
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

Expanded education opportunities coming to Squamish

SQUAMISH – People in the growing Sea-to-Sky region will benefit from a new Capilano University campus in Squamish following a \$48-million investment from the Province.

Capilano University, with funding from the B.C. government, has bought the former Quest University campus with an investment of \$63.2 million after the private institution closed in April 2023. The newest public post-secondary education campus in the province will serve approximately 100 students when it opens in spring 2024 and is expected to serve more than 380 students in later years.

“The Sea-to-Sky region is growing quickly,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. “Capilano University’s purchase of the former Quest University campus in Squamish will provide post-secondary education opportunities closer to home for people living in the area, which is fantastic news for local high school students and those who want to go to university at any age from the Squamish, Whistler and surrounding areas.”

The campus property is 18 acres and includes 12,234 square metres (131,684 square feet) of existing university infrastructure. Built in 2007, the campus provides prospects for collaborative partnerships and future growth. The turn-key ready campus includes an academic building, library, cafeteria, recreational and athletic facilities, an all-weather sports field and two large parking lots.

“As a university that serves Vancouver’s North Shore, the Sunshine Coast and the Sea-to-Sky region, we look forward to delivering new opportunities for learners in Squamish to pursue post-secondary studies,” said Paul Dangerfield, president, Capilano University. “We are grateful to the Province, the District of Squamish and the Squamish Nation for their support. We look forward to continuing to build a relationship with the community, the Squamish Nation and multiple partners to design and offer programs that match the education and skills-training needs of the community and region.”

The university is partnering with local First Nations communities to define program priorities and to co-create specific First Nations programs that enhance Indigenous learner participation.

“The Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) has worked closely with Capilano University for many years, and we are pleased to support the return of in-person learning to the District of Squamish,” said Wilson Williams (Sxwíxwtn), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw. “The new campus will provide opportunities for our youth in Squamish to seek post-secondary education close to home. We look forward to continuing discussions with Capilano University about how to best serve our members and how we can help Indigenize the university’s programs.”

Starting in spring 2024, the new campus will serve students studying early childhood care and

education (ECCE) and literacy programming, followed by arts, science and business programs, as well as outdoor recreation and programming with the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations in September 2024.

In addition, Capilano University will be exploring options for operating a new 74-space child care centre on campus property. Minor renovations will include upgrading some classrooms for the university's specific programming needs.

"The District of Squamish and Capilano University share a 40-year history and vision for Squamish based on common values and our deep commitment to truth and reconciliation, and we are thrilled CapU has made a full return to Squamish," said Armand Hurford, mayor, District of Squamish. "Local access to quality post-secondary education is a valuable asset to any community, and we look forward to the opportunities CapU will provide to students and learners of all ages in Squamish."

The new campus in Squamish will accommodate growth in the Sea-to-Sky region for people looking for in-community education pathways, reduce commute times between home, work and study for students in the region, and increase post-secondary participation for people.

"Being an early childhood education student at CapU has changed my life for the better," said Tatiana Moraru, a Capilano University student. "Now, more people who live in the Squamish region will have access to affordable and accessible post-secondary education to bring their passion and potential into reality."

The campus will also provide clear and accessible pathways for Indigenous and Sea-to-Sky District 48 students to engage in higher learning, leading to better career paths and well-paying jobs, and deliver upgrading and support for students who did not graduate from high school or get the necessary grades.

This purchase aligns with the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, which was released May 2, 2023. This is a cross-government plan that is working to make education and training more accessible, affordable, responsive, and relevant to help prepare the people of B.C. for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The action plan is supported by a provincial investment of \$480 million over three years.

Quick Facts:

- Quest University, a private institution, sold the Quest University campus to Primacorp Ventures Inc. in 2020 and shut its doors in April 2023.
- Capilano University bought the former Quest University campus from Primacorp, with the property sale closing Aug. 10, 2023.
- The Sea-to-Sky communities of Whistler, Squamish and Pemberton are growing faster than average in B.C., with one of the youngest populations in the province.
- There is an opportunity in the future to acquire already-built student housing adjacent to the campus that would provide approximately 450 beds.
- Further feasibility analysis about this potential acquisition will be required.

Learn More:

For information about Capilano University: <https://www.capilanou.ca/>

For more about StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/jobs-and-training>

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