

<b>Subject:</b> On-Campus Student Housing	<b>Policy Number:</b> EXT-8	<b>Last reviewed:</b> 2023 Jan. 9
<b>Approved by:</b> Council	<b>Managed by:</b> Advocacy & Policy Committee	<b>Next review:</b> 2026 Jan. 30

### Policy Rationale:

Finding affordable housing has long been a problem in the Lower Mainland, and students are one of the groups most affected by a tight market and high rents. With low vacancy rates, increasing rents, and a rising cost of living, the challenge of finding affordable housing has an undeniable negative impact on students.

For BCIT students, the limited supply of on-campus housing further heightens the pressures facing far too many students. While there have been some increases in density along the Willingdon corridor, this has not always translated into more affordable options. In Burnaby, average rents have continued to rise: a one-bedroom unit costs \$2,010 per month, while a two-bedroom unit now costs \$2,744; these are the sixth highest in the country, and well above the national average.<sup>1</sup>

Building more affordable housing on campus helps to lower students' dependence on roommates for housing security and fosters a vibrant on-campus community where students live in close proximity to the school. Living on-campus can also provide a higher quality of life compared to living off-campus, mainly due to reduced commutes and lower rents, as well as living with others who share similar lifestyles, goals, and needs.

### External Policy Position:

1. The Student Association supports:
  - A. The further construction and expansion of high-quality, affordable, purpose-built student housing on-campus with accompanying amenities to fully encompass students' academic and social needs;
  - B. The development and enforcement of policies that ensure residence fee increases are tied to inflation or to the maximum allowable rent increases set annually by government for off-campus rentals;
  - C. The inclusion, in on-campus student housing developments, of units which address the unique needs of students with families, those with accessibility needs, international students, and Indigenous learners.
  - D. The status of student residences as exclusively owned and operated by public post-secondary institutions or community-based not-for-profit organizations.

<sup>1</sup> "Burnaby rental prices still averaging more than \$2k a month, report shows." *Burnaby Now*: August 12, 2022 ([link](#)).

- E. Increased supports from government for on-campus housing through the following:
- i. investments through capital grants and low-interest loans;
  - ii. permanent policy changes to permit post-secondary institutions to incur debt to expand housing; and
  - iii. the provision of ongoing dedicated operating funding to public post-secondary institutions for on-campus student housing.
- F. The continued development of sectoral best-practices, through ongoing consultations, such as the recent “Leading Practices in Student Housing Agreements” resource prepared by the Ministry.<sup>2</sup>
2. The Student Association opposes:
- A. Increases in student housing fees beyond the equivalent maximum allowable rent increases off-campus;
  - B. Payment programs which require residents to pay an entire semester’s rent up-front rather than the prevailing monthly payments found off-campus; and
  - C. Profits of any kind generated from on-campus student housing, especially from international students’ residences, where applicable.

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<sup>2</sup> “Leading Practices in Student Housing Agreements.” *Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills*: Fall 2022 ([link](#)).