Supporting BC Post-Secondary Students with
Lived Experience In Care

BCCAT

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Prepared for BCCAT by Plaid Consulting

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This report is available online at
https://www.bccat.ca/intro/LivedExperienceInCare2022

Content Warning:

This report discusses the experiences of post-secondary students with lived experience in BC's child welfare system. The report contains references to, and personal recollections of, the difficult living and financial circumstances and mental health struggles of some study participants. Some of this content may be disturbing to readers.

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List of Abbreviations Used in the Report

AYA	Agreements with Young Adults
CIHR	Child in Home of Relative program
DAA	Delegated Aboriginal Agency
FOIPPA	BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
FYIC	Former Youth in Care [This term refers to students who were but are no longer in care. This category includes those who aged out of care upon turning 19, as well as those who left care prior to aging out.]
MCFD	Ministry of Children and Family Development
PSE	Post-secondary education
PSI	Post-secondary institution
PTW	Provincial Tuition Waiver
PTWP	Provincial Tuition Waiver Program
SABC	StudentAid BC
STP	Student Transitions Project
UBCW	University of British Columbia Post Care Tuition Waiver
UVICTA	University of Victoria Youth in Care Tuition Award
YAC	Youth Advisory Council
YAEF	Youth Educational Assistance Fund
YFEF	Youth Futures Education Fund

Executive Summary

Students with lived experience in government care can face significant challenges in their lives and their educational journeys. Students entering higher education may be simultaneously transitioning out of government care and grappling with the complexities of a new educational system. Many are struggling with past or current trauma. Students formerly in care are more likely than the general student population to be Indigenous, to experience poverty and homelessness, mental health and substance abuse challenges, disabilities, and often identify as members of marginalized groups overrepresented in the child welfare system (BC Representative for Children and Youth, 2020). Former youth in care (FYIC) in BC who graduated from high school in 2013/14 were also 31% less likely than the general population to attend post-secondary education (PSE) within three years of their high-school graduation (BC Ministry of Education, 2018).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of financial, academic, and mental health supports intended to improve the post-secondary experience of students with lived experience in BC's care system.

In 2017, the BC government created the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (PTWP) to encourage students with lived experience in care to continue their education at the post-secondary level. The PTWP replaced a patchwork of bursaries and grants, and covers all tuition costs for a first undergraduate program for eligible students who attend any BC public post-secondary institution (PSI), the Native Education College, or an eligible BC trades or apprenticeship program. Eligibility for the PTWP generally requires the student to have a minimum of 24 cumulative months in government care in BC, and to be between the ages of 19 and 26 when they apply for the waiver. In addition to the PTWP, students also may have access to financial supports intended for basic living and educational expenses through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), StudentAidBC (SABC), and non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups. Eligibility for these programs may differ from the PTWP eligibility requirements.

In the four years since the PTWP was launched, more supports have been made available to BC students with lived experience in care. Some PSIs have introduced their own tuition waiver programs to support FYIC who do not meet PTWP eligibility requirements. Other external sources of funding are also available.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of financial, academic, and mental health supports intended to improve the post-secondary experience of students with lived experience in BC's care system.

Four PSIs participated in this research: the University of British Columbia (UBC), the University of Victoria (UVic), Thompson Rivers University (TRU), and Langara College. Data on students who identified as having lived experience in care were collected from each participating institution. A total of 278 students were included in the study, with approx-

imately one-quarter from each of the four PSIs, and 26% self-declaring as Aboriginal. Forty of those students completed an anonymous survey that explored their experiences with academic, mental health, and financial supports. Twenty survey respondents participated in one-on-one interviews with a researcher. Researchers also interviewed 12 professional staff at the four participating PSIs who played support roles for students with lived experience in care. PSI websites, government white papers, and scholarly research were also reviewed to obtain relevant information.

Students reported difficulties with leaving the care system and transitioning into PSE. Those who received the PTWP were satisfied with that program; however, a third of the students surveyed did not meet PTWP eligibility criteria related to length of time in care, age, type of care placement, or care located in British Columbia. Other students told us that it was difficult to get additional funding to cover other living and educational costs, and others described the process of accessing and obtaining those funds as difficult.

Forty percent of respondents said they had utilized on-campus mental health services at their institution. However, the majority were not happy with long waitlists for these services, and/or felt that PSI mental health counsellors did not understand their backgrounds well enough to effectively assist them.

