10%	18%	29%	15%	17%	27%
Increase public funding to post-secondary institutions to support more course options and higher enrolments	120	73	20	28	78	42	25	27	67	21	51	48
	15%	16%	14%	14%	20%	10%	9%	12%	23%	11%	15%	18%
Increase student grants	101	55	22	23	66	34	24	20	55	22	47	30
	13%	12%	15%	12%	17%	8%	9%	9%	19%	11%	14%	11%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Region: Gender:

	Region			Gender		Age			Education			
	Total	LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All Respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
REGION												
Vancouver/Burnaby	210 26%	210 46%	0 -	0 -	110 28%	100 24%	76 27%	58 26%	73 25%	28 15%	78 23%	102 38%
Rest of Lower Mainland	248 31%	248 54%	0 -	0 -	125 32%	123 30%	90 32%	67 30%	89 31%	66 34%	112 33%	67 25%
Vancouver Island	148 18%	0 -	148 100%	0 -	65 16%	83 20%	48 17%	43 19%	57 20%	40 21%	59 17%	49 19%
Rest of BC	195 24%	0 -	0 -	195 100%	92 23%	103 25%	67 24%	53 24%	72 25%	59 30%	87 26%	48 18%
GENDER												
Male	391 49%	235 51%	65 44%	92 47%	391 100%	0 -	113 40%	111 50%	163 56%	87 45%	161 48%	142 53%
Female	409 51%	222 49%	83 56%	103 53%	0 -	409 100%	168 60%	110 50%	128 44%	106 55%	175 52%	124 47%

DEMOGRAPHICS

z1. Age:

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
AGE												
18 to 24	89 11%	63 14%	9 6%	17 9%	29 7%	60 15%	89 32%	0 -	0 -	45 23%	32 10%	10 4%
25 to 34	192 24%	104 23%	39 26%	49 25%	84 21%	108 26%	192 68%	0 -	0 -	26 14%	96 29%	70 26%
35 to 44	94 12%	58 13%	14 9%	22 12%	50 13%	44 11%	0 -	94 43%	0 -	11 6%	38 11%	44 16%
45 to 54	127 16%	67 15%	29 20%	31 16%	61 16%	66 16%	0 -	127 57%	0 -	27 14%	51 15%	49 18%
55 to 64	167 21%	91 20%	31 21%	45 23%	92 24%	74 18%	0 -	0 -	167 57%	48 25%	69 21%	49 18%
65+	124 15%	71 15%	26 17%	28 14%	70 18%	54 13%	0 -	0 -	124 43%	33 17%	47 14%	44 17%
(DK/NS)	7 1%	4 1%	0 -	3 1%	4 1%	2 1%	0 -	0 -	0 -	2 1%	3 1%	1 0
Groups												
18-34	281 35%	166 36%	48 33%	67 34%	113 29%	168 41%	281 100%	0 -	0 -	71 37%	129 38%	80 30%
35-54	221 28%	125 27%	43 29%	53 27%	111 28%	110 27%	0 -	221 100%	0 -	38 20%	89 26%	93 35%
55+	291 36%	162 35%	57 39%	72 37%	163 42%	128 31%	0 -	0 -	291 100%	81 42%	116 34%	93 35%
Summary												
Mean	46.2	45.5	48.1	46.1	48.3	44.1	27.0	45.4	65.2	46.2	45.0	47.7
Median	46.2	44.5	47.7	46.9	48.2	41.9	27.0	45.8	62.8	50.3	44.1	46.3

DEMOGRAPHICS

z5. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Grade school or some high school	45 6%	20 4%	10 7%	15 8%	21 5%	24 6%	11 4%	6 3%	28 10%	45 23%	0 -	0 -
Complete high school	148 18%	75 16%	30 20%	43 22%	65 17%	82 20%	60 21%	32 15%	53 18%	148 77%	0 -	0 -
Complete technical or trade school/Community college	177 22%	94 20%	33 22%	50 26%	93 24%	83 20%	58 21%	48 22%	69 24%	0 -	177 53%	0 -
Some community college or university, but did not finish	159 20%	97 21%	25 17%	37 19%	68 17%	92 22%	70 25%	41 18%	47 16%	0 -	159 47%	0 -
Complete university degree, such as a Bachelor's	176 22%	107 23%	36 24%	34 18%	90 23%	86 21%	58 21%	64 29%	54 19%	0 -	0 -	176 66%
Post-graduate degree, such as a Master's or Ph.D.	90 11%	62 14%	14 9%	14 7%	52 13%	38 9%	22 8%	29 13%	39 13%	0 -	0 -	90 34%
(DK/NS)	5 1%	4 1%	0 -	1 0	1 0	4 1%	2 1%	1 1%	1 0	0 -	0 -	0 -
Summary												
High School	193 24%	94 21%	40 27%	59 30%	87 22%	106 26%	71 25%	38 17%	81 28%	193 100%	0 -	0 -
Post Secondary	336 42%	190 42%	59 40%	87 45%	161 41%	175 43%	129 46%	89 40%	116 40%	0 -	336 100%	0 -
University	266 33%	169 37%	49 33%	48 25%	142 36%	124 30%	80 28%	93 42%	93 32%	0 -	0 -	266 100%

DEMOGRAPHICS

z6. What is your current employment status?

