

# BC COLLEGES SUBMISSION

## The Public Post-Secondary Sector Sustainability Review

BC Colleges is providing this submission in response to the Terms of Reference of the provincial Independent Sector Sustainability Review released 25 November, 2025.<sup>1</sup>

BC's colleges are a fundamental and unique component of BC's public post-secondary ecosystem. Colleges do a different job than their institute, teaching university, and research university partners, while driving at a shared outcome with them: positioning the people of BC to make a good living and build good lives through education, training, and access to the economy.

A sustainable post-secondary education sector will recognize the distinct value of each component of BC's public post-secondary system. It will enable nimble responses to the needs of learners, communities, local industries, employers and economies, while inspiring and facilitating institutions and programs that drive access, efficiency and demonstrable impact. It will connect accessible post-secondary opportunities to the many First Nations communities in BC, and it will ensure every resident in BC knows there is a public post-secondary institution responsive to their needs, hopes and ambitions across the province.

BC's colleges provide job-ready skills and training for BC's workforce. Colleges have taken concrete, innovative, and impactful action to recover from the COVID19 pandemic and from changes to federal immigration policy. Additionally, over the past two years college executive teams have responded to long-standing structural challenges with difficult but thoughtful adjustments. They have initiated strategic program realignment to better meet industry and community needs and drive institutional collaboration, while minimizing disruption and impacts to the high-quality education and training they offer. Financially, they have mapped and are delivering pathways to balanced budgets and financial stability. The recommendations outlined in this submission will further enhance college resilience and the impacts our institutions have on the BC economy.<sup>2</sup>

BCC's recommendations are guided by the seven principles the BC public post-secondary sector Association Chairs jointly recommended in the fall of 2025.<sup>3</sup> BCC encourages consistent engagement, consultation and collaboration with the broader sector to turn bold ideas into positive results. BCC will provide supporting data, validation and detail on any of the following recommendations upon request.

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<sup>1</sup> BC Colleges is the association of 10 of BC's public colleges: Camosun College, Coast Mountain College, College of New Caledonia, College of the Rockies, Langara College, North Island College, Northern Lights College, Okanagan College, Selkirk College, Vancouver Community College.

<sup>2</sup> A brief fact sheet outlining the unique role BC's colleges play in the public post-secondary ecosystem and their impact on learners and communities is attached as Appendix I.

<sup>3</sup> These principles are provided as Appendix II.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Governance and Legislation

Governance and legislative shifts can be undertaken to ensure colleges are positioned to respond to economic priorities, changes, and opportunities at pace. In addition, smaller legislative shifts will ensure an accurate representation of the role colleges play in the post-secondary environment, in BC's economy, and communities.

**Governance Clarity:** Targeted legislative amendments to the *Colleges and Institutes Act* (CIA) could be considered to enhance governance efficiency, clarify levels of institutional authority, and improve responsiveness in program and policy decision-making. BCC member colleges would welcome the opportunity to work with PSFS and sector partners to consider focused changes that could include modernizing statutory language to align with current credential offerings, providing clear and consistent definitions, reinforcing public accountability, and ensuring consistent alignment with ministerial and provincial priorities and operational realities.

**Accuracy of “Objects of a College”:** If legislation is amended through the sector sustainability process, the “Objects of a College” section of the Act should be amended to better reflect the important contributions and capabilities public colleges make to British Columbia and the workforce. Currently, the CIA does not reference trades training, which most of BC's colleges deliver.

## 2. Revenue

A suite of policy and regulatory changes are necessary to enable institutions to operate like viable businesses, while addressing potential competitive disadvantages created for public PSIs relative to private post-secondary operators. This theme also considers limitations imposed on the public post-secondary sector by the *Tuition Limit Policy* which provides certainty and predictability to students and institutions, but also prevents responsiveness to the real costs of program and service delivery.

