

Dear SFUFA Members:

The following bulletin contains information on:

- Budget motion and response
- Member motions on Israel/ Palestine and arms divestment
- Security breach of SFU websurvey
- SFUFA Equity Committee survey
- Reminder – alternate contacts

Budget Motion and Response

At the SFUFA general meeting on May 8, SFUFA members passed, with 96% 'yes' votes, a motion to ask for accountability and transparency in SFU budgeting. The motion included two tables, showing that SFU's main two sources of revenue - tuition and provincial government grants - have been stable and, in fact, increasing. The SFUFA executive brought the motion to a consultation and asked the Administration to respond to the request. Rather than addressing the substance, however, SFU simply said that our numbers are wrong, despite the fact that they came directly from SFU's [Annual Financial Reports](#). The Executive asked for the correct numbers, but has not been provide any. What is more, when asked if SFU's budgetary leaders would meet with those of us who did this analysis so as to come to a shared understanding of the budget, the Administration refused.

The Provost, Dilson Rassier, did respond to the Association more generally saying the following:

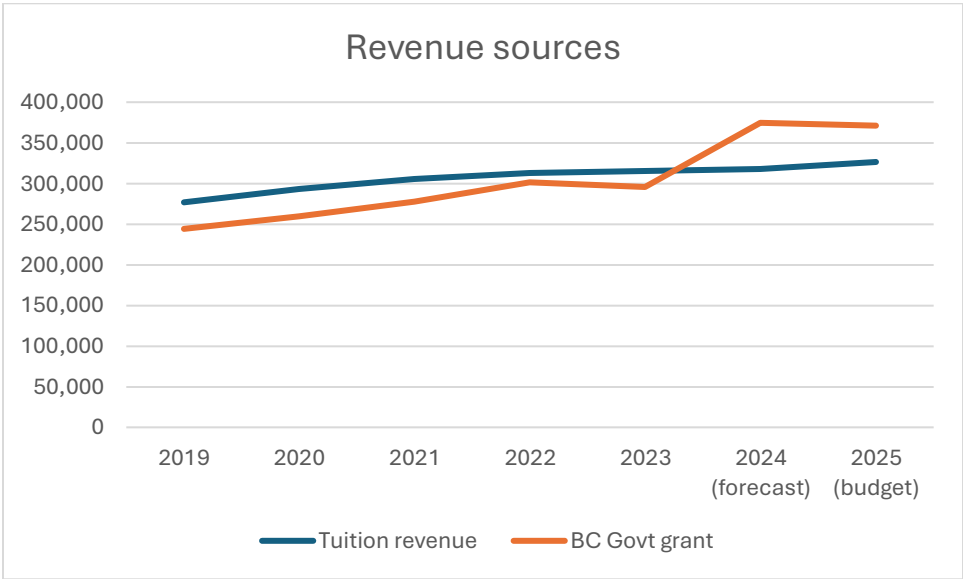
Major pressures contributing to the deficit at SFU included declining international student enrolment, increases in pension costs and one-time divestment from fossil fuels. Other contributing factors include a high inflationary environment, rising interest rates, aging infrastructure and lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, we have experienced an increase in hybrid work and digital demands, requiring us to invest in IT services and infrastructure to ensure security and reliability for students, faculty and staff. We have also invested in enhanced data governance and security, including for research data. Due to these and many other factors, costs have increased faster than revenues and funding, as communicated to faculty and staff via regular email and town hall updates over the past year.

Dr. Rassier further notes that the budgeting process has been altered to ensure a greater role for the Provost's office and greater attention to prioritizing the academic mission. He indicates, too, that SFU will have a balanced budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

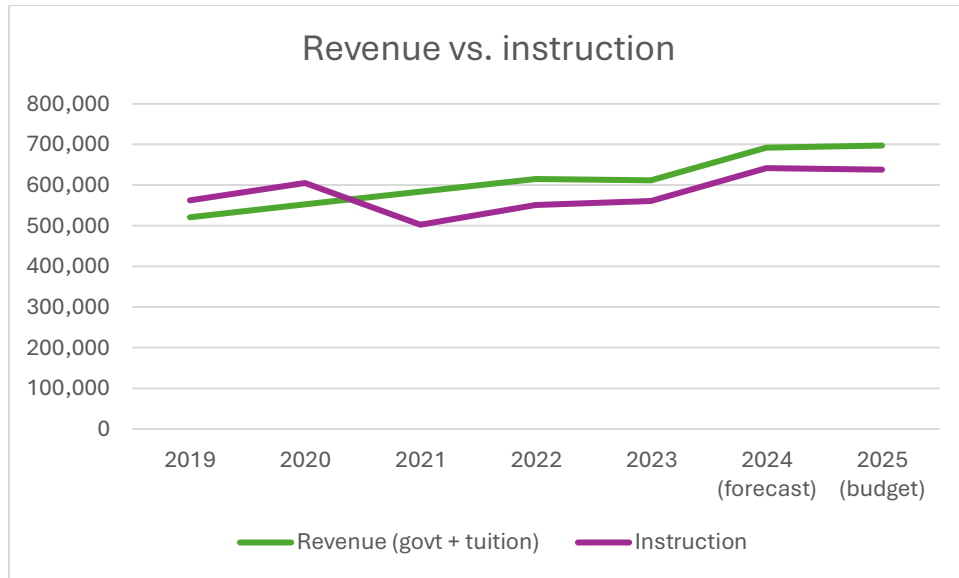
While we appreciate the response that was received, neither we nor the members who brought forward the motion have been provided any alternate numbers nor an opportunity to hear why the Administration believes the member analysis is inaccurate.

