



**STUDENTS' UNION
OF VANCOUVER
COMMUNITY**



COLLEGE

2023 - 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

SUWVCE

STUDENTS' UNION
OF VANCOUVER
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BCFS LOCAL 16

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Students' Union of Vancouver Community College, British Columbia Federation of Students Local 16
August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2024

Executive Summary

Campaigns

- Launched the new Rise Up campaign which advocates for reduced tuition fees, a 2% cap on International Student Tuition Fees, and increased funding to the BC Access Grants Program
- Donated \$12,000 for the purchase and installation of period product dispensers in all women's and gender-neutral washrooms on both campuses and continued to push the institution to permanently provide product for these dispensers

Government Relations

- Signed onto an open letter to Premier David Eby with 5 calls to action for the Post-Secondary system.
- Attended the annual BCFS Lobby week in Victoria
- Met with MLA's and Ministry staff throughout the year

College Relations

- Advocated to the College for a 2% cap on International Student Fees. Secured a 3% increase for the 2024-25 year.
- Presented two budget consultations to the College showing the financial needs of students and value provided by student services.
- Provide student representation on 13 College boards, committees and working groups.

Campus Life & Events

- Continued to hold the Union's staple events for members throughout the year
- Hosted the Union's first talent show
- Assisted the International Department in various cultural events

Internal Affairs and Finance

- Adopted and amended numerous policies
- Established an investment portfolio through Vancity Investment Management

Services

- Completed renovation of Broadway Office and Member Study Space
- Added Professional Development discounts for members
- Updated the free printing service to improve print automation

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Campaigns

Provincial Campaigns

Rise Up

The goals of the Rise Up campaign are to:

- Increase funding for institutions and secure a progressive funding model that provides stability and accounts for inflation
- Freeze and progressively reduce tuition and other user fees.
- Have international tuition fee increases capped at 2%
- Increase funding for the BC Access Grant
- Garner media about the cost of education and;
- Lobby government by meeting with local Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Rise Up Campaign launched in September 2023 and combines the aims of two previous campaigns: Fund it Fix It and Fairness for International students. The Rise Up Campaign was featured prominently Students' Union's Kickoff Karnival days in September 2023 and the Welcome Back days in January 2024. Members could spin a wheel for a prize if they signed up for the campaign.

Over 700 members signed up at the initial events. In February 2024 members were asked to use the Rise Up website to send an email to the BC Government in support of the goals of the campaign. Over 1500 emails were sent from students across BC and SUVCC made up a big portion of that.

Open Textbooks Now!

The goals of the Open Textbooks Now! campaign are to:

- Educate faculty and students about open educational resources (OER) and demonstrate support for adoption, and creation, of more OER and;
- Create and share content for Open Access Week and Open Education Week

During Open Access Week in March of 2024, the Students' Union shared information about the provincial Open Textbooks Now! Campaign through campus events and social media to bring awareness of Open Education Resources and how they can be used at VCC.

The Union continues to meet with the VCC Library throughout the year to find ways to collaborate and encourage more instructors to use Open Education Resources in their courses.

Local Campaigns

Period Promise

The goals of the Period Promise campaign are:

- The cost-free provision of menstrual products in all washrooms on campus paid for by the College and;
- The cost-free provision of menstrual products in all washrooms in all public buildings in the province

The Students' Union partnered with VCC to run the Menstrual Equity (ME) campaign. As a pilot project, VCC installed free Aunt Flo menstrual product dispensers in 15 gender neutral washrooms on both campuses. For the past few years the Students' Union has pushed for the program to become permanent and to expand the program to include dispensers in all washrooms on both campuses. In order to move the project forward, the Students' Union made a donation of \$12,000 to the VCC Foundation to cover the cost of purchasing and installing Aunt Flo machines in all of the women's and the remaining gender neutral washrooms. Unfortunately, there is no estimated completion date at this time due to complications VCC has encountered in negotiations with the supplier. The Students' Union hopes to see the project completed this year.

Consent Culture

During Welcome week in September 2023, the Students' Union campaigned and brought awareness to its consent campaign through tabling, posters and social media. For the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls, the Women Students' Representative Ridhi Bhatia held tabling on campus where members could talk to their representative about 16 days of activism and pledge to take a stand. Social media awareness posts were shared online through Instagram. In February

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2024, the Students' Union held events on campus in celebration of Valentine's Day and to continue to raise awareness and educate members on consent. Members were asked "what does consent mean to you" and post it on a whiteboard. At the end of February, a Pub Night with a Consent theme was held at Library Square, where members were encouraged to learn more about consent.

International Women's Day

On March 14, Women Students' Representative Bhatia created a motivational poster which had pockets filled with positive messages for members. Posters were put up at Broadway Campus and Downtown campus in celebration of International Women's Day. Tabling was also held at both campuses where members had the chance to talk about a woman in their life who inspire and motivates them. Members wrote on a card and pasted the card on a white board. Honorable women from the past and present were also printed and showcased on the table.

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Government Relations

Provincial Government Relations

2023 BCFS Lobby Week

On October 3-6 the Students' Union participated in the BCFS annual Lobby Week at the BC Legislature in Victoria. Delegates from students' unions across BC attending meetings with MLA's from the BCNDP, BC United, the BC Greens and the BC Conservatives to lobby for the following changes:

- Increased grant funding
- The creation of an apprenticeship completion strategy
- A cap on tuition fee increases for international student tuition fees
- Increased funding to the post-secondary system of \$500 Million annually

Delegates noted that there was cross party recognition that the current funding model does not work and needs to change.