Students from UBC and UVic were happy with the dedicated "navigator" staff at these PSIs who support students with lived experience in care. Navigators were able to help the students identify financial supports, refer them to other support services, and facilitate mentoring sessions, clubs, and events. These students felt well served by navigators at their PSIs, and highly recommended this model of support.

The report concludes with three main categories of recommendations:

- Create wrap-around support models at all PSIs.
- Review and align mental health supports.
- Review and align financial supports.

Six recommendations are made within these three categories, each of which would help to better facilitate students' movement from the provincial care system into PSE and beyond. Implementing each recommendation would require additional funding or additional staffing resources, but the need is clearly urgent. Students with lived experience in care should have the same access to and opportunity for success as other BC students in their post-secondary journeys.

Introduction

In 2018, the BC Ministry of Education reported that students with lived experience in the care of the BC Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) were 31% less likely than their peers in the general population to attend post-secondary education (PSE) within three years of graduation from high school (BC Ministry of Education, 2018). Once students with lived experience in care enter post-secondary studies, their outcomes are similarly differentiated, with students with lived experience in care[1] having lower graduation rates. These differences especially affect Indigenous[2] students and those with special needs. In response to this situation, both the BC provincial government and post-secondary institutions (PSIs) have created financial-support programs to improve access to PSE for students who have been in BC government care.

The financial supports for these students now include the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (PTWP), launched in 2017, which waives the full tuition costs for former youth in care (FYIC) at any public PSI in the province. There are also internally-funded tuition waivers at institutions such as the University of British Columbia, the Justice Institute of BC, the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Selkirk College, the University of Victoria, and Vancouver Island University. Institutional waivers are often available for students that do not meet PTWP eligibility requirements such as age or time in care.

In addition to tuition waivers, students with lived experience in care have access to financial supports for expenses other than tuition while attending any educational program recognized by the BC government. **Table 1** summarizes all provincially funded financial support programs available to students with lived experience in care, if they meet eligibility criteria.

To meet the PTWP eligibility requirements, a student must be:
- A resident of BC, or a BC resident placed in care in another province under an MCFD or delegated Aboriginal agency (DAA) interprovincial placement agreement;
- Studying full- or part-time at a BC public PSI, the Native Education College, or one of 10 approved trades-training providers;
- Between the ages of 19 and 26;
- A high-school graduate;
- No longer in MCFD, DAA, or Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction CIHR program care; and,
- Formerly in care of any of the programs listed above for at least 24 months or 730 days, consecutive or accumulated (StudentAid BC, n.d.a).

In BC, students "age out of care" on their 19th birthday, meaning that they become adults in the government's eyes and are no longer eligible for the funding that was formerly provided to feed and house them. Students who aged out of care at age 19, and who are between the ages of 19 and 26, may receive financial support through the provincial Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program (Government of British Columbia, n.d.). Students with lived experi-

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[1] This report will use the term "students with lived experience in care" to refer to students who have been under the care of MCFD or other youth-care programs in British Columbia.
[2] In this report, the term "Indigenous" will be used whenever possible, to acknowledge that it is gradually replacing the term "Aboriginal" in Canada and internationally. "Aboriginal" will be used when referring to data collected for this study, as "Aboriginal" is the term used on BC's post-secondary admission application site (EducationPlannerBC) and thus becomes part of the data in the student's application file.

Table 1

Summary of Provincially Funded Financial Supports for BC Youth Formerly in Care

Program name	Where does the money come from?	Eligibility criteria	Brief description
Provincial Tuition Waiver	Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training	• Ages 19-28 inclusive • 24 cumulative months in care including Child in the Home of a Relative • First program only • Must apply	Provides unlimited tuition fees for a first post-secondary program
Agreements with Young Adults	Ministry of Children and Family Development	• 19-26 inclusive • Turned 19 with either a Youth Agreement or Continuing Custody Order care status • Maximum 48 months • Must apply	Income support up to $1,250 per month available to eligible youth, for up to 48 months
Youth Education Assistance Fund	Ministry of Children and Family Development and private foundations	• 19-24 inclusive • Had either a Continuing Custody Order care status, or were under Guardianship of the Director as per the *Adoptions Act* • Had to turn 19 under either status or have been in care for 5 years before being adopted • Independent applications which are administered by Student Aid BC	Bursaries of up to $5,500
Youth Futures Education Fund	Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, private foundations	• Students accessing a tuition waiver at a BC post-secondary institution are eligible for funding • Funds are administered by United Way of the Lower Mailand	Provides funds for books and supplies, living expenses, and other costs. Funds per student range from $50-%4,500
Learning Fund for Young Adults	Ministry of Children and Family Development matches federal program	• Born after Jan. 1, 2007, in care for at least one year. Can access after turning 17 • First disbursements in 2004	Administered by the Victoria Foundation, MCFD contributes to match the British Columbia Training and Education Savings Grant which provides $1,200 for every BC child born after 2006
PGT Educational Assistance Fund	Administered by Public Guardian and Trustee	• Must have had a Continuing Custody Order care status and be at least 19 at time of application • Applicants must demonstrate financial need	Two private donors created the fund which is held and administered by the Public Guardian and Trustee Eligible youth may receive bursaries from the fund
Post-secondary institution-specific tuition waiver program	University Student Aid budgets	• Each university has varying policies that provide for youth in care. Some are BC-specific, and some provide bursaries in addition to tuition.	Many BC post-secondary institutions offer waivers to former youth in care