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Working full-time (that is, 35 or more hours per week)	319	190	58	72	163	156	146	132	41	62	122	135
	40%	42%	39%	37%	42%	38%	52%	60%	14%	32%	36%	51%
Working part-time (that is, less than 35 hours per week)	82	56	5	21	25	57	47	15	20	19	45	19
	10%	12%	3%	11%	6%	14%	17%	7%	7%	10%	13%	7%
Self-employed	96	50	22	25	61	35	21	39	36	24	43	29
	12%	11%	15%	13%	16%	8%	8%	17%	13%	13%	13%	11%
Unemployed, but looking for work	27	14	5	7	11	16	18	6	3	9	11	4
	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	6%	3%	1%	5%	3%	2%
Attending school full-time/A student	32	22	7	3	14	18	30	2	0	6	16	10
	4%	5%	5%	2%	4%	4%	11%	1%	-	3%	5%	4%
Retired	184	99	37	49	101	83	0	6	175	52	71	61
	23%	22%	25%	25%	26%	20%	-	3%	60%	27%	21%	23%
Not in the workforce (A full-time homemaker/unemployed and not looking for work)	50	21	15	15	8	43	20	19	12	18	26	5
	6%	4%	10%	8%	2%	10%	7%	9%	4%	10%	8%	2%
Other	7	6	0	1	6	1	0	4	3	2	3	2
	1%	1%	-	1%	1%	0	-	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
(DK/NS)	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	0	0	-	0	1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

DEMOGRAPHICS

z8. Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income? That is, the total income before taxes - or gross income - of all persons in your household combined?

	Total	Region			Gender		Age			Education		
		LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Under \$10,000	23 3%	11 2%	7 5%	6 3%	7 2%	16 4%	12 4%	5 2%	7 2%	9 5%	10 3%	4 1%
\$10,000 to just under \$20,000	63 8%	31 7%	17 11%	15 8%	25 6%	38 9%	33 12%	9 4%	22 7%	23 12%	28 8%	11 4%
\$20,000 to just under \$30,000	78 10%	38 8%	18 12%	22 11%	28 7%	50 12%	38 14%	13 6%	26 9%	27 14%	32 9%	17 6%
\$30,000 to just under \$40,000	88 11%	48 11%	21 14%	19 10%	43 11%	44 11%	36 13%	14 6%	37 13%	24 12%	38 11%	25 9%
\$40,000 to just under \$50,000	71 9%	45 10%	12 8%	13 7%	28 7%	43 11%	24 9%	18 8%	29 10%	13 7%	39 11%	19 7%
\$50,000 to just under \$60,000	83 10%	46 10%	17 11%	20 10%	35 9%	48 12%	31 11%	29 13%	23 8%	14 7%	40 12%	29 11%
\$60,000 to just under \$70,000	73 9%	35 8%	14 10%	24 12%	43 11%	30 7%	26 9%	21 10%	26 9%	12 6%	32 9%	29 11%
\$70,000 to just under \$80,000	41 5%	22 5%	10 6%	9 5%	23 6%	17 4%	11 4%	17 8%	13 4%	10 5%	17 5%	14 5%
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000	68 8%	39 8%	13 9%	17 8%	37 9%	31 8%	17 6%	29 13%	22 7%	13 7%	26 8%	29 11%
\$100,000 and over	123 15%	84 18%	14 10%	25 13%	79 20%	44 11%	36 13%	51 23%	35 12%	16 8%	42 12%	65 25%
(DK/NS)	90 11%	60 13%	6 4%	24 12%	43 11%	47 12%	17 6%	16 7%	51 18%	33 17%	32 10%	23 9%

DEMOGRAPHICS

z14. Do you have access to the Internet?

	Region			Gender		Age			Education			
	Total	LM	Isl	Int	M	F	18-34	35-54	55+	HS	PSec	Unv
Base: All respondents	800	500	111	189	373	427	175	326	288	184	328	282
Weighted	800	457	148	195	391	409	281	221	291	193	336	266
Yes	683 85%	406 89%	120 81%	157 81%	349 89%	334 82%	247 88%	203 92%	230 79%	138 72%	294 87%	247 93%
No	115 14%	51 11%	28 19%	36 19%	41 10%	74 18%	34 12%	18 8%	60 20%	54 28%	42 13%	18 7%
(DK/NS)	1 0	0 -	0 -	1 1%	1 0	0 -	0 -	0 -	1 1%	0 -	0 -	1 1%