Open Letter to Premier David Eby

In February 2024, in response to changes to international student policies announced by the Canadian government, the Students' Union along with 39 other Students' Unions, Community Organizations and Labour Unions signed on to an open letter to Premier Eby with 5 calls to action for post-secondary:

- Cap international student tuition fee increases at 2% annually.
- Release a plan on how international study permits will be distributed to institutions in BC.
- Complete the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review and determine gaps in government funding, in particular for regional colleges and universities.
- Develop a funding model that provides long-term financial stability for institutions, delivers quality education and services for students, and does not rely on student tuition fees as the main source of funding.
- Invest in BC's public post-secondary institutions to ensure post-secondary education is affordable and accessible and that the province is able to produce the skilled workers needed in the labour force.

The Students' Union was able to secure the support of both the Vancouver Community College Faculty Association and the Vancouver Community College support staff union (CUPE Local 4627) for this open letter.

Meetings with Government

On November 16th, 2023 members of the board met with Eric Peters, chief of staff to the Minister of Post Secondary and Future Skills and discussed issues facing students at VCC.

On March 27th, 2024 members of the board met with Ravi Parmar, Parliamentary Secretary for International Credentials, and discussed current issues facing international students at VCC as well as the state of post secondary education in BC more broadly.

On June 14th, 2024 members of the board met with Joan Phillip, the recently elected MLA for Vancouver-Strathcona. This meeting was to establish a working relationship her as the new MLA representing the Broadway Campus and to educate her on issues that members are facing at VCC.

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College Relations

College Governance

Board of Governors

At the November Meeting the Board of Governors voted to increase International Student Tuition fees by 3% for the 2024-25 Academic Year. 1% of this increase was specifically earmarked for International Student services. While the Students' Union is disappointed that the increase is still above 2%, we are pleased that additional resources have been allocated to support international students. It was noted that this decision, and the discussion surrounding it, highlights the importance of a full funding review and the need to advocate for appropriate funding from the Provincial Government.

Budget Consultations

September 2023

The Students' Union ran its first Budget Consultation with members in September 2023 in order to collect information on the financial needs of members and present this to the College to further advocate for a reduction in fees and increase in services. The Students' Union believes this consultation was partial the reason the Board of Governors only increase International Student fees by 4% in 2023-24.

May 2024

The Students' Union ran its second Budget Consultation in May of 2024. The goal of this consultation was to determine what students services members valued most in order to advocate to the College that student services should not be cut should the College experience a financial deficit in the coming years.

Education Council

The Education council is working on a process to increase indigenous representation on a permanent basis. In the interim, David Kirk, the Dean of Curriculum and Pedagogy, has been appointed as a temporary non-voting representative. The Students' Union supports efforts to increase indigenous representation but wishes to make sure that the percentage of elected student representatives on Education Council is not reduced when a permanent process is implemented.

Other College Committees and Initiatives

SUVCC also sits on the following College Committees

- Accessibility Committee
- Administration Policy Committee
- Curriculum Committee
- Education Policy Committee
- Education Quality Committee
- Environmental Sustainability Advisory Group
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee
- Equity Spaces Sub-Committee
- Gender-Based Violence Education and Prevention Committee
- Mental Health & Well-Being Steering Committee
- Operations Council

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Campus Life & Events

Events

2023 FALL EVENTS

Welcome Days – September 11th & 13th

The Students' Union held Welcome Back events at both campuses, welcoming members back to campus, giving out relevant information and SWAG to members. As this is often the first time many members are learning about their Students' Union there were information tables set up to show the many services members can access through SUVCC as well as the advocacy work being done.

Kickoff Karnival – September 11th and 13th

The Students' Union held a large semester kickoff event, with food, a photobooth, games, beverages and more. The event was designed to create a sense of community on campus as the beginning of the new semester. The Students' Union invited departments of the College to join, with the goal of providing both fun and resourcing at the event.

Halloween Movie Days - October 26th & 28th

The Students' Union held a Halloween themed movie day. Three movies were shown on each campus.

Diwali - November 14th & 15th:

The Students' Union and International Education Department celebrated Diwali at both campuses, giving out samosa, Aloo Tikki, Pakora, Gulab Jamun and pop for members, faculty and staff. The Students' Union also had information about Diwali and its significance with an action item where members would write messages of love and good wishes and a chance to win a prize pack.

Holiday poster boards - November 27th - December 4th

The Students' Union decorated the poster boards for Christmas and hung candy canes.

Stressbusters - November 27th & 28th

During exam season the Students' Union ran stress buster activities to help members. This included handing out holiday snacks, hot coca, yoga, puppy therapy with the BC Alberta guide dog puppies, and a holiday movie marathon.

Holiday Cheer - December 4th & December 7th

The Students' Union held a holiday cheer event, giving popcorn, pretzels, candy canes and more, to celebrate the holiday season.

2024 WINTER EVENTS

Info tabling and Welcome Days - January 3rd – 11th

The Students' Union introduced new and returning members to the many benefits of their membership with SUVCC. Board members provided information on services such as the Deals App, Health and Dental, the member handbook, and handed out swag.

Welcome Days - January 8th & 10th

The Students' Union and College held a joint welcome day on both campuses, giving out hotdogs and drinks to members and staff. As this is often the first time many members are learning about their Students' Union there were information table set up to show the many services members can access through SUVCC as well as the advocacy work being done.

Lunar New Year - February 12th & 13th

The Students' Union celebrated Lunar New Year on both campuses. The International Education department also took part, providing fortune cookies, and spring rolls made by the Asian culinary department. Board members handed out lucky red packets that contained lucky candy and well wishes to the membership. A few of the lucky packets contained special prizes that members could use to claim swag. Members could learn about Lunar New Year and their Zodiac sign.

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Valentines Day & Consent Event - February 14th

The Students Union ordered handmade cookies from the VCC baking department. Board members packaged cookies and candy and handed them out to the membership. Board members also talked to members about the Let's Get Consensual awareness campaign and handed out safe sex kits. During the event, members were asked to write how they practice consent.

Pub Night - February 23rd

The Students' Union hosted its first pub night event at the Library Square Pub. The event had free entry, coat check and snacks for all members who attended. Let's get consensual campaign materials were also present at the event.

