

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Subject: International Tuition | Policy Number: EXT-7 | Last reviewed: 2022 Nov. 28 |
| Approved by: Council | Managed by: Advocacy & Policy Committee | Next review: 2024 Nov. 30 |

Policy Rationale:

In contrast with their peers, international students in Canada face additional pressures that can make it far more challenging to access a post-secondary education. For example, many lack any genuine predictability with respect to year-over-year increases, in addition to the substantial differential between the rates charged to international students and those charged to domestic students. While the provincial government limits annual increases in domestic tuition at 2%, no such regulations exist for students paying international tuition rates. As a result, international tuition rates have increased almost tenfold in the past thirty years, from \$3,991 in 1991 to \$30,903 in 2021; during much of this period, domestic tuition has been subject to a freeze or to the 2% cap on increases.¹

As government funding stagnates and post-secondary institutions face budgetary shortfalls, disturbing patterns are developing whereby international tuition hikes are used to balance the books. This trend, combined with the unpredictability of these students' tuition hikes, leaves many in a vulnerable and uncertain position as they try to plan their academic future.

The numerous contributions made by international students to British Columbia should not be understated. Society is made more diverse by their involvement in communities across the province, and domestic students' education is more enriching thanks to their presence. Economically, a recent study shows that they spend almost \$5 billion each year and help to create over 45,000 jobs in BC.² Finally, many will ultimately choose to settle in Canada: a 2021 study by the Canadian Bureau for International Education shows that over 70% plan to apply for the post-graduate work permit and 60% intend to seek permanent residency in Canada.³

External Policy Position:

1. The Student Association supports:
 - A. The implementation by the Province of British Columbia of a binding cap on annual increases to international tuition, similar to the existing *Tuition Limit Policy*;
 - B. The provision by post-secondary institutions of world-class student services that recognize the unique needs of international students and their significant financial contribution to their own education, to the local economy, and to government's tax revenues; and

¹ Statistics Canada, table 477-0077 *Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study annual (dollars)*. Supplemented by data in the Canadian Association of University Teachers' *Almanac of Post-secondary education in Canada* ([link](#)).

² Government of Canada, *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada* (2020 update), produced for Global Affairs Canada by Canmac Economic Limited ([link](#)).

³ CBIE International Student Survey, 2021 ([link](#)).

- C. The creation by government of a proper international education strategy that:
- i. Is co-developed in partnership with international students, student association, post-secondary institutions, and other stakeholders;
 - ii. Is based not solely on enrolment numbers but also addresses the financial and social challenges faced by international students; and
 - iii. Recognizes the inherent value that international students contribute to post-secondary education in BC, above and beyond their economic impact.
2. The Student Association opposes:
- A. The provincial government's ongoing refusal to regulate international tuition fee increases;
 - B. Any unfair or unreasonable increases in international tuition, especially in excess of inflation;
 - C. The growing tendency by post-secondary institutions to rely on international tuition increases to balance their budgets, and the resulting financial dependence on these enrolments; and
 - D. Unpredictable increases in international tuition, especially in relation to any student who has already paid their commitment fee or commenced their studies.