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DATE: January 20, 2026

TO: Members of Senate

FROM: Elizabeth Croft, Vice-President Academic and Provost

CC: Tony Eder, Associate Vice-President Academic Resource Planning

RE: Enrolment projections for 2026/27

Background

This annual memo recommends a level of FTE enrolment for UVic for the coming year (2026/27). Under the BC University Act, Senate recommends enrolment targets to the Board of Governors, which holds final approval authority. Levels are subject to review throughout the year in light of changing information regarding application rates, funding, environmental challenges and other external factors.

The university's operating grant from the province is based on a specified enrolment expectation of undergraduate domestic students and graduate students. The enrolment projections and the funded levels set by government are defined in terms of annualized full-time equivalent (FTE) students, which are calculated by dividing the total unit course registrations of students by the full-time unit course requirements of the program of their registration. The enrolment level is an annual target met through counting FTEs in the summer and winter sessions. FTEs are closely related to equivalent enrolments taught (EETs), which are calculated by dividing the total unit course registrations of students by 15. This measure is used for internal enrolment monitoring purposes.

Any undergraduate domestic or graduate student that UVic enrols over the level set by government provides only tuition revenue to UVic, which is insufficient to cover the full cost of a student's education. International undergraduate enrolments are not funded through the provincial operating grant, and the full cost of their education is paid through tuition fees. Together, the provincial grant and tuition account for approximately 90% of UVic's operating budget revenue, 80% of which is allocated to employee salaries and benefits as per the annual Planning and Budget Framework.

UVic frequently works with the BC Government on targeted expansions of specific academic programs, aligned with government priorities and student interest. Government-approved expansions increase our enrolment targets and provincial operating grant and are included in the summary below.

Summary

The memo presents the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS) target for UVic for 2026/27, provincially-funded expansions, and recommended enrolment by undergraduate/graduate and domestic/international categories. For context, the memo also outlines enrolment trends and reports against UVic's 2025/26 targets.

UVic's overall enrolment recommendation for 2026/27 is 20,300 FTE. Provided these enrolment levels are approved and achieved, the university's financial modeling indicates a balanced budget for 2026/27, without the need for planned reductions.

While UVic consistently meets our domestic undergraduate and graduate enrolment targets set by PSFS, many of BC's 25 public post-secondary institutions (PPSIs) are experiencing challenges meeting their targets. In November 2025, the Minister announced a Post-Secondary Sector Sustainability Review, noting that 20 of BC's 25 PPSIs are forecasting at least one annual deficit between now and 2028/29. The review is intended to take a broad, holistic approach to sector-wide sustainability and will cover the following areas:

- Governance and operations: examine the structure of the public post-secondary system to reduce duplication, streamline service delivery and improve overall efficiency.
- Program delivery: identify ways to deliver programs more effectively within existing budgets, ensuring that institutions are effectively preparing graduates with relevant skills and training.
- Financial sustainability: explore broad opportunities to address both short-term and long-term financial challenges.

UVic continues to offer—and look for opportunities to strengthen—pathways and partnerships with colleges and other research universities to support overall sector health. For example, UVic's pathway program with Camosun College represents the single biggest pathway in the BC transfer system.

UVic is also well positioned to help the province address critical environmental and societal issues facing our society, including through our teaching and research priorities. We will continue to advocate for additional funded spaces for domestic and graduate students to meet student demand and respond to government priorities. Future investments from the province will likely continue to be highly targeted and support government priorities, although their impacts are felt broadly at the university, including because they help to fund supports and services for all students.

Provided we remain competitive with recruitment and retention efforts, quality programming, scholarships, and early offers of admission, UVic is likely to continue experiencing strong demand from domestic and graduate students in the coming years.

Enrolment trends

Our undergraduate domestic enrolment is at its highest level to date. This is a result of strategic investments in entrance scholarships, earlier admission offers and funded government expansions in engineering and health programs. It is also a result of significant efforts within the faculties and the Division of Student Affairs to encourage student applicants to register and to make high-demand courses more available by opening waitlists and offering additional sections based on student demand.