: Midterm Stress Busters - March 18th – 21st

Board members gave out tea, hot cocoa, granola bars, and juice boxes, to help members during their midterms. Members could also win SWAG such as post it notes, notebooks, pens, highlighters, and shirts.

2024 SPRING EVENTS

End of Semester "Hello Spring" & Talent Show Event - April 3rd & 4th

The Student' Union celebrated the end of semester at both campuses with a spring themed, talent show event. Members could showcase any special talents they had, play games, win prizes, dance, take photos at a photo booth, and eat lots of free food!

Welcome info tabling - May 6th – 8th

The Student' Union welcomed members taking classes in the summer semester with snacks, and information about the Student' Union and the services it provides. Board members also gave out lanyards, chapstick, phone wallets, pens, highlighters, post it notes, water bottles and stress balls.

Pub Night - May 29th

The Students' Union hosted another pub night event at the Library Square Pub after the success of the first one. The event had free entry, coat check and snacks for all members who attended. Let's get consensual campaign materials were also present at the event.

Pride Party - July 30th

The Students' Union had Pride Parties at both campuses. There was an outdoor event at Broadway with games, dancing, freezies, pizza, cookie decorating and information on what Pride means. The event downtown was similar but held inside. VCC also had the convocation for graduating members at the same time, and lots of graduating members participated.

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Internal Affairs & Finances

Governance

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

BC Societies Act

The Students' Union maintains compliance with the College and Institute Act in order to ensure that its fees can be collected by Vancouver Community College. The Students' Union was in compliance with the Act through the 2023-24 year.

College & Institute Acts

The Students' Union operates under the Societies Act of British Columbia and remained in compliance with the Act through the 2023-24 year.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Union held its Annual General Meeting on December 6, 2023 at the Downtown Campus. The meeting was quorate. Members received the 2022-23 Annual Report.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS AND ORIENTATION

The annual Board of Director election ran from October 3 – 5 2023 and was held online using ElectionBuddy. 22 candidates ran for 12 of the 13 vacant positions, and 996 ballots were cast. There was 1 disqualification. No candidate ran for the Indigenous Students' Representative position.

A board orientation was held on October 20. Sessions held at the meeting taught directors about the Students' Union's structure and finances, the legal responsibilities of directors, labour relations, and the regular responsibilities of directors among other things.

POLICY AND BYLAW UPDATES

Bylaw Updates

No bylaw changes occurred during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Policy Updates

- Operations Policy 10.01: Elections amended
- Operations Policy 10.04: Privacy adopted
- Operations Policy 10.05: Respectful Workplace adopted
- Finance Policy 20.01: Finances rescinded
- Finance Policy 20.01: Budget and Operations adopted
- Finance Policy 20.02: Investment Policy Statement adopted
- Finance Policy 20.03: Board Member Compensation adopted

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Staffing

REGULAR STAFF AND STAFFING CHANGES

In January, 2023 Mandy Wan was hired to the position of Services Coordinator to cover the Leave of Absence of McKenzie Hutchison.

Financial Management

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2022-23 Audited Financial Statement

The 2022-23 audit took place in October 2024. The Audited Financial Statements will be presented to the general membership at the AGM on Wednesday, December 6th.

Investment Portfolio

During the fiscal year the Board opened an investment portfolio with Vancity Investment Management (VCIM) for the purposes of maintaining purchasing power, thus beating inflation, and growing funds for future projects. \$200,000 from the Union's General Fund, and \$300,000 from its Health & Dental Fund were invested into the portfolio with the intentions of accessing this fund in 10 or more years. Members can read Policy 20.02: Investment Policy Statement for more information on the management of this Fund.

DUES COLLECTION

The Students' Union collects its fees through automatic assessment and collection by the Vancouver Community College in accordance with the College and Institute Act. The Students' Union also uses the same mechanism to collect fees on behalf of the BC Federation of Students

Students' Union Fees

The Students' Union fees were increased by the rate of inflation to \$55.58 as per the Union's Bylaws. The Students Union currently collects two fees from members;
Membership Fee: \$55.58 per semester (adjusted annually for inflation)
Accessibility Fee: \$2 per semester

BC Federation of Students' Fees

The Students' Union collects fees on behalf of the BC Federation of Students (BCFS) consistent with VCC students' membership in the Federation. In 2022-23, the fees for the BCFS were increased by the rate of inflation per the organization's bylaws. The BCFS fee is currently \$10.59.

Membership Communications

Newsletters/Print Media

Newsletters were sent out to the membership for the purpose of sharing information, giving notice for elections and meetings, promoting events and services, and raising awareness of ongoing advocacy work. 7 newsletters were sent throughout the reporting period with an open rate between 75 - 89%.

Social Media

The Students' Unions Facebook and Instagram accounts are some of its primary modes of communication with members. Along with posting services, events, and campaigns, the Student's Union also shares content from the BCFS, the VCC community and other important things on our story consistently. The Students' Union Instagram followers have increased from 2,450 to 3,773 and on average posts reach around 1,840 members.

BC Federation of Students'

GENERAL MEETINGS

42st Annual General Meeting (January 18-21)

The Students' Union sent 11 delegates; Directors Singh, H.Kaur, M.Kaur, Ligeralde, Leonardo, Gupta, Ng, Bhatia, and Staff Joyce, Gaidu, Nielsen to the General Meeting.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Between the start of the fiscal year and October 2023 the SUVCC representative on the Executive Committee was Airan Sahagun, Chairperson. Between November 2023 and the end of the fiscal year the SUVCC representative on the Executive Committee was Harleen Kaur, Director of Events.

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Services

Health And Dental Plan

Provider

The Students' Union's Health & Dental plan is provided by Greenshield Canada. The Union has worked with Greenshield for many years and continues to be pleased with the low cost of the plan as well as the speed in which they process claims.

