

**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry: Advanced Education

Date: June 8, 2017

Minister Responsible: Minister of Advanced Education

Student Housing

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Government continues to explore options to increase the supply of housing for public post-secondary students.
- This includes looking at different financing vehicles to encourage and allow public post-secondary institutions to be part of the market housing phenomenon without the debt being placed on the provincial government books.
- There are 16 public post-secondary institutions in B.C. with student residences, which include approximately 20,000 student beds with more under development.
- Public post-secondary institutions also offer services that connect students with available off-campus accommodations.
- Some universities – UBC, UVic, TRU and VIU – guarantee all eligible first-year students an on-campus residence space.

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT HOUSING INITIATIVES:

- Work camp style housing at Northwest Community College in Terrace is helping to meet demand for student residences, while providing a unique learning opportunity. The innovative housing solution offers accommodation to 49 students and became available in fall 2015 with \$375,000 from the Province.
- The University of Victoria announced a proposal in June 2017 to redevelop property in downtown Victoria to be used in part for student housing.
- Capilano University is creating affordable student housing in North Vancouver by refurbishing dormitories and a dining hall on the site of the former Bodwell High School.
- UBC is enhancing the campus life experience by expanding the number of on-campus student housing: Brock Commons at UBC is the newest residence building at UBC and will be home to over 400 students in the new school year.

UVIC MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:

- A potentially promising option involves adapting the BC Housing non-profit housing model for the public post-secondary sector to create student housing.

- **In November 2016, BC Housing and the University of Victoria signed a Memorandum of Understanding to explore the viability of a new student residence development model.**
- **An information session took place on Jan. 24, 2017 for all public post-secondary institutions to provide information about the BC Housing model and its potential applicability.**

BACKGROUND REGARDING THE ISSUE:

Rental markets in the Greater Vancouver and Victoria areas are very tight and are driving rents higher and increasing demand for on-campus student housing.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BC Housing and UVic will look at how the non-profit model can be developed to meet the student housing needs at UVic. The MOU took effect on Nov. 15, 2016 and expires on Dec. 31, 2019.

A half-day information session on Jan. 24, 2017 was hosted by BC Housing, AVED and the Office of Housing and Construction Standards at the BCIT Downtown Campus in Vancouver. Public post-secondary institutions were invited to send a representative to the session. The Ministry committed to hosting another information session later in the year to keep all of the institutions informed on progress.

UBC, UVic, TRU and VIU guarantee eligible first year students on-campus housing. Most public post-secondary institutions offer information to students on how to look for rental accommodations in their region and offer services that link students to potential accommodation options

The Ministry of Advanced Education does not typically fund student residences. Managing campus housing is the responsibility of individual institutions. Institutions self-fund student housing capital projects and operate the resulting facilities on a cost-recovery basis.

On Sept. 5, 2016, the Alliance of BC Students launched a campaign calling for a provincial government investment of \$18 million per year over 10 years to accelerate the construction of on-campus housing.

StudentAid BC funding includes a moderate standard of living allowance for: shelter, food, transportation and miscellaneous costs. The living allowance for B.C. students is higher than in all other provinces with the exception of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut in recognition of the higher-shelter costs in the province.

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