We provide here the analysis that was conducted and that we continue to believe is an accurate depiction of the budget story. We are open to being corrected, but so long as SFU does not provide alternate numbers or meet with the members to discuss, we must continue to rely on these – published by the University in its financial reports.

SFU's reports show that over 6 years from 2019 to 2024, tuition revenue has increased by \$39.7 million and provincial government grants by \$130.4 million. Combined, that revenue has increased 34% during a period when the government limited salary increases, SFU's largest expense, to about 19.5%.



Comparing our main sources of revenue (tuition and BC government grant) to the cost of instruction, it is clear that our revenue has been consistently above the cost of instruction.



During the same 6 year period, SFU reported an operating surplus 5 years in a row, ranging from \$22 million to \$49 million annually and accumulating to \$181 million. In addition, \$148 million was contributed to the endowment for a total of \$329 million in surpluses. The only reported deficit is \$4.9 million in 2024. That deficit is less than 3% of the operating surplus accumulated over the previous 5 years, and far less than the \$34.9 million surplus put into the endowment in 2024. Our conclusion is that the current budget problems are not due to a lack of revenue, but to excessive spending. We are asking for accountability and reform to prevent excessive spending in the future.

But, first, we need to agree on what the current financial situation is. If we cannot agree on what the financial situation is, and if we cannot trust the numbers published by Finance, then we cannot act together to address the underlying issues as a university community. If we cannot talk, there can be no space for learning from past mistakes and no opportunity to make things better for the future. Transparency and dialogue are critical foundations for any public institution, and all the more so for a university whose entire reason of being is the pursuit of public knowledge in the common interest.

Member Motions re: Israel/ Palestine and Arms Divestment

As previously announced, 2 member motions – relating to Israel-Palestine and arms divestment – were put to electronic ballot. Both motions passed.

The motions do not call on SFUFA or SFUFA members to take any particular action, but do call on SFU to act. The Association has communicated the motions and their results to the University Administration, but has not yet had any response.

Security Breach of SFU Websurvey

As previously reported, SFUFA's first vote on the member motions noted above had to be nullified after it was discovered that the integrity of the voting system – SFU's websurvey tool – had been compromised; specifically 305 identical votes had been cast in a period of approximately 30 minutes on the final day of voting.

As websurvey is an SFU system, an investigation was undertaken by IT, and determined that the votes in question were cast from a single IP address external to SFU but linked to a specific SFU email account. This is all the information that has been provided to the Association.

We understand that SFU's internal IT investigation is now complete, and a report has been submitted to the responsible University authorities. It is unclear as to whether there is a further police investigation, as that is not uncommon in cases of internet fraud, but this? would not be shared with us.

The information we will receive, and information we would in any event be able to share, is quite constrained given the high levels of confidentiality involved in such investigations.

Further, should it be determined that an SFU faculty member or staff person was involved in any way, that would become an employment matter governed by a number of privacy protocols, and SFUFA would need to be available to represent any impacted faculty member to ensure the fairness of any investigation and possible disciplinary action.

The Executive takes this situation very seriously and understands that many members are seeking transparency in any and all investigatory processes. We provide here as much as we know at this time, but it is unlikely we will hear more that we can share.

As a result of the security breach and the vulnerabilities that have been exposed in the websurvey tool, SFU is discontinuing its use and will be adopting alternative systems for its future ballots.

SFUFA Equity Committee Survey

The SFUFA Equity Committee is finalizing a survey designed to gather insights into the experiences and challenges faced by SFU faculty members concerning workload and equity issues. The survey is expected to launch within the next week or two. Your participation offers an opportunity to share your experiences and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of these issues, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented. The feedback gathered will help identify areas for improvement, fostering a more equitable and supportive working environment at SFU. We appreciate your time and willingness to contribute to this important initiative.

Reminder – Alternate Contacts

Given periodic disruption of SFU's internet and email systems, the Association is collecting alternate contacts (email or phone) for members, to be used only in the event that we need to reach you during a time that the University's communications systems are not functioning. Members can send alternate email addresses and/ or phone numbers to SFUFA Executive Director, Brian Green, at bsgreen@sfu.ca