This year, the Students' Union increased the Health and Dental fee from \$275 to \$285. This increase was needed due to the increased cost of managing the plan which in turn was due to inflation as well as increased usage of the plan. The Plan had been kept at \$275 for many years and the Union hopes it can maintain the fee of \$285 for the next few years.

Broker and Third Party Administrator

The Students' Union uses Prosum Health Benefits as its broker, allowing it to add beneficial services to the H&D plan with minimal additional costs.

AGA Benefits is the Union's Third Party Administrator (TPA). As the TPA, AGA Benefits ensures that students and their dependents are enrolled onto the H&D plan as efficiently as possible every month.

Member Handbook and Dayplanner

The Students' Union produces its annual handbook through a service of the BC Federation of Students. The BC Federation of Students continually keeps the price stable and as affordable as possible, with handbooks arriving early in August every year in time for orientation and welcome back events.

2023-24 HANDBOOK

The Students' Union ordered 4000 member handbooks which arrived on time for the Fall. The handbook continues to be one of the most popular and tangible services for members. \$995 in ad revenue was generated from the Unions contract with CU Advertising, which assists in offsetting the cost of the handbooks. The Students' Union has signed another contract with CU Advertising for the 2024-25 Handbook and will be working to increase advertising revenue. Offsetting the increasing cost of handbooks through advertising is a priority.

Student Discount App

The Students' Union provides members discounts in coordination with the BCFS and other member local unions around the province through the Deals App. The Deals App is a free app for members which gives them access to discounts at businesses, restaurants, and services across BC.

Discount Solicitation

Board Members worked hard to secure new discounts and renewals this past year. Most discount solicitation is done in the summer however board members do try to get discounts throughout the year.

New discounts added this year:

- Kita No Donburi - 10% discount
- Aloha Hawaii Grill – 10% discount
- Il Mondo Cafe – 15% discount
- Vancouver Whitecaps (Summer Rewind Discount) - 23% discount

Promotion

The Students' Union primarily promoted the Deals App online through social media and in person at welcome events.

Membership Development and Member Supplies

Broadway Office Renovation

The Students' Union completed the Broadway Campus Office renovation. The new office includes increased member study space, couches with moveable desks, charging stations, a coffee station and more. The space is fully accessible, with each area of

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the room being wheelchair accessible, as well as all doors being equipped with automatic opening functions. Renovations were completed on schedule.

Professional Development

The Students' Union has worked hard to implement discounts for members across various professional development courses. The Union recognizes that many programs at VCC require specific course qualifications prior to their studies. As such, the Union has established the following discounts:

1. Link2Life: Discounted First Aid and CPR classes - members get \$10 off when they use coupon code SUVCC2024 at checkout
2. ASIST & SafeTalk: Discounted suicide prevention workshops - members get \$10 off (inquire in office for details)

Fall 2023 Materials

The Students' Union ordered over \$27,000 worth of swag items from the BC Federation of Students' ethical bulk purchasing service. This order included; umbrellas, toques, smart phone wallet, lanyards, sweatshirts, stickers, highlighters, sticky notes, pens, water bottles, and pencils. Swag items are given out throughout the year at events and in the offices.

Winter 2024 Materials

A small order of \$4,750 was placed to top up supplies for the rest of the 2023-2024 semester. This included pens, highlighters, and water bottles.

UPASS

About the Program

U-Pass BC is a universal transit program offered by Vancouver Community College in partnership with the Students' Union of VCC, TransLink and the Province of British Columbia. U-Pass BC provides affordable access to public transit in Metro Vancouver for eligible members. Almost every post-secondary institution in the Lower Mainland participates in this service.

In the Summer of 2024 the UPASS Advisory Committee (UAC) was able to secure another 5 year agreement between Translink, the Provincial Government, and the (UAC) which caps the UPASS monthly fee increases at 2% per year until August 31, 2030.

Students' Union Offices

Tax Clinic

The Students' Union runs a tax clinic every year to provide members with free assistance in filing their personal taxes. Last year the clinic helped over 115 members.

Printing Services

The Students' Union made changes to the free printing service, moving to an automated system that uses free print credits, as opposed to free pages. As of May, members are given \$7.50 in free print credits to use at both the Broadway or Downtown offices. Black and white prints are \$0.05 per page and coloured prints are \$0.12. Members are now required to make an account for themselves when printing for the first time under this system. This update allows for a more efficient printing process for both members and staff. Members can purchase additional credits if they run out of free credits. Free credits are autoloaded onto the members printing account every semester, with all credits they have purchased also being carried into following semesters.

Student Lockers

Lockers are available for rent at \$10 a semester on the second and third floors of Building A on the Broadway Campus.

Students' Advocate

The Students' Union offers a Students' Advocate to assist members when navigating system of the College. The Students' Advocate can assist in grade appeals, conduct appeals, or mediate issues between the College, faculty, staff, and members. This service is free and confidential for members to use.

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Yoga

The Students' Union provides free Yoga 1-2 times a month during the Fall and Winter semesters at both campuses.

Legal Assistance Services

Members who are part of the Health and Dental plan can access experienced lawyers to guide them through most major types of law, including:

- Family
- Criminal
- Civil litigation
- Landlord and tenant
- Residential real estate
- Wills and Estates
- Tax, Employment
- Condo/Strata
- Immigration
- Identity Theft Support.

Members also have access to unlimited free summary telephone legal advice and unlimited referrals to local lawyers at preferred rates.

Members who are not part of the Health and Dental plan and who live in Greater Vancouver are eligible for 30 minutes of free legal advice by a lawyer.

Protein Project

The Students' Union used the remaining canned salmon and peanut butter, handing them out to members who are facing food insecurity throughout the year. The program has shifted to a bagged model of the program, where members receive a package including both salmon and peanut butter. The program has seen moderate success. The Union continues to explore ways to help members facing food insecurity.