Note: Table from BC Representative for Children and Youth (2020, p. 43).

ence in care who are attending a PSI or an educational or life-skills program, or attending a mental health or rehabilitation program, are eligible to receive up to $1,250 per month for living expenses, for up to four years. AYA funds may be used for expenses such as housing, childcare, tuition, and health care.

In 2019, fewer than 10% of the province's FYIC were on an AYA (Representative for Children and Youth, 2020). A 2020 report from BC's Representative for Children and Youth recommends automatically placing students with lived experience in care on an AYA (Representative for Children and Youth, 2020).

The Youth Futures Education Fund (YFEF, n.d.) was created by SABC, in conjunction with the PTWP, to provide recipients of the provincial tuition waiver with additional financial support for academic and living expenses. In 2018/19, the fund distributed $432,288 among 464 students (YFEF, 2019). The single largest allocation was $4,500, and the smallest was less than $100. Of the students who benefitted from the YFEF in 2018/19, 26% were Aboriginal (YFEF, n.d.).

The YFEF is overseen by the Youth Futures Advisory Council, which includes 20 professionals who work with students with lived experience in care or with services that support these students at PSIs; representatives of BC government ministries; representatives of other relevant organizations; and one student representative (YFEF, n.d.).

The Youth Educational Assistance Fund (YEAF) of the MCFD is available to students between the ages of 19 to 24 with a minimum of five years of lived experience in care. Eligible students receive up to $5,500 per year, for up to four years, through SABC (StudentAidBC, n.d.b).

Additional programs to support post-secondary students with lived experience in care include the Learning Fund for Young Adults and the PGT Educational Assistance Fund. When a student does not meet the eligibility requirements for the PTWP, they may seek financial support through a PSI, Indigenous organizations and bands, and/or external organizations. If students are ineligible for funding from any of these sources, they may apply for student loans through SABC and/or apply for institutional bursaries or awards available to the general student population.

Table 1 illustrates the complexity of the requirements for these different forms of financial support. While the number of funding sources for students with lived experience in care has expanded over the past 10 years, several sources of financial support require students to have been in care for a particular length of time. By the time a student is 27 years old, some sources of financial support will likely have been exhausted, or they may no longer be eligible for some forms of support because of their age. In attempting to connect with other sources of financial support, these students may need to re-identify themselves as former youth in care to different support staff and organizations. This may cause them to experience frustration and possible re-traumatization and/or stigmatization.

In 2016/17, before the PTWP was offered, 186 students with lived experience in care attended BC PSIs. In 2018, the first year that the PTWP was offered, this number expanded to 806. In the fall of 2019, according to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, 1,119 students were receiving the provincial waiver.

Table 2 shows the number of students receiving the provincial tuition waiver in 2019 by institution.

In 2019, VIU had the largest percentage of students benefitting from the PTWP in 2019, with 11% of the provincial total. Of the four institutions that participated in this study, Thompson Rivers University had the largest number of PTW recipients at 101 (9% of the provincial total), Langara had 77 (7%), UBC had 51 (38 at UBC Vancouver and 13 at UBC Okanagan, collectively representing 5% of the provincial total), and the University of Victoria had 43 (4%).

When students with lived experience in care register at a BC PSI, they have access to the supports available to any student at that institution. Each PSI organizes its student services in different ways, but all institutions provide transition, academic, mental health, and financial support for students. Some institutions also provide support in other forms, such as student residences, dining halls, and childcare facilities. As funding opportunities have expanded for post-secondary students with lived experience in care, and the numbers of these students have increased, BC PSIs have developed policies, processes, and services specifically for those students. However, there is little research on the types of supports these students need to be successful.