**Enabling Business Operations:** BC's public post-secondary institutions are expected to perform and operate like private businesses while being constrained in the strategies and practices they are permitted to employ. BCC member institutions are individually subject to 207 regulations, policies and pieces of legislation. They are additionally constrained to two primary lines of revenue (the annual grant and domestic tuition) which do not keep pace with inflation. Over 80 percent of this revenue is regulated.

A sustainable public-post secondary system would enable public post-secondary institutions to operate as businesses. This includes access to credit, leveraging assets including land, and the capacity to run purpose-driven deficits to enable long-term strategic planning.

**Addressing Public Post-Secondary Competitive Disadvantages:** BC is home to the second largest number of private PSIs in Canada. These private institutions, while regulated through the provincial System Integrity Branch, and through mechanisms including the Degree Quality Assessment Board and the Education Quality Assurance designation where applicable, are otherwise permitted to operate nimbly and without the legislative, financial, and policy/regulatory strictures applied to colleges.

A sustainable public post-secondary system for BC will consistently assess the different expectations and requirements applied to public and private institutions and ensure public institutions are not put at a competitive disadvantage relative to private operators.<sup>4</sup>

**Revisiting the Tuition Limit Policy:** The Tuition Limit Policy (TLP) restricts increases in domestic tuition and mandatory fees at public PSIs in BC to a maximum of 2% per year. It has been in place since 2005. Inflation over this period has frequently exceeded this limit.<sup>5</sup> Today, BC maintains the fourth lowest undergraduate tuition in Canada, but the cost of this achievement is born by BC's public PSIs where programming is consistently offered at a financial loss.<sup>6</sup> An additional unintended consequence of the TLP is the creation of tuition and fee disparity between programs and regions.

Various approaches could be considered in combination to enable short- and long-term resilience, including:

- Targeted increases for specific high delivery cost programs or where there is broad variation across the province.
- A one-time correction period within set parameters, including addressing situations where disparity exists between institutions charging less than others for similar programs.
- Gradual increases to the TLP's current 2% cap or tying that cap to inflation.
- Refining policy definitions regarding when a program may apply for a new rate of tuition to better enable institutions to demonstrate when cost pressures are necessitating changes (e.g. regulatory or accrediting body requirements).

In each case, student impacts should be mitigated via grandfathering, phased implementation, leveraging of national non-repayable student aid, or temporary provision of existing provincial student funding mechanisms.

As tuition and the base grant are the two primary sources of public PSI revenue, any shifts should be considered in conjunction as part of the broader funding model. In this regard, BCC recommends review of its Funding Model Review Submission of 2022 and the outputs of that

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<sup>4</sup> By way of example, WorkBC requires public PSIs to run separate cohorts for their clients rather than enabling those learners to be added to existing cohorts.

<sup>5</sup> From 2021-2023, average inflation was significantly higher at an average of 4.7% annually.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, Average undergraduate tuition fees for full-time students by province or territory, 2025/2026, available online at: [Average undergraduate tuition fees for full-time students, by province or territory, 2025/2026](#).

process generally. In addition, while the introduction of necessary flexibility in tuition policy can provide opportunities to address institutional cost pressures as they arise, such flexibility should be pursued in a way that retains accessibility, stability and predictability for both students and PSIs.

### 3. Mandate, Policy, Regulation and Reporting

Streamlining annual reporting requirements and consistently considering cost mitigations is a hallmark of sustainability and progress for any sector or industry. These recommendations outline ways of ensuring efficient reporting, reduced administrative burden, and stronger public accountability for BC's public PSIs. They also encourage exploring ways to reduce the fiscal impacts of aggregated unfunded mandate commitments while preserving their intent and outcome.