Reusable Menstrual Products

This year the Students' Union began selling menstrual cups, pads, and underwear to members. These products are being sold at the same cost the Union purchases them for to minimize the cost to members. The service has been well received.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF –February 2023 – September 2023

a. Board of Directors

Accessibility Director

Broadway Campus Representative

Broadway Campus Representative

Chairperson

Director of College Affairs

Director of Events

Director of Internal Affairs

Downtown Campus Representative

Downtown Campus Representative

Indigenous Students' Representative

Queer Students' Representative

Women Students' Representative

Marcus Ng

Vacant

Matricia Kennedy

Airan Sahagun

Gabriel Sarnoh

Naz Serter

Dilara Örs

Ravneek Singh

Kritika

Santana Desjarlaid Guimond

Jessica Ligaralde

Ravneet Kaur

b. Local Staff

Bookkeeper

Executive Director

Organiser- Advocacy and Governance

Organiser-Campaigns & Communications

Organiser-Campus Life

Services Coordinator

Helen Huie

Brynn Joyce

Stefan Nielsen

Gurpinder Gaidu

Andy Oya

McKenzie Hutchison

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO INSTITUTION GOVERNANCE BODIES

a. Board of Governors

November 2022 to October 2023

February 2023 to October 2023

Justine Gonzales (Downtown)

Yanni Wong (Broadway)

b. Education Council

November 2022 to October 2023

November 2022 to October 2023

November 2022 to October 2023

February 2023 to October 2023

Gabriel Sarnoh

Marcus Ng

Sonal Singh

Cheung Ying Kam

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF – October 2023 – September 2024

a. Board of Directors

Accessibility Director	Manjot Kaur
Broadway Campus Representative	Harneem Gidda
Broadway Campus Representative	Sukhmanjeet Singh
Chairperson	Ravneek Singh
Director of College Affairs	Marcus Ng
Director of Events	Harleen Kaur
Director of Internal Affairs	Mahakdeep Singh
Downtown Campus Representative	Aditya Gupta
Downtown Campus Representative	Francesca Leonardo
Indigenous Students' Representative	Vacant
Queer Students' Representative	Jessica Ligeralde
Women Students' Representative	Ridhi Bhatia

b. Local Staff

Bookkeeper	Helen Huie
Executive Director	Brynn Joyce
Organiser- Advocacy & Governance	Stefan Nielsen
Organiser-Campaigns & Communications	Gurpinder Gaidu
Organiser-Campus Life	Andy Oya
Services Coordinator	Mandy Wan
Services Coordinator (On Leave)	McKenzie Hutchison

2. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO INSTITUTION GOVERNANCE BODIES

a. Board of Governors

November 2023 to October 2024	Daniela-Mercedes Ocana-Macias
November 2023 to October 2024	Ridhi Bhatia

b. Education Council

November 2023 to October 2024	Simranjot Kaur
November 2023 to October 2024	Jessica Ligeralde
November 2023 to October 2024	Marcus Ng
November 2023 to October 2024	Dana Valeria Rodriguez Arellano

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Appendix A



DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

Room 358 (Above the Library)
250 W Pender St
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S9

BROADWAY CAMPUS

Room 2662 (Building A)
1155 E Broadway,
Vancouver, BC V5T 4V5

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

SUVCC Joins Students' Unions and Coalition Partners Across BC to Call on Premier Eby to Deliver for Students and Address Critical Systemic Issues Facing the Post-Secondary Sector

VANCOUVER BC — In a united effort to address the critical challenges facing the post-secondary education sector in British Columbia, students' unions and coalition partners representing diverse sectors have penned an open letter to Premier Eby, urging immediate action to prevent the collapse of the province's post-secondary institutions.

The open letter, titled "[*We Can Do Better for Students: Our Vision for a Post-Secondary Education System that Delivers for Students and Communities in BC.*](#)" underscores the urgent need for government intervention to rectify systemic issues that plague the sector, the effects of which are likely to be exacerbated following the Federal government's two-year cap on international study permits.

"We're at a point where a band-aid approach is no longer enough. This is a golden opportunity for the provincial government to work together with stakeholders and institutions to provide real, long-term solutions," said Ravneek Singh, Chairperson of SUVCC. "We need to act now and choose a path forward that prioritizes the needs of students and the ability for institutions to provide quality education and services.

For many years, student advocates have warned about the precarity created by the overreliance on international student tuition fees as a revenue source for BC's institutions and called for the government to commit annual funding to the sector to relieve the reliance on tuition fees and return the government as the main source of operational funding.

The open letter also outlines the concerns of students, which include the fear that international student tuition fees and ancillary fees will continue to rise and vital services students rely on will be cut as a result of the additional pressures the loss in revenue will place on the already cash-strapped public post-secondary sector.

"Vancouver Community College has become alarmingly dependent on International Tuition. We have seen it rise from 10% of total revenue in 2018 to 38% of total revenue in 2023. This is an enormous change in a few short years," said Singh. "Our post-secondary system needs to serve the needs of our communities, and be a tool to create a flexible, adaptable workforce. Our five calls to action are crucial to making this a reality.

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REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Students' Union of Vancouver Community College, British Columbia Federation of Students Local 16
August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2024

Appendix B



DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

Room 15B (Above the Library)
250 W Pender St.
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S8

BROADWAY CAMPUS

Room 2003 (Building A)
1155 E Broadway,
Vancouver, BC V5T 4V5

September 20, 2023

To the VCC Senior Team and Finance And Audit Committee,

The Students' Union of Vancouver Community College is pleased to present this submission on behalf of the students at Vancouver Community College. This will be our first submission as part of the budget consultation process and our hope is that this will mark the beginning of a new era of student participation in the development of VCC's annual budget.

The transition back to in person learning and on campus events in the 2022/23 school year was wonderful for student wellbeing and the sense of community, but it has not been without its difficulties. It is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis has left students feeling vulnerable, both mentally and financially, and there is a need to invest in strengthening VCC's services to support them.