It is worth noting that funded expansions from the province have increased our enrolment levels by 993 FTE over the period of 2018/19 to 2024/25. Accompanying the funded FTE increase have been base budget investments in the faculties of Engineering and Computer Science, Health, Humanities, Science and Social Sciences to meet these higher levels of enrolment demand. Enrolment management funds are allocated annually through VPAC and the faculties. Thanks to these resourcing efforts, student-faculty ratios have remained constant over the past decade.

Graduate enrolment is also tracking well, ahead of previous years, thanks in part to our research reputation and the quality of our faculty and graduate programs.

Domestic applications remain strong for 2026/27, and we continue to prioritize investments in scholarships to attract and support a diverse and talented student population.

Population growth in BC over the past two decades has largely been driven by immigration and by inter-provincial migration. According to BC Stats, the population of BC is expected to grow by almost 800,000 people over the coming decade, but the projected population of 18–24 year olds is expected to decline by almost 50,000 individuals over that same period. While population growth informs the demand for

post-secondary education, the personal economic benefits of attending university are well known to prospective students and their families, and we expect domestic interest to remain strong. The major research universities in BC, including UVic, have been above target with respect to funded domestic enrolments for several years.

In contrast to the positive domestic outlook, the international outlook for post-secondary institutions in Canada is constrained, and institutions across the province and country have experienced—and continue to experience—a decline in international student registrants.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada continues to implement constraints on study permit applications, requirements and allocations. We are into the third year of the requirement for prospective international students to obtain a Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) before applying for a Canadian study permit. The allocation of PALs fortunately has not yet constrained our approval of study permits, but it has created application complexities for all international undergraduate students wishing to study in Canada, including those already onshore and transfer students. Graduate students were recently excluded from this process. These entry requirements are in addition to financial requirements, limits to hours worked in a week, and limits to online studying imposed earlier. We believe these changes continue to create uncertainties for students and affect application numbers.

There is also increased competition globally for students. Many of our principal source countries, including China and India, continue to increase onshore domestic opportunities for students. The United Kingdom and Australia remain top destinations for Chinese students, and Asian countries such as Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore are becoming increasingly popular. As part of our Strategic Enrolment Management Plan published in 2019, UVic is further diversifying our international undergraduate student population by country. In this increasingly competitive market, we continue to reinforce the UVic value proposition to prospective students, which includes integrating academic and research excellence with experiential learning to address global challenges.

Finally, geopolitical factors and diplomatic disputes may be impacting international interest in Canada and Canadian post-secondary education. For example, UVic, like most Canadian institutions, experienced a significant drop in applications from India—one of our longstanding top three recruitment countries—following diplomatic tensions. Application numbers have only recently begun to recover and stabilize.

These factors, and potentially more, are contributing to international enrolment shortfalls across the sector and are informing our international enrolment targets.