**Efficiency of Reporting:** BC's public PSIs submit multiple reports to PSFS and other ministries annually (40+) in support of accountability, performance monitoring, strategic alignment, and planning. The current reporting schedule represents inefficiencies, unrealistic timelines, questionable utility, and is accompanied by frequent and duplicative ad hoc information requests (10+ annually).<sup>7</sup> Responsiveness to these requirements comes at a cost, conservatively estimated at \$2.5M–4.5M annually across BCC members.<sup>8</sup>

A sustainable and coherent public post-secondary sector would benefit from a coordinated, rationalized, and streamlined reporting schedule, while maintaining accountability and transparency. This would be undertaken by reviewing, reducing, and merging annual formal reports; adjusting submission timelines; coordinating minor and ad hoc reporting requests; and expanding the Ministry use of data mining from the Central Data Warehouse and other sources to remove redundancies.

**Mitigating Unintended Consequences of Mandate Commitments:** Government-issued public post-secondary mandate letters are an important articulation of government priorities and public PSI accountabilities. From 2016–2024, an increasing number of mandate letter commitments have moved from broad guiding principles to detailed, prescriptive, and cross-cutting governance and compliance requirements, requiring significant institutional planning, policy and systems coordination, and reporting workload, often with concurrent requirements for investment without corresponding funding for implementation or ongoing operation. These impacts are acutely felt at the college level where smaller administrations and budgets prevent easy absorption. It is

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<sup>7</sup> By way of comparison, Alberta and Manitoba public PSIs submit 2 formal reports annually; Maritime provinces submit 3, Newfoundland submits 2, and Saskatchewan PSIs submit 8. Ontario employs a multi-year accountability agreement report together with financial reporting and targeted funding reporting. Quebec requires an annual report, financial reporting and a student outcomes survey report. An overview of BC public post-secondary annual financial reporting requirements is available online at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/financial-reporting/gre-reporting-deadlines>.

<sup>8</sup> For colleges savings/efficiencies of this dimension are material relative to annual revenue.

conservatively estimated that colleges require roughly 31–41 incremental administrative FTEs system-wide to respond to aggregated mandate commitments annually (roughly \$3.7M–\$4.9M).<sup>9</sup>

BCC recommends consideration of applying a standard for mitigating unfunded mandate letter commitments. These may include limiting annual commitments to 6–8 outcome statements; shifting to a 3-year cycle with stable measures; adopting once-only or limited-duration reporting; standardizing reporting templates and definitions; employing risk-based assurance models; enabling shared specialist capacity for smaller institutions; and applying a “one-in, one-out” approach to retire older requirements.

#### 4. Shared Services and Procurement

A sustainable post-secondary sector must capitalize on opportunities to reduce costs and enhance services through the provision of shared services, shared employee benefits, shared procurement, and shared digital infrastructure. Shared infrastructure is particularly impactful when it helps to drive new levels of collaboration between institutions. Examples like EdPlannerBC, BCNet, FindYourPath, BC Campus (and the Open Learning Collection), Here2Talk, the Thompson Rivers University Credit Bank, and the BC Council on Admissions and Transfers, have demonstrated the value of sharing resources and purchasing power to enhance student access, affordability, transfers, and institutional cost-savings and efficiencies.

Longstanding challenges to further advancing shared infrastructure and procurement have consistently served as barriers, including:

- costs associated with breaking long-term contracts;
- collective agreement limitations or differences between collective agreements;
- unique obstacles for rural and remote institutions regarding access to services; and
- sunk costs in existing relationships and systems.

Clear direction and facilitated phased approaches would assist in mitigating some of these challenges, as may coalition-based approaches enabling shared systems to be onboarded over time as unique challenges are addressed or existing contracts are concluded.

#### 5. Collaboration

This theme considers opportunities for creating or enhancing platforms that drive interoperability between institutions, improve student mobility within the BC post-secondary system and across Canada, and reduce duplication of programming to support short- and long-term sustainability.