The issues and recommendations included in this submission are reflective of the concerns raised by students gathered from numerous engagements over the past year. Thank you for your consideration of the ideas and comments in this written submission.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the Students Union of Vancouver Community College

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Students' Union of Vancouver Community College, British Columbia Federation of Students Local 16
August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2024



DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

Room 358 (Above the Library)
250 W Pender St
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S9

BROADWAY CAMPUS

Room 2063 (Building A)
1155 E Broadway,
Vancouver, BC V5T 4V5

Input Gathered by the Students' Union of Vancouver Community College

In late August of 2023 SUVCC launched an online survey of our members. It asked a variety of questions that sought to not only solicit input on VCC's services but also to give a more complete picture of our members financial situation and their lives outside of school.

It should come as no surprise that the biggest theme among the survey respondents was affordability. Besides tuition, many of our members reported high living costs and over half reported that they had faced unexpected costs in the last six months that they had difficulty paying for. Our members are stretched thin financially and we are concerned that they will not be able to bear much more.

It is with that theme in mind that SUVCC presents the following recommendations:

1. Cap and Regulate International Tuition Fees

Many of our International Student members report being faced with unexpected tuition increases, and the hardship this causes. Not being able to make informed decisions about costs prior to coming to Canada presents enormous problems, especially when coupled with the already high cost of living.

SUVCC recommends that the next budget incorporate a 2% cap on international tuition increases in order that international students experience the same long term predictability that domestic students enjoy.

2. Increase support to encourage the development and adoption of Open Education Resources.

The cost of textbooks is another frequent complaint among our members. When many high quality Open Education Resources are readily available this expense is a financial burden that is completely unnecessary. VCC had a very high rate of adoption of OERs in previous years, but this rate has largely stalled as the OER grant funding has largely been exhausted.

SUVCC recommends that resources be allocated to encourage the development and adoption of Open Education Resources at VCC.

3. Expansion of Menstrual Product Availability

The menstrual equity pilot project has been a great success and our members appreciate the convenience of having menstrual products available in some washrooms. However, they reported frustration at not having menstrual products readily available in all washrooms where they can easily access them wherever they happen to be on campus.

SUVCC recommends that resources be allocated to complete the menstrual equity pilot project and install dispensers in every washroom on both campuses.

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DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

Room 358 (Above the Library)
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Vancouver, BC V6B 1S8

BROADWAY CAMPUS

Room 2688 (Building A)
1155 E Broadway,
Vancouver, BC V5T 4V5

4. Food Service.

When we surveyed our members, over 80% of them reported that they brought food from home rather than purchase food on campus. When they were asked to give reasons why, the overwhelming majority cited cost, lack of options, or food services being unavailable when they are on campus.

SUVCC recommends that resources be allocated to allow for both longer hours and more affordable food options at both cafeterias.

5. Increased Advising Resources and Support for Newcomers

With the increase in international students there comes an increased need for support. Without the social and family networks that they enjoy at home, VCC has become the primary resource international students turn to when they need support and guidance.

SUVCC recommends that additional resources be allocated to increase the supports available for international students.

6. Emergency Food Supports

It is abundantly clear that food insecurity is a growing problem among students. Based on our survey responses, upwards of 13% of our members told us that they have accessed a community food bank in the past 6 months. We believe, however, that the true number is much higher given the large number of additional comments asking for food supports we received in the survey.

SUVCC recommends that additional resources be allocated to supporting, coordinating and expanding the emergency food programs at VCC.

Conclusion

SUVCC thanks the VCC Finance and Audit Committee and Senior Team for their time and consideration of our recommendations.

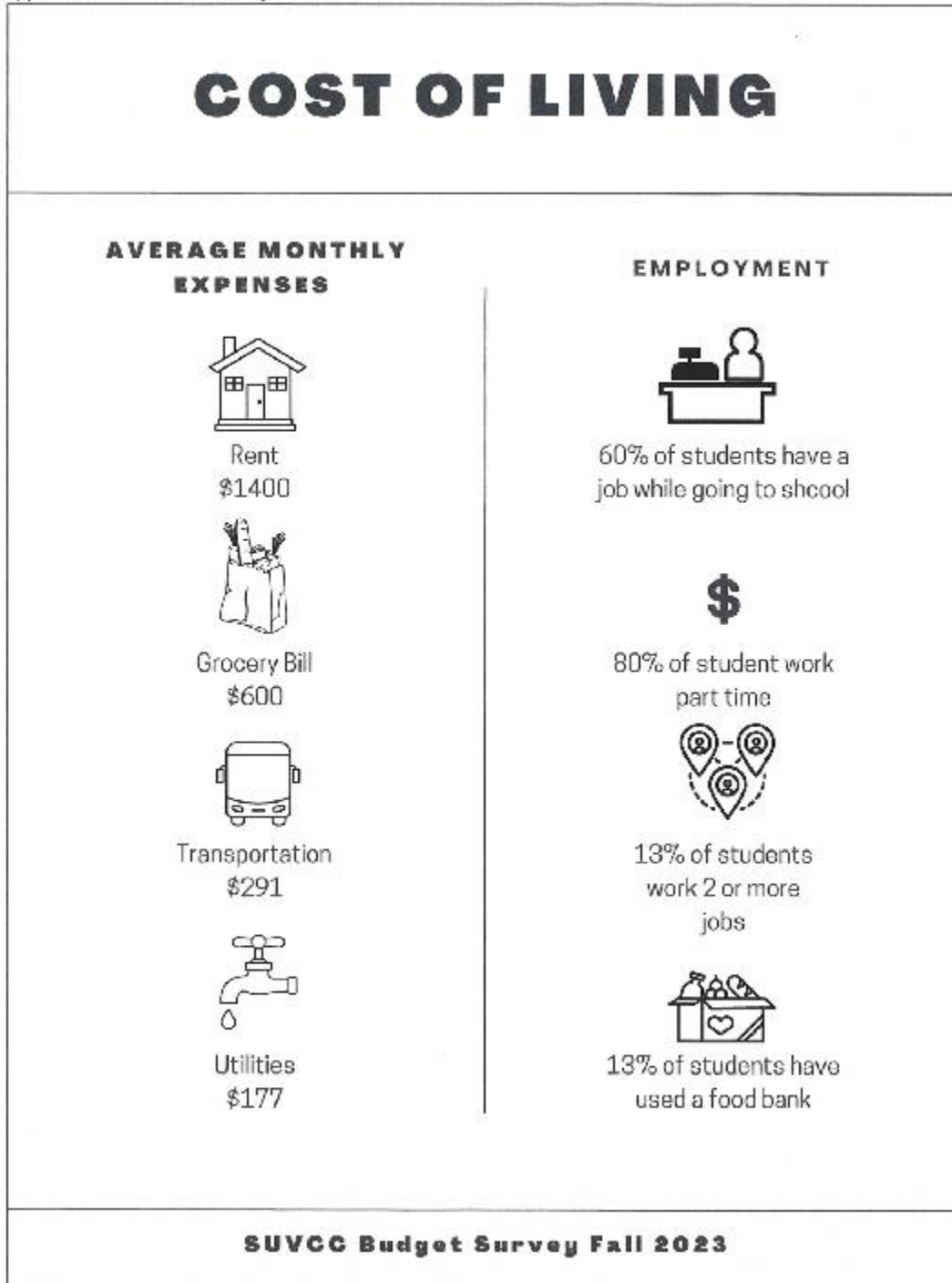
It is unfortunate that many of our recommendations relate to issues that are outside of VCC's immediate control. We understand the difficult environment in which VCC operates and our primary focus remains on pushing the government to provide resources to fix the issues that they have created. However, in the absence of adequate government support for students, institutions must do as much as possible to ensure that students continue to be supported.