One previous BC study (Czeck, 2015) examined barriers to accessing or completing post-secondary studies experienced by some students with lived experience in care. Czeck asked 43 participants to make recommendations to MCFD and their PSIs about what would promote better post-secondary outcomes for them. The students' recommendations specific to PSIs were:

Table 2
Number of Students Receiving the PTWP at BC PSIs, 2019

Vancouver Island University	123
Thompson Rivers University	101
Camosun College	98
Douglas College	88
University of the Fraser Valley	87
Langara College	77
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	58
Okanagan College	52
British Columbia Institute of Technology	48
North Island College	48
University of Victoria	43
Simon Fraser University	41
College of New Caledonia	40
Vancouver Community College	39
UBC Vancouver	38
Capilano University	35
Northern Lights College	16
College of the Rockies	15
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	13
UBC Okanagan	13
Selkirk College	11
Other institutions (<10 at each institution)	35
Total	**1,119**

Note: Data from BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (2019).

- Eligibility requirements for financial-support programs should be more flexible.

- Mentoring programs and specialized on-campus support programs for students with lived experience in care need to be enhanced.

- Mental health services should be embedded in a trauma-informed approach.

- Staff at PSIs need professional development to better meet the challenges faced by students with lived experience in care.

- Additional academic research should be funded to explore the educational experiences of students with lived experience in care.

Some of these recommendations, such as the one around mental health services, refer to services that may be available to all students at a PSI, but seek a new approach to the current service delivery model. Other recommendations, such as specialized campus-support programs, would require new or redesigned services, and possibly new staff resources. Addressing all of the recommendations would require additional funding.

The BC Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT) has commissioned this study to investigate post-secondary supports for students with lived experience under the care of MCFD or other designated agencies. Our study examines the services for students with lived experience in care who are enrolled at BC PSIs. The specific research questions are:

1. What financial, academic, and mental health supports are helpful to students with lived experience in care during their post-secondary experience?

2. What can students with lived experience in care tell us about supports at their post-secondary institutions?

3. What do professional staff who support students with lived experience in care feel are effective supports for these students?

4. What can PSIs in BC, and government, do to better support students with lived experience in care?

To address these questions, the report includes:

• An overview of relevant support programs, policies, and practices at four BC public PSIs and at provincial organizations;

• An overview of the development of these supports;

• The results of a survey and interviews asking students with lived experience in care about supports at their PSIs;

• The results of interviews with post-secondary institutional staff who work directly with students with lived experience in care; and,

• Recommendations for PSIs and government around improving the post-secondary experience for BC students with lived experience in care.

As the funding opportunities have expanded for post-secondary students with lived experience in care, and the numbers of these students have increased, BC PSIs have developed policies, processes, and services specifically for those students. However, there is little research on the types of supports these students need to be successful.

Methodology

Four BC public PSIs participated in this study, with 278 students from these four institutions being identified as eligible to participate. The study authors asked public PSIs in BC to participate in the study. Four institutions participated in all aspects of the research: the University of British Columbia (UBC), the University of Victoria (UVic), Thompson Rivers University (TRU), and Langara College.

Students whose data were included in the study were students attending one of the four participating PSIs, or a graduate of one of these institutions, who have lived experience under the care of MFCD, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Child in Home of Relative (CIHR) program or similar predecessor agencies or a DAA, or who self-identify as a student with lived experience in care/FYIC. Forty of the 278 students completed an anonymous online survey designed to provide information on their experience with financial, academic, and mental health supports. Twenty students who completed the survey also participated in follow-up 30-minute online interviews to further explore their experience with supports. Twelve staff at the four PSIs participated in one-on-one virtual interviews to discuss their experience in administering the supports provided to students with lived experience in care.

The study included both quantitative and qualitative data. The research methodology was approved by UBC's Research Ethics Board, whose approval was accepted by the other three participating institutions as meeting their own research ethics requirements. The four tools used to collect data for the study are described below.

In order to understand the backgrounds and academic paths of the student participants, information collected about these individuals through the institutional datasets and student surveys is presented in the Methodology section. Data on participants' experiences with supports are presented in the Results section.

Institutional and Provincial Datasets

The four institutions participating in the study were chosen to ensure a diversity of institutional types (research university/college; newer/older institutions; large/smaller institutions; location in the Lower Mainland of BC/location outside the Lower Mainland) were represented in the data. These PSIs also indicated that they were able to respond within the planned timelines of the research. Vancouver Island University (VIU) was identified as a potential participating institution, representing BC's special purpose teaching universities, but its response time did not meet the study's time constraints. Data from both UBC campuses (UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan) were combined into data identified as being from UBC, except where noted otherwise in the data analysis.