**BC Qualifications/Credential Framework:** A qualifications or credential framework articulates the skills, knowledge, and core competencies attained upon completion of a specific post-

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<sup>9</sup> For colleges savings/efficiencies of this dimension are material relative to annual revenue.

secondary program. It sets standards for qualification- or credit-granting programming and ensures learners and employers know what they can expect to ‘get’ from a program and where learners can go in their careers or subsequent study and training. While BC currently has a framework for degree programs, a corresponding framework for all credentials and learning levels (including diplomas, certificates, micro-credentials etc.) is not in place.<sup>10</sup> Developing a framework of qualifications and credentials for the province would:

- Standardize and quality assure the length, type and quality of certificates, diplomas and other credentials;
- Provide certainty for students, employers and the public;
- Enable the comparison of BC credentials provincially, nationally and internationally;
- Improve credential recognition for incoming students and workers to get skilled people to work in their fields of expertise faster;
- Better enable stacking, laddering and transferring within and between institutions; and
- Create a clear strategic picture of BC’s training and educational environment, highlighting gaps or duplications and mapping clear pathways to work.

**Shared Curriculum:** Colleges have been at the forefront of creating ways for public post-secondary institutions to develop and share curriculum to reduce duplication of effort, development costs, and inconsistencies of quality. With ministry funding through the *StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan*, Vancouver Community College (VCC) has led the Collaboration Framework multi-year pilot to assess how a structured and incentivized curriculum sharing system can improve the timelines and scope of training delivery across the province and potentially open revenue streams for BC curricula outside of the province. Working with Camosun College and Okanagan College, VCC has established foundational principles of a common curriculum licensing agreement that addresses multiple longstanding challenges to this form of collaboration. The initiative has secured 30% of the public post-secondary sector as signatories to this agreement so far and has established a functional repository, leveraging the BC Electronic Library Network.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the pilot’s successes and ongoing imperatives for collaboration of this type, existing regulatory frameworks, funding mechanisms, complexities around collective agreements and coordination structures represent challenges for cross-institutional collaboration. A sustainable public-post secondary system would encourage focus on overcoming these challenges through coordinated governance mechanisms.

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<sup>10</sup> National qualifications/credentials frameworks are common and include best practice leaders in Australia, New Zealand, and the European Union. In Canada, only Ontario has a Qualifications Framework, though other provinces are currently developing similar frameworks to facilitate quality control, student mobility, and enhanced credential recognition, including for immigrants and international students.

<sup>11</sup> Curriculum Sharing for Higher Education online portal: [Home](#). Current participant institutions are Vancouver Community College, Camosun College, Okanagan College, Langara College, North Island College, Northern Lights College, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and Douglas College.

**Distributed Learning:** Distributed learning (DL) – programs designed and quality-assured by a lead institution and delivered through a blend of online instruction, regional sites for labs, or simulations, and practicums – can expand access for rural, remote and Indigenous learners, remove unnecessary program duplication, strengthen local workforce pipelines, and reinforce a systematic and collaborative approach to learning. The provision of dedicated learning centres in specific communities can also help facilitate the reach of DL models. Impactful DL is illustrated through examples like Selkirk College’s blended Pharmacy Technician Diploma and UBC’s multi-site distributed health and MD education models, as well as in multiple micro-credential offerings across the province. In many cases, significant cost savings for program delivery relative to traditional forms are realized while increasing learner access.

DL should be expanded in BC by:

- Developing a provincial DL strategy with targets in high-demand areas and regions with access gaps;
- Creating incentives for joint delivery and shared curriculum/learning-tech capacity;
- Standardizing partnership templates;
- Targeted investment in shared enabling infrastructure, including technology and internet access in some communities;
- Expanding shared lab/simulation capacity via regional hubs’; and
- Strengthening placement coordination with shared tools and dedicated coordinators.

## **6. Delivering for the Economy, Regions, and Communities**

A sustainable post-secondary system supporting a sustainable economy requires consistent and constructive relationships between industry, public PSIs, government, and communities to ensure training and labour market needs are articulated and addressed. This necessitates routinized dialogue between industry proponents and PSIs, and the formation of focused task groups to solve defined challenges on mutually agreed upon timelines with results measured.