We look forward to working with you over the coming year to implement improvements that will have a positive impact on the lives of all VCC students.

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Appendix 1: Selected Survey Data



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Appendix 1: Selected Survey Data

COST OF LIVING

PAYING FOR EDUCATION*



47% pay with personal savings



42% receive financial support from family



38% pay with employment income



16% took out a student loan
7% took out a personal loan

OTHER EXPENSES



35% of students financially support family members



52% of student had an unexpected expense in the last 6 months that was difficult to pay

*Some student selected multiple options

SUVCC Budget Survey Fall 2023

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August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2024

Appendix C



DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

Room 358 (Above the Library)
250 W Pender St
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S9

BROADWAY CAMPUS

Room 2662 (Building A)
1155 E Broadway,
Vancouver, BC V5T 4V5

August 20, 2024

To the VCC Senior Team and Finance And Audit Committee,

The Students' Union of Vancouver Community College is pleased to present this submission on behalf of the students at Vancouver Community College. While much has changed in the world of public post-secondary education since our last submission, a lot has remained the same.

It is very evident that the cost of living crisis has continued through the 2023/24 academic year. Our members continue to struggle with food and housing affordability as well as the costs of education. This vulnerability means that they have come to rely even more on the services that VCC provides to help them succeed.

The changes to International Student admission announced in January 2024 have introduced an even greater level of uncertainty into the Post Secondary sector compared to last year. We hope we can work together to prevent this uncertainty from affecting student facing services.

The issues and recommendations included in this submission are reflective of the concerns raised by students gathered from numerous engagements over the past year. Thank you for your consideration of the ideas and comments in this written submission.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the Students Union of Vancouver Community College

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Progress Since Last Year

We are pleased to see that there has been progress on many of the recommendations we made for the last budget. In particular, we would like to highlight the joint initiatives with the VCC Foundation to address food insecurity, the commitment to expand the availability of free menstrual products, and the allocation of 1% of the international tuition increase to support international student services.

Input Gathered by the Students' Union of Vancouver Community College

In late March of 2024 SUVCC ran our annual online survey of our members. It asked a variety of questions that sought to provide a picture of members' use of VCC's services and to give a more complete picture of our members' financial situation and their lives outside of school.

The online survey found that beyond the library, bookstore and international office, the three most heavily used services were the Learning Centre, Advising, and Counselling services. These results reflect what we have been hearing anecdotally from other parts of the VCC Community who work in those areas.

Appendix A which shows survey respondents' use of, and satisfaction with, VCC's services. Note that with services such as Counselling and Disability services, the number of students who use the service is much less important than the quality of the service provided to those students accessing it. Many students never need to access these services, however those who do often heavily rely on them to support their education at VCC.

Based on these survey results and the countless informal discussions that members have had in our offices and at our events over the past year, we present the following recommendations:

1. Continue to Protect and Invest in Student Services

We have noted very high demand for student services at VCC in recent years. This demand is especially high for those students, both International and Domestic, who don't have a local network of support.

Budget cuts brought about by a drop in the number of international students have the potential to undermine the services that VCC students count on.

These services provide invaluable support to our members in their school, career and personal lives. Given the external pressures students are facing, and will continue to face we anticipate this need will

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continue to grow. Continued investment will be needed to ensure that these services are able to meet students' needs.

2. Cap and Regulate International Tuition Fees

We appreciate VCC's efforts in recent years to limit increases to international tuition fees, and we hope that this will continue. We continue to recommend that VCC go further and cap and regulate international tuition increases at the same level as domestic tuition.

We are very much aware of the uncertain financial situation that the post-secondary sector now faces. The fallout from the January 2024 announcement of changes to International Student visas by Immigration Minister Marc Miller continues to be felt and no one knows what the long term implications will be. We are concerned that institutions will be pushed to exploit dwindling numbers of international students even further to make up potential shortfalls, which will only increase barriers to access.