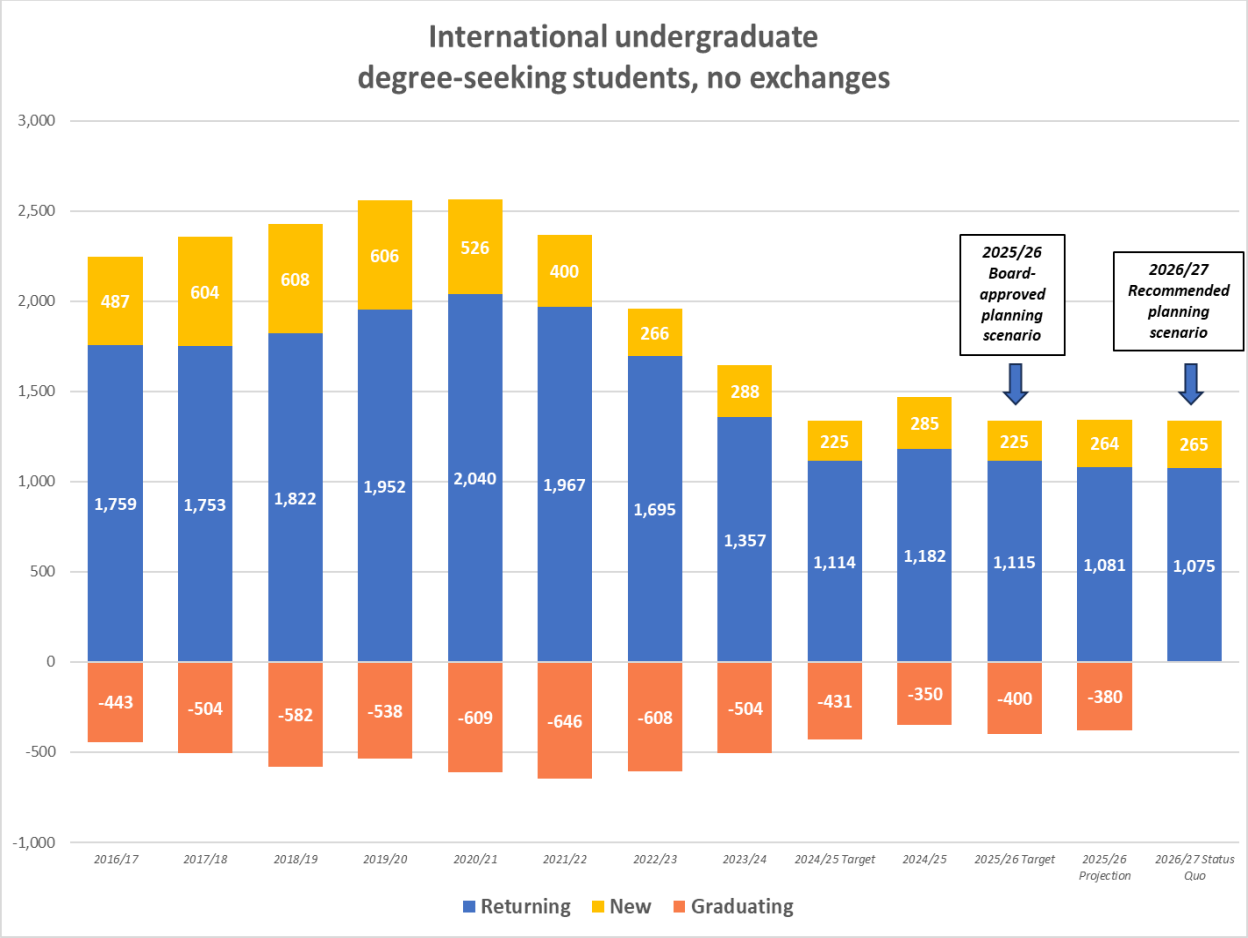

Figure 1: UVic's international undergraduate enrolment over time and planned level for 2026/27.

Recruitment efforts at UVic include scholarships for domestic and international students, diversifying both in terms of countries and the programs we are marketing, strengthening our international network of recruiters and agents, and targeted marketing campaigns. We have also clarified and sped up our admission processes, with offer letters going out four weeks earlier than in previous years. We continue to look for new pathway opportunities, including through the Division of Continuing Studies and the BC Transfer System. New degree programs, micro-credentials and professional graduate degrees are also helping to set us apart and attract learners.

Report on 2025/26 targets

Our fall interim enrolment report to PSFS shows that we will exceed our 2025/26 funded enrolment accountabilities for domestic undergraduate students (which do not include international students) and that we will exceed our graduate student target.

On a domestic undergraduate basis, UVic is at 107% of our PSFS target (15,529 FTE on a target of 14,508) and on a graduate basis, UVic is at 119.6% of PSFS target (2,916 FTE on a target of 2,438). For budget planning purposes, UVic set undergraduate and graduate enrolment targets higher than PSFS targets at 15,512 FTE and 3,027 FTE respectively. Including international undergraduate FTE, UVic's total enrolment is 99.6% of target or 19,790 FTE on a target of 19,879 FTE.

Annually, the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost works with Deans to ensure adequate resourcing for enrolment fluctuations, and internal, faculty-specific targets are reviewed and adjusted to align with student demand and approved plans.