To facilitate consistent partnerships and active industry involvement, the following infrastructure is recommended with a focus on regional approaches which recognize local employer/industry needs, local institutional expertise, the impact and value of unique regional and community identities, co-development opportunities, and delivering for communities.

Colleges and other post-secondary institutions have been successful in establishing industry and employer relations across the province. First Nations in British Columbia play a vital and enduring role in resource development projects. In the broader northern part of the province, there are many distinct First Nations communities each with its own history, languages, and relationships to the land. Resource development projects do not advance without First Nations involvement in multiple and meaningful ways. As industry activity grows, companies rely on colleges to deliver targeted, job-ready training that enables Indigenous people to step directly into well-paying, in-demand roles with

the employers working in the region. This partnership is essential to building a strong local workforce and ensuring the long-term success of northern resource development.

Leveraging college roles with formalized structures would simplify, amplify and systematize mutual engagement, investment and outcome in BC.

**Regional Collaboratives:** BCC recommends investigation of creating formalized regional collaboratives between public post-secondary institutions as a platform for consistent collaboration, shared or optimized program offerings, and reducing duplication and inefficiency. Regional collaborative models are responsive to the Sector Sustainability Review’s emphasis on balancing restructuring with regional access, affordability, and community economic/social contributions as per the Terms of Reference. They also better ensure the preservation of regional expertise and identity and, together with shared services, infrastructure, and procurement, are a preferable and more dependable model of consolidation than overt mergers or the creation of centralized entities.

Under a regional collaborative model, institutions that share broad or densified geographical areas, like Northern BC, Interior BC, the Lower Mainland, and Vancouver Island, would establish formal associations to routinely address shared programming, labour market, and demographic or economic challenges/opportunities, leveraging each other’s strengths to develop strategic and operational responses. Regional collaboratives:

- Map services and programming across institutions, removing gaps and duplication while maintaining access across the region;
- Enable individual institutions to focus on establishing areas of unique expertise or centres of excellence with appropriately prioritized funding;
- Deliver efficiency by implementing shared delivery, services, coordinated capital/investment, and joint scheduling, without the multi-year distraction, costs and uncertain outcomes of full mergers;
- Preserve access and the ‘anchor institution’ role, relationship and identity in communities;
- Create easy access points between regions to address broader issues; and,
- Improve employer and community responsiveness while reducing duplication or confusion.

In addition, a regional collaborative approach preserves the foundational local community relationships and knowledge that individual colleges and First Nations have established over time. In most cases, in particular in rural and remote areas, relationships are shared with multiple First Nations and Indigenous communities, and each is deeply nuanced to ensure unique learner and community needs and Indigenous economic development ambitions are understood and met.

Strong precedent exists for the value of regional collaborative structures. The Northern Post-Secondary Collaboration (NPSC) is an exemplar coalition and replicable model composed of

four northern public post-secondary institutions.<sup>12</sup> The collaborative actively identifies and pursues opportunities for combined efforts to provide robust and coordinated education and skills training in partnership through their diverse campuses.

By way of example, the NPSC worked with the Northern Health Authority to respond to labour market shortages in the region's healthcare sector through a shared marketing campaign, and created the Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NCBNP). The NCBNP is offered in collaboration between all four institutions and provides a four-year integrated program culminating in a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) degree.

Creating regional collaboratives for other regions of the province (through the addition of interior, Island, and Lower Mainland variations) would inspire these efficiencies, opportunities and cost savings. These could be reinforced with a clear provincial mandate, particularly around expectations and accountabilities for institutional participation; and a resourcing approach developed in partnership with institutions.