3. Increase Support to Encourage Further Adoption of Open Education Resources

The cost of textbooks is another frequent complaint among our members. When many high quality Open Education Resources are readily available this expense is an unnecessary financial burden. VCC had a very high rate of adoption of OERs in previous years, but this rate has stalled as the OER grant funding has largely been exhausted.

With declining domestic enrollment and a potential drop in international enrollment measures that reduce barriers to access will be critical to reversing this trend. OERs are an excellent way to make courses at VCC more accessible for potential students.

4. Provide Support for Additional Student Spaces

We understand that efforts are under way by some departments to facilitate re-purposing of existing spaces to better meet student demand and we recommend that VCC support these efforts.

When asked "What on campus amenities or services would you like to see introduced at VCC?" a substantial portion of the answers were variations of Student social or study spaces, particularly on the Downtown campus. SUVCC's newly renovated Broadway office reflects this need, but that is simply not possible Downtown.

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Conclusion

SUVCC thanks the VCC Finance and Audit Committee and Senior Team for their time and consideration of our recommendations.

We understand the difficult environment in which VCC operates and our primary focus continues to be pushing the government to provide resources to fix the issues that they have created. If the worst-case scenario does indeed come to pass with international enrollment, institutions must still do everything within their power to ensure that students continue to be supported.

We look forward to working with you over the coming year to implement improvements that will have a positive impact on the lives of all VCC students.

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Appendix A: Use of VCC Services

Library

84% of respondents used the service

56% of students who used the service were somewhat or strongly satisfied

Bookstore

66% of respondents used the service

35% of students who used the service were somewhat or strongly satisfied

Learning Centre

50% of respondents used the service

38% of students who used the service were somewhat or strongly satisfied

International

44% of respondents used the service

36% of students who used the service were somewhat or strongly satisfied

Advising

35% of respondents used the service

33% of students who used the service were somewhat or strongly satisfied

Counselling

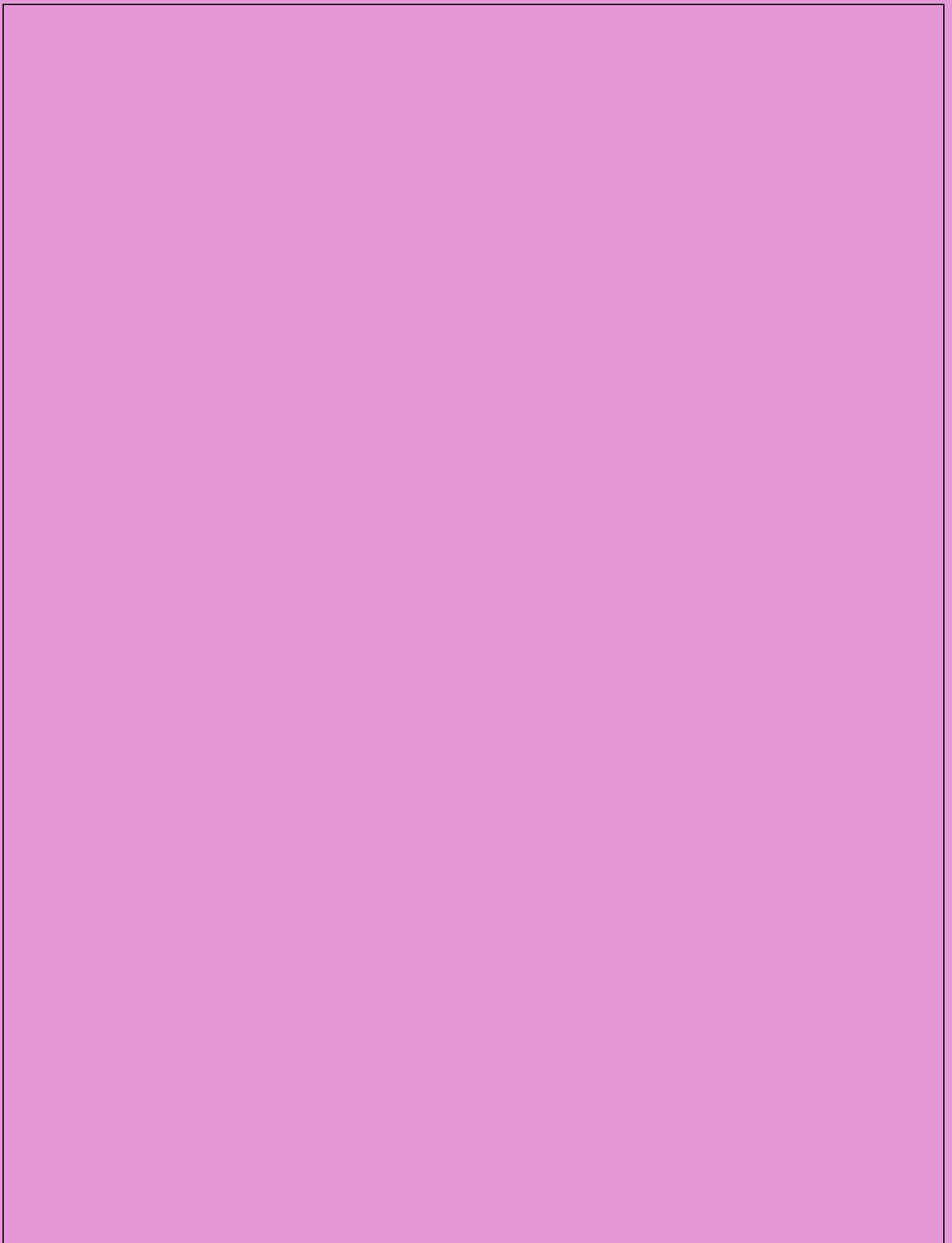
30% of respondents used the service

33% of students who used the service were somewhat or strongly satisfied

Disability Services

21% of respondents used the service

27% of students who used the service were somewhat or strongly satisfied





STUDENTS' UNION
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