Forty of the 278 students completed an anonymous online survey designed to provide information on their experience with financial, academic, and mental health supports. Twenty students who completed the survey also participated in follow-up 30-minute online interviews to further explore their experience with supports. Twelve staff at the four PSIs participated in one-on-one virtual interviews to discuss their experience in administering the supports provided to students with lived experience in care.

Each of the participating institutions was asked to provide data using an aggregated data template developed by Plaid Consulting, in Microsoft Excel. The template is presented in **Appendix 3**.

The data requested from each institution represented different points in a student's enrolment at that institution. These data were:

(a) at admission:

- Whether a student had lived experience in care [students who received funding or waivers on that basis, and/or students who self-identified as such];
- whether these students were transfer or direct-entry students;
- the year and term/session when the student was admitted into an undergraduate program;
- age;
- whether the student self-identified as Aboriginal; and,
- gender [female, male, or other category, as recorded by the institution];

and (b) for each term/session:

- enrolled or not enrolled;
- graduated or not graduated; and,
- number of academic credits accumulated at the end of
  - Year 1, term 1
  - Year 2, term 1
  - Year 3, term 1

Enrolment and graduation markers were added to the dataset for each time period to indicate whether a student was enrolled or not enrolled, and whether they had graduated.

Following creation of the institutional datasets, the four participating institutions were asked to send the researchers a list of students included in the data, along with an anonymized identification number for each student. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training was provided with the lists of anonymized identification numbers along with corresponding lists of students' Personal Identification Numbers (PINs), which are used by the Ministry to track student mobility within the BC post-secondary system. The Ministry then provided the researchers with provincial post-secondary student data linked only to the anonymized identification numbers. This allowed the researchers to determine whether each student pursued further studies at another public PSI in BC, while maintaining the student's anonymity.

The provincial Student Transitions Project (STP) provided an additional dataset that indicated whether each student attended another institution subsequent to their time at the participating institution. These data help institutions offering undergraduate non-degree programs, such as certificates and diplomas, to track whether a student remained in the BC public post-secondary system after completing these types of programs. The researchers' access to the STP data followed the requirements of the STP Data Access Policy and FOIPPA requirements for academic research, including the creation of a research agreement with the STP.

Data were analyzed using Tableau Prep Builder and Tableau Desktop. In the presentation of the data analysis and the results, any results involving 10 or fewer responses are presented as <10. We acknowledge that excluding outcomes involving fewer than 10 responses limits the scope of the results, since there are only 40 survey respondents and 20 interview participants. However, because the students participating in the study belong to a potentially vulnerable population, the decision was made to exclude smaller numbers in order to ensure the privacy of the student participants.

The invitation to participate in the student survey was distributed to the identified students by the participating institutions rather than by the researchers, to ensure the researchers did not have access to the students' identifying information. UVic, TRU, and Langara students enrolled between 2015 and 2020, and UBC students enrolled between 2010 and 2020, received invitations to participate in the survey. Survey data were anonymous and were aggregated in the data analysis to include all four institutions.

Approximately one-quarter of the student participants in the study were enrolled at, or graduates of, each participating institution. Langara provided data on 73 students (26%), TRU 71 (26%), UVic 69 (25%), and UBC 65 (23%). **Table 3** summarizes this information, as well as the number of students participating in the survey and in interviews.

Table 3

Number of Students with Lived Experience in Care Included in Datasets, Survey, and Interviews, by Institution

Institution	Number of Students Included in Dataset	Number of Students Participating in Survey	Number of Students Participating in Interviews
Langara	73 (26%)	<10	0 (0%)
TRU	71 (26%)	11 (28%)	0 (0%)
UVic	69 (25%)	<10	<10
UBC	65 (23%)	19 (48%)	16 (80%)
Total	**278**	**40**	**20**

Note. These data exclude respondents who indicated "other" or "none of the above" when asked which of the participating institutions they attended most recently.

[Table 4](#) presents comparative enrolment and demographic information on the four participating institutions, as well as the number and percentage of students identified as "Aboriginal" or as "students with lived experience in care" during the 2018-19 academic year. The "Aboriginal" category included individuals who self-identified as Aboriginal on their applications for admission, while "students with lived experience in care" included students who received funding or waivers on that basis, and/or students who self-identified as having had this experience.