**Post-Secondary Major Projects Office:** The Government of BC launched the *Look West: Jobs and Prosperity for a Stronger BC and Canada* strategy and fast-tracked 18 major projects in the province in 2025. BC is also represented on nearly half of the federally announced nation-building priority projects and has a strong role to play in Canada's investment in the nation's military capacity. The establishment of a BC Post-Secondary Major Projects Office would create a "front counter" for project proponents, industry, First Nations, and different levels of government to rapidly access the right public post-secondary partners, individually or in focused task groups or collaboratives. Through a Post-Secondary Major Projects Office, proponents could ensure their projected training or educational needs are understood, specific training criteria are being met, assets are appropriately leveraged, and, where necessary, partnerships are formed to establish focused rapid response programming that evolves in real time as industry and workplaces evolve.

Recent precedent for the types of responsive relationships a Post-Secondary Major Projects Office could facilitate exists in the partnership between Northern Lights College (NLC) and Tourmaline Oil in Northeastern BC. Working together to define a labour market and training challenge, NLC and Tourmaline shared resources and expertise to rapidly co-develop a training solution (the Field Operators Technician - Hydrocarbon Resource Program) that is responsive to a well-defined industry constraint. Utilizing continuing education and workforce training facilitation to enable rapid response, their work together has resulted in measurable initiative outputs and high student/employer success. These types of relationships and the optimization of continuing education/workforce training at an institutional level could be reinforced by a front desk facilitation of post-secondary and industry relations responsive to the *Look West* industrial strategy.

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<sup>12</sup> NPSC member institutions: Coast Mountain College, the College of New Caledonia, Northern Lights College, and the University of Northern BC.

**Regional Industry Advisory Councils:** A complimentary approach to establishing a Post-Secondary Major Projects Office is the establishment of regional industry advisory councils composed of local major industry players and major project proponents in an established region, together with host municipalities, First Nations, and regional public post-secondary leadership. Reporting to the provincial government, advisory councils could be mandated to meet regularly to discuss projected industrial employer needs and shifts, corresponding economic impacts, demographic considerations, and post-secondary training capacity to ensure clear line of sight, strategic alignment, and roles, responsibilities and accountabilities in planning for and responding to anticipated challenges and opportunities.

## 7. Making a Seamless System for Students

Theme seven recommends policy changes and initiatives that better enable increasing domestic enrollment, a seamless curriculum across BC, and rapid student employment/economic outcomes.

BC's Labour Market Outlook estimates one million job openings between 2025 and 2035 with over 75% of current and future jobs requiring post-secondary education and training.<sup>13</sup> The volume of domestic K-12 students transitioning to post-secondary, and, from there into the workforce, as well as the pace at which these transitions take place, shows significant lag. Improving the rate and quality of these transitions will be fundamental to BC's economic growth.<sup>14</sup> Colleges play a unique role in this, with generally shorter programming, lower tuition, smaller class sizes, a student support focus, an access mandate, and consistently strong employment outcomes at graduation. These attributes are particularly important considering K-12 student demographic trends showing precipitous increases in a range of diagnosed learning disabilities and special needs.<sup>15</sup> The majority of these students will look to local colleges to meet their complex needs while positioning them for success in their communities and the economy.

**Ensuring Smooth Transitions for BC Learners:** The Government of BC consistently assesses the efficacy and outcomes of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) and its regulations. Current restrictions on the sharing of data between ministries, specifically between the ministries of Education and Childcare and PSFS, complicate application processes for entry into public post-secondary and thereby serve as barriers. Every opportunity should be taken to streamline the learner experience in transitioning educational systems, and

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<sup>13</sup> Government of BC, *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025-2035 Forecast* (2025); available online: [British Columbia - Labour Market Outlook - 2025/2035 Forecast - 2025 Edition](#)), p. 5; 14-19.

<sup>14</sup> Government of BC, *Student Transitions Project*; available online: [Student Transitions Project - Province of British Columbia](#).

