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Vancouver Community College's New Budget Will Continue to Restrict Access

Unrealistic Targets and Further Tuition Increase Planned

The +\$90,000,000 budget for 2007-08 is the focus of the agenda at this Thursday's Vancouver Community College Board meeting, April 26 (6pm Room 420, Downtown Campus). The budget anticipates a 102% enrollment. It calls for an across the board tuition increase of 2%.

"While I hope they meet this enrollment target, it's totally unrealistic and the further fee increase will not help. The College has not been close to a 100% enrollment for over 5 years, ever since tuition was allowed to more than double and there's nothing in the budget that makes it seem attainable," said Faculty Association President Frank Cosco.

Government Policy has Shifted Building Burden onto Current Students

"In fact the last few years have seen large operating surpluses at VCC which then get transferred to capital projects, the main one being the \$50,000,000 new building at our Broadway campus (formerly known King Edward Campus). The provincial government seems to have forgotten how to fund buildings; it's only supplying about 80% of the money needed, leaving VCC over \$10 million short and with no borrowing authority.

"Last year \$3.5 million was transferred from the operating surplus, a surplus largely created by high tuition fees. This short-sighted funding policy leaves our students paying unnecessarily high fees" Cosco added.

Time to Eliminate Tuition for Adult Basic Education: Campus 2020 agrees

Adult students needing to update and/or complete their high school equivalencies have always formed a large cohort of VCC's students and they are particularly vulnerable to high tuition increases. "Because of high tuition and incoherent government policies around receiving social services support while going to school, all of our ABE programs have been hurting. We're even starting to face layoffs." Today, the Campus 2020 report of Geoff Plant calls for the immediate elimination of all tuition for ABE in BC.

"We applaud the Campus 2020 recommendation for no ABE tuition and call upon VCC and all BC post-secondary institutions to institute it immediately," concluded Cosco.

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