Annualized FTE target comparison

	2024/25 actuals	2025/26 target	2025/26 forecast	Ministry funded
Domestic undergraduates	15,050	15,512	15,529	14,508
International undergraduates	1,426	1,340	1,345	0
Total undergraduates	16,476	16,852	16,874	14,508
Total graduates	3,001	3,027	2,916	2,438
Total students	**19,477**	**19,879**	**19,790**	**16,946**

Table 1: UVic's overall annualized enrolment for 2025/26 is projected to exceed our undergraduate target by 22 FTE but be short of UVic's internal graduate target by 111 FTE, while remaining well above the Ministry-funded level. Our graduate forecast and target both exceed our Ministry-funded target.

Annualized student FTEs over time

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	7-yr % chg
Undergrad domestic	14,129	14,239	14,083	14,299	14,818	15,050	15,529	9.9%
Undergrad international	2,577	2,492	2,275	1,907	1,587	1,426	1,345	-47.8%
Total undergraduates	**16,706**	**16,731**	**16,358**	**16,171**	**16,405**	**16,476**	**16,874**	**1.0%**
Total graduates	**2,688**	**2,630**	**2,791**	**2,853**	**2,974**	**3,001**	**2,916**	**8.5%**
Total students	**19,364**	**19,361**	**19,149**	**19,059**	**19,379**	**19,477**	**19,790**	**2.2%**

Table 2: UVic's overall annualized student FTEs have been stable, with a growth of 2.2% in seven years. As we are currently in 2025/26, this number is a projection and includes a best estimate of spring term 2026.

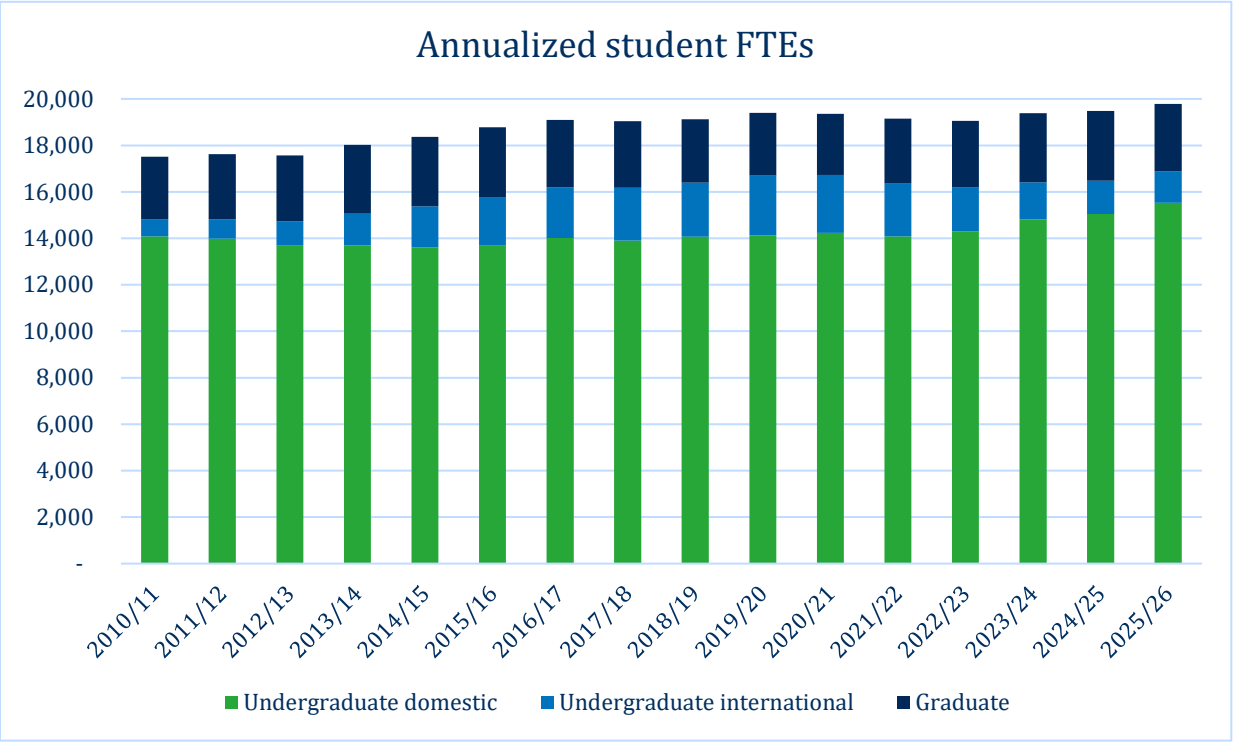

Figure 2: Overall annualized student FTEs over time. Between 2018/19 and 2025/26 UVic has been funded for an additional 998 domestic FTE. Student-faculty ratios have remained constant over this period.