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd, J. E. V., & Baumbusch, J. L., *Inclusive Education Snapshot: Prevalence over Time of BC's K-12 Students with Learning Exceptionalities and Disabilities*, (Vancouver: School of Nursing, UBC, 2020); available online: [Lloyd J et al Inclusive education 2020.pdf \(2\).pdf](#). See also, Government of BC, *BC Data Catalogue*; available online: [Student Headcount by Disabilities or Diverse Abilities Category - Student Headcount by Disabilities and Diverse Abilities Category field definitions - Data Catalogue](#).

to reduce the number of applications, and submissions students, institutions and ministries manage.

**Automatic Enrollment:** Auto-enrollment<sup>16</sup> is a concept whereby K-12 students have the option to be automatically enrolled in a public college of their choosing in general programming upon completion of their Dogwood certificate. It is a bold approach to improving access to post-secondary, increasing domestic enrollment, and responding to shifting labour market dynamics.

Auto-enrollment would not preclude students from applying to focused programs or to programs outside of the college system at institutes, teaching or research universities, but would waive the application process for those interested in attending a public college or beginning their studies there.

Auto-enrollment in BC would be a first in Canada and would represent a culture shift by:

- Concretely and immediately increasing access and equity by reducing barriers;
- Improving K-12 to post-secondary transition rates;
- Normalizing post-secondary participation and simplifying the application process;
- Encouraging early informed decision-making for students and families;
- Contribute to rapidly building a skilled workforce;
- Support other public post-secondary partners' success by growing domestic transfer; and
- Improving learner outcomes by inspiring faster pathways into the economy.

**Enhancing BC's Labour Market and Public Post-Secondary System Integration:** Establishing a province-wide labour Market Integration Hub would optimize and articulate the intersections between real-time, granular labour market information; employer data; academic program content, availability and outcomes; and student pathways. While the individual components referenced are largely in place independently in BC, an integrated hub would supply these inputs at a single source, using existing tools like BC's Find Your Path to map opportunities and projected outcomes for learners, employers and the BC public.

**Optimizing Post-Secondary and Workforce Transitions:** Provincial investment in dual credit and work integrated learning programs consistently demonstrates significant return on investment in student transitions, particularly in rural and remote communities, supported by Ministry research and statistics for these programs. A sustainable post-secondary system will consistently recognize and capitalize on initiatives with demonstrable positive outcomes, noting and addressing pinch points, such as the unique challenges associated with operating dual credit or work integrated learning programs at small or rural and remote institutions.

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<sup>16</sup> Also referred to as "opt-out registration" and "direct admission".

## APPENDIX I

### BC'S COLLEGES AND ACCESS TO THE ECONOMY – FACT SHEET

- BC's colleges have a presence in over 50 locations right across the province, meaning learners are always close to a college location. In fact, 92% of the population in BC are within 50km of a BC college. A BC Student Transitions Project report has found that learner retention rates are 82.4% for those who remain in their home region compared to 64.9% for those who move to a different region from where they graduated from high school.
- In 2025/26, BC college tuition averaged about \$3,416 in 2025/26 across BC's public colleges, compared with a BC public university average of \$5,856.<sup>17</sup> Across Canada, average undergraduate tuition for Canadian students is projected to be \$7,734.
- BC's colleges offer flexible admission policies and preparatory, development and upskilling programs, which increases the opportunities for success for learners from traditionally underrepresented groups.
- BC's colleges have, on average, smaller class sizes, resulting in lower student-to-instructor ratios, more personalized learning, and improved learner outcomes.
- Colleges are the main providers of post-secondary education in many regions of BC, serving learners across urban, rural, northern and Indigenous communities. They are also generally a major employer in many of these communities.
- In response to the province's labour market needs in the past five years, BC's colleges have graduated over 7,500 skilled trades professional, many of whom are construction workers. Over the same period, BC's colleges graduated over 11,000 nurses and other health professionals and over 6,500 childcare and social services professionals.
- By 2029, the highest demand job openings, 41 percent in total, will be in occupations specifically requiring credentials or trades that colleges offer, including healthcare, hospitality, business administration, sales, construction, shipbuilding, transportation, new technologies, and accounting.
- Serving as vital community hubs, BC's colleges work very closely with local employers to ensure programs respond to the current and emerging economy. According to the 2024 BC Student Outcomes Survey of recent college graduates:
  - Certificate Students (Diploma, Associate Degree & Certificate group)
    - Labour force participation: ~98%
    - Employment rate: ~88%
    - Of those employed: ~84% reported that their work was *education-related*

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<sup>17</sup> Tuition amounts reflect full-time studies over two semesters for a domestic undergraduate academic Arts student.

