

September 30, 2021

## **Budget 2022 Consultation**

### **Written Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services**

Joy Johnson, President & Vice-Chancellor  
Simon Fraser University

For decades, British Columbia's (BC) integrated public post-secondary system has been an enormous asset for the province, and now, as the province turns its attention to economic recovery, that system can, not only be a powerful engine for recovery, but also help to ensure an economic recovery that does not leave anyone behind.

To that end, Simon Fraser University (SFU) fully supports the recommendations brought forward by the Research Universities Council of British Columbia, as they complement sector-wide priorities and efforts to build a bridge to economic recovery across the province and support our resilient students, businesses, and communities through the transition towards a sustainable and resilient economic future.

## **SFU PRIORITIES**

For decades, SFU has been defined by its commitment to engagement with our three campuses in Burnaby, Vancouver, and Surrey and meaningful partnerships that reach across the province and beyond. We have long marshalled our resources to help make life better for all British Columbians. Today, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this work and mission is more important than ever, and it is in that spirit, I ask the Standing Committee to consider the following priorities:

### **1. Access, Jobs & Training**

Investing in post-secondary education and skills training opportunities are an important part of BC's recovery. We must start by giving young British Columbians the tools they need to succeed in a fast-changing economy. BC's labour market forecast indicates a vast majority of new jobs over the next decade will require a post-secondary credential.

I applaud the government for creating 2,000 new tech related seats and supporting pathways for success for Indigenous and other traditionally underrepresented students. However, even with these measures, demand continues to climb.

Our newest campus in Surrey is perfectly positioned to fill the gap. In 2006, the Province and SFU agreed that it was necessary to double the size of the campus. Since then, SFU Surrey has helped to transform the educational landscape of the region – including the launch of the School of Sustainable Energy

Engineering. However, we can do more to ensure young British Columbians have fair access to post-secondary education and training necessary to thrive and contribute to building a better, safer, more sustainable future for all British Columbian's.

- **SFU asks this committee to recommend that Budget 2022 includes a commitment to increase the size of SFU Surrey's campus from its current size of 2,900 to 5,000 full-time equivalent students.**

## **2. Innovation & Infrastructure**

BC has a thriving life sciences sector, but this sector has indicated that access to talent is limiting their growth. A new **Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building on SFU's Burnaby Campus** will help meet this demand and provide a centre for discovery, invention, and innovation. (See Appendix 2.1 for details.)

At SFU's Burnaby campus, those who use transit will face some of the longest-commute times in Canada traveling on outdated diesel buses. The **Burnaby Mountain Gondola** is a cost-effective, environmentally friendly, and reliable solution to this growing problem. (See Appendix 2.2 for details.)

- **SFU asks this committee to recommend that Budget 2022 includes the necessary capital funding required to see these two innovative projects through to completion.**

## **3. Improving Public Health**

The pandemic emphasised the tight link between a strong public health care system and an effective pandemic response. I am excited about the prospect of a second medical school located on our Surrey Campus with learning centres across Fraser Health Authority. With our partners – the Fraser Health and First Nations Health Authorities, the new school will be an ground-breaking step forward for strengthening our primary care system by expanding our healthcare workforce, meeting the needs of Indigenous communities.

- **SFU's final ask is that this committee recommends that Budget 2022 maintain the government's ongoing commitment to improving our public health care system by funding SFU's new medical school – a new kind of community-responsive, team-based primary care.**

Please contact Joanne Curry, Vice-President – External Relations for further information:

Email: [joannec@sfu.ca](mailto:joannec@sfu.ca)

Phone: 604.512.3255

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 2.1: NEW Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building (ILS)

The Life Science industry is experiencing phenomenal growth. From providing industry with skilled graduates to relevant and critical research leading to commercialization opportunities, SFU plays a key contributing role in the Life Sciences sector and ecosystem.

The Faculty of Science also represents the second largest annual FTE intake at SFU with two-thirds of students graduating with a degree in Life Sciences. Continued success, however, is constrained by conditions of the Shrum Science Centre Biology Building where Life Sciences is predominantly located. With a current FCI of 0.90, the outdated and end-of-life infrastructure does not meet current industry standards and is unsuitable for modern science. Exacting requirements for HVAC, plumbing and power cannot be met and low floor to floor height limits equipment placement.

Capacity limitations mean departments are dispersed and in disparate space. As modern science is also intensely social, requiring open labs to support team-based work, the new ILS Building will co-locate Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Sciences, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Life Sciences Research Core, and the Pandemic Institute to establish a “hub” for interdisciplinary study and research and active and applied learning in the Life Sciences.

The building will directly support 132 Faculty, 23 Staff, 80 graduate FTEs, and approximately 1,800 Life Science undergraduate FTEs – all existing FTEs.

The space program includes the following:

Program Functional Area	Total Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Wet Laboratories including Lab Support	4,720
Dry Laboratories including	680
Seminar Rooms	400
Indigenous Outreach Hub	50
Offices (Faculty, Grad Students, Staff)	2,449
Meeting Rooms and Collaboration Space	347
Undergraduate/Graduate Science	134
Cafe	130
Shipping/Receiving and Building Support	100
<b>Total Net Square Meters</b>	<b>9,375</b>
<b>Total Building Gross Square Meters</b>	<b>14,980</b>

### Total Project Cost: \$174 M

SFU has limited capital reserves. Funding would be a direct capital funding from AEST

## Appendix 2.2: Burnaby Mountain Gondola

The proposed Burnaby Mountain Gondola project will improve commutes for thousands of Burnaby Mountain residents. This will also help better link key regional destinations such as Surrey City Centre, Downtown Vancouver, Great Northern Way, the University of British Columbia, and the North Shore. An urban gondola will enhance the regional transit system and help meet other priorities for the region. A gondola solution is already in service for commuters in Portland, Mexico City, La Paz (Bolivia), Medellín (Colombia), Koblenz (Germany), and other cities around the world.

At peak hours, commuters see up to four full buses travel past them, doubling the length of their journey up and down the Mountain. Bus service is ranked in the bottom 10% of routes in the region in terms of overcrowding, on-time performance and bus bunching.

The SFU community, and over 5,000 UniverCity residents, (soon to grow to over 9,000) lack an alternate access route to get on and off the Mountain in the event of road closure due to snow, fire or other emergency.

TransLink has determined a gondola is the most cost-effective and efficient technology for meeting Burnaby Mountain's unique transportation needs:

- At peak operation, the gondola will support up to 3,000 riders per hour, compared to a maximum of 2,000 possible with bus service. By 2045, estimated hourly ridership will peak at 2,600 riders per hour, ensuring that the gondola will be able to handle capacity and more in order accommodate growth.
- The gondola offers strong operational reliability in harsh weather systems, ensuring a safer option for riders to depart Burnaby Mountain in the event of inclement weather leading to bus service cancellation.
- The proposed technology makes use of three cables in place of a singular cable system. This system offers additional safety redundancy in the event of a cable failure. In the event of a possible fire at the expanded Trans Mountain Tank Farm, the proposed gondola will allow travellers to avoid the crucial Burnaby Mountain Parkway-Gaglardi Way intersection and enable safe evacuation off the mountain.

### **Total project cost: \$210 M**

Operating costs: \$5.6 – 30% less than current annual operative costs (\$7.8 M) for the existing bus service.