Recommended enrolment levels for 2026/27

For 2025/26, UVic was funded by PSFS to enrol **16,920 FTE students**, which included the second year of the expansion of student spaces in technology-related programs and expansions in the Nurse Practitioner and Health Information Sciences programs. For 2026/27, an additional **152 FTE** including 140 FTE for technology-related programs and 12 FTE for graduate health information sciences are anticipated, bringing **PSFS's total funded enrolment target for UVic to 17,072 FTE.**

As noted earlier in this report, funded expansions result in new base budget investments directed to the faculties offering the programs and courses, to support the increased number of students enrolled.

2026/27 PSFS-funded expansions	FTE
Bachelor Software Engineering*	~~60~~
Bachelor Computer Science*	~~75~~
ENGR Additional Allocation**	80
ENGR Economic Sector Alignment**	50
Bachelor Health Information Science	10
Master Health Information Science	12
Total funded new FTEs	**152**

Table 3: PSFS provided UVic with funding for an additional 152 FTE in 2026/27 for specific academic programs aligned with government priorities and student demand. PSFS has canceled some expansions (*) and others remain tentative (**).

Because international enrolments are not included in the PSFS target, UVic's total recommended enrolment level will be higher than what is funded for by the province. Total enrolment includes international undergraduate students, domestic undergraduate students, and graduate students.

Thanks to significant recruitment initiatives outlined earlier, as well as immigration and onboarding efforts, UVic was able to achieve the planned level of 1,340 international undergraduate FTE in 2025/26 and had an actual enrolment of 1,345 FTE. Senators will recall that the recommended target, which was approved by the Board of Governors on recommendation of Senate, reflected prudent planning and the continuing challenges with international enrolment across the Canadian post-secondary sector, which are expected to persist into 2026/27. Continuing with this planning and outlook, the recommended international undergraduate target for 2026/27 is 1,340 FTE.

Given the projected intake of international undergraduates and the strong demand from domestic undergraduate students, the Board of Governors endorsed a planned domestic undergraduate enrolment level 1,312 FTE higher than our target with PSFS. Similarly, at the graduate level, UVic enrols an additional 576 FTE beyond our PSFS target, and that enrolment level is expected to persist.

The table below shows expected enrolment levels for both PSFS-funded enrolment accountabilities and UVic's internal enrolment expectations for 2026/27. The recommended enrolment level of 20,300 FTE includes additional FTE for provincially funded expansions: 140 FTE for technology-related programs and 12 FTE for graduate health information science. International undergraduate enrolments and additional graduate as well as domestic undergraduate enrolments are also factored into the recommended enrolment level.

Expected enrolment levels

PSFS-funded undergraduate FTE	14,648
PSFS-funded graduate FTE	2,424
Total PSFS-funded FTE for 2026/27	**17,072**
International enrolments*	1,340
Additional domestic undergrad enrolments*	1,312
Additional graduate enrolments*	576
Recommended enrolment level for 2026/27	**20,300**

*Table 4: Expected and recommended enrolments for UVic. *Recommended in consultation with the Board of Governors.*

Faculty plans have been developed to accommodate at least this level of enrolment and enrolment management supports are available to the faculties in consultation with VPAC. Admission standards will continue to vary by program based on demand, but will remain well above Senate-approved minimums of 67% for high school entrants and 60% for college transfers.

This recommended enrolment level informs our financial outlook and annual Planning and Budget Framework, which is approved by the Board of Governors in March. Provided these enrolment levels are approved and achieved, the university's financial modeling indicates a balanced budget for 2026/27, without the need for planned reductions.

Motion

THAT Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors that it also approve a recommended enrolment level of 20,300 FTE for the 2026/27 academic year, subject to revisions in the event of new information regarding mandated growth, funding levels and/or application rates.