

4 March 2016

Dear Rick,

Thank you for your email on February 15. With the difficulties that Bernadette had in attempting to identify a meeting time, she suggested that we write you instead.

In advance of the next Board of Governors meeting, we wanted to follow up on the matter of resource allocation dedicated to curriculum- and program-related initiatives discussed at the February board meeting.

From a university-wide perspective, we are concerned about the degree to which the 2016/17 preliminary budget allocates sufficient funds to one-time and ongoing projects directly related to broadening program offerings at Capilano University.

While it seems difficult to arrive at fully clear and precise conclusions from the Ministry of Advanced Education data, it appears to be the case that Capilano has declines in enrollment that are steeper than other comparable institutions. The comparisons aside, Capilano has lost approximately 1000 FTE in just three or so years. While a sizable percentage of this has been in the Arts and Sciences, at a recent coordinators roundtable it became very clear that declines have been felt across the entire institution and that very serious concerns about the state of the university are universal.

Our questions at the February meeting were intended to stimulate discussion around budget priorities aimed at addressing the steep declines in domestic enrollments. Very little of the Non-FTE generating add-ons appear to be directed at increased domestic student recruitment capacity. In addition, very little, if anything, appears to be available for the development of new programs/degrees.

As you noted in your presentation to the Board, steepest declines have been in “undeclared” student enrollments and that increases have been in baccalaureate degree programs (although many of these also appear to be flat or slightly declining). Given this, and given the long standing idea that we should focus on 4-year programming, it seems crucial that we make it a primary focus of this institution to do all we can to significantly grow the number of 4-year offerings in as timely a fashion as possible. These are the principal “reasons to come and reasons to stay”. It is our view, and one held by many others, that the student experience, while being an important element in attracting students, is never going to be the principal draw to Capilano University. And, in turn, compared with similar institutions, our program mix continues to be modest in scope, a limitation which could arguably be contributing to our weak numbers.

As the VP Academic and Provost, does the preliminary budget sufficiently permit you to execute the much needed development initiatives central to a substantive expansion in programming diversity at the University; develop and support university-wide curriculum initiatives such as the Cap Year Experience and General Education; and begin resourcing a Teaching and Learning Centre at the base level required in a primarily undergraduate teaching focused university?

In our capacity as Board members, we feel it is our duty to ask and confirm, if possible, that the Office of the VP Academic is resourced appropriately to initiate and meaningfully move forward on curricular initiatives of fundamental importance to the ongoing structural integrity of the university? Without such assurances, it is difficult to endorse the resource allocation in the 2016/17 preliminary budget.

Regards,

Aurelea Mahood and Michael Fleming