### Apprenticeship Students

- Labour force participation: ~98%
  - Employment rate: ~95%
  - Of those employed: ~99% were working full-time and ~83% were in a training-related job.
- BC's colleges are the province's "access institutions":
    - Students from low- income families overwhelmingly select colleges as their post-secondary institution of choice. For example, 62 percent of all students from families with income in the \$20-30k range (the lowest recorded range) attending a PSI, chose to attend a BC college. On the other hand, no students from families with income in the \$170-180k range (the highest recorded range) attending a PSI chose to attend a BC college (all these students chose to attend a BC university).
    - Most grade 12 graduates enrol in postsecondary institutions in the same region where they graduated from high school. BC colleges provide options in all regions of the province.
    - Students entering BC colleges tend to have lower GPAs than those entering universities.
    - Not all students entering post-secondary are prepared for four-year commitments and shorter college programs can serve to introduce them to post-secondary study while maintaining an economic outcome regardless of subsequent decisions.
    - Over 7,5000 students who begin their post-secondary journeys at a public college transfer to a university every year. Interestingly, over 5,000 students transfer from universities to colleges each year, marking colleges a fundamental component of a thriving and symbiotic ecosystem for learners.
    - BC colleges, compared to universities, have a larger share of female students, Indigenous students, and age 30+ students relative to their share of total enrolment in the BC system.

## APPENDIX II

### PRINCIPLES OF A SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY SECTOR IN BC

The Sector Association Chairs of BC Colleges (BCC), the Research Universities' Council of BC (RUCBC), and the Pacific Association of Canadian Institutes and Universities (PACIU) jointly recommended seven principles to guide creation of a sustainable public post-secondary system in the fall of 2025. These seven principles underpin the recommendations laid out in BCC's submission.

- 1. Balanced Revenue:** A sustainable public post-secondary system includes a mix of government funding, domestic and international tuition, active industry participation, and research. In a balanced system, there is no single point of system-wide dependency.
- 2. Differentiated System:** Diverse institutional roles enable focus and avoid unnecessary duplication while maintaining accessibility, coherence, collaboration and coordination.
- 3. Foundational Knowledge:** Maintain a foundation of diverse disciplines that cultivate adaptable graduates with transferable skills, cultural literacy, and long-term innovative capacity.
- 4. Adaptability:** Institutions, programs and delivery models must be able to respond to student/market demand, changing demographics, lifelong learning, and the needs of the labour market and economy.
- 5. Efficiency:** Shared services, procurement, and partnerships must consistently reduce duplication, promote cost savings, and pursue optimization.
- 6. Alignment:** The public post-secondary system has a fundamental responsibility to respond to the economic needs and opportunities of British Columbia and Canada. Long-term sustainability requires mechanisms to enable consistent connectivity and strategic design between governments, industry and public post-secondary institutions.
- 7. Regional:** Recognizes the value institutions provide to communities, learners and regionally diverse economies.

These principles complement those which subsequently appeared in the Sustainability Review TOR issued November 25, 2025: ensuring sector alignment with provincial priorities; positive economic and social impact; lasting and meaningful reconciliation; incentivizing collaboration; consultation and engagement; and a pursuit of excellence.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Government of British Columbia, *Modernizing the Public Post-Secondary Education Sector in British Columbia: A review of Sector Sustainability Terms of Reference*, available online at: [ReviewofSectorSustainability\\_TermsofReference.pdf](#); p. 5-6.