Demographics

Approximately two-thirds of the 278 students in the datasets self-identified as female, while one-third identified as male. Fewer than 10 students did not declare a gender.

Seventy-two students (26%) self-declared as Aboriginal. This percentage is high compared to the overall percentage of Aboriginal students enrolled at the four participating institutions, as shown in [Table 4](#). But this percentage is understandable in the context that in 2019 an Indigenous child in BC was 16.8 times more likely to be in care than a non-Indigenous child (BC Ministry of Child and Family Services, 2019).

One hundred and seventy-seven students (64%) were enrolled in a bachelor's degree program. Smaller numbers of students were working toward a diploma (39, 14%), an associate of arts degree (33, 12%), an associate of science degree (<10), or a certificate (13, 5%).

Students were identified in the dataset as being direct-entry students, meaning they had only high-school transcripts upon admission, or as transfer students, indicating they reported post-secondary credits from one or more institutions on their admission applications. One hundred and ninety-five students (70%) were admitted to their institution as direct-entry students without prior post-secondary experience, while 83 (30%) transferred from another PSI to their current institution.

Table 4

Comparative Enrolment and Demographic Statistics for Students at Participating Institutions, 2018/2019

Name of Institution	Institutional Type	Location	Total Domestic Under-graduate Students	Domestic Under-graduate Female/ Male Ratio	Number of Domestic Undergraduate Aboriginal Students	Domestic Undergraduate Aboriginal Enrol-ment as Percentage of Total Student Enrolment
UBC-V[a]	Research university	Lower Mainland	44,882	55% F 45% M	1,095	2%
UBC-O[a]	Research university	Thompson-Okanagan	8,990	56% F 44%M	583	6%
TRU[b]	Research university	Thompson-Okanagan	20,358	62% F 38% M	2,241	11%
UVic	Research university	Vancouver Island	17,941	56% F 44% M	1,370[c]	8%[d]
Langara	College	Lower Main-land	8,073[e]	54% F 46% M[f]	400	5%

Notes.

[a] *https://academic.ubc.ca/sites/vpa.ubc.ca/files/documents/2018-19%20Enrolment%20Report.pdf*

[b] *Includes on-campus and Open Learning students. Data were provided by TRU Integrated Planning & Effectiveness.*

[c] *Includes domestic, undergraduate and graduate Aboriginal students. https://www.uvic.ca/institutionalplanning/assets/docs/indigenous/indigenousby-faculty.pdf*

[d] *Undergraduate (excludes graduate) headcount by fall 2018. The data reflect term–based, unique headcounts per term. Headcounts in this report cannot be tallied from term to term to produce a "unique annual headcount." https://sas.uvic.ca/SASPortal/syndication.do?com.sas.portal.ItemId=Report%2Bomi%3A%2F%2FFoundation%2Freposname%3DFoundation%2FTransformation%3Bid%3DA5IP10KY.AX00007T*

[e] *"Undergraduate" is considered to include university transfer and baccalaureate and excludes career, vocational, post-degree, and continuing studies. https://langara.ca/about-langara/langara-at-a-glance/registration.html*

[f] *Based on a non-distinct count of spring 2019 and summer 2019, females/males combined, excluding fall 2018 (information not available). "Undergradu-ate" includes university transfer and baccalaureate and excludes career, vocational, post-degree, and continuing studies. https://langara.ca/about-lang-ara/langara-at-a-glance/demographics.html*

Student persistence, or how far a student had progressed towards their academic goals, was identified by whether the student had received a credential (graduated) and/or was still enrolled, as well as the number of credits accumulated, at the end of the first term of each of three consecutive years of post-secondary enrollment. Three consecutive years of data were used in this study, since some students would be enrolled in credential programs that require less than four years of study.

One hundred and twenty-two of the 278 students (44%) were still enrolled in the institution at the time the data were collected. One hundred and sixty-five (59%) were no longer enrolled at the time of data collection. Forty-two of those who were no longer enrolled (25%) had graduated from the institution.

Retention data are broken down into two separate tables. **Table 5** shows the retention rates for students in a program length of three years or greater, by institution, excluding Langara. **Table 6** shows rates for students seeking a creden-tial of one or two years only by institution, and therefore includes only TRU and Langara.

Table 5

Retention Rates Across Academic Years 1, 2, and 3 for Students Seeking a Credential
of Three or More Years in Length, by Institution

Institution	Retention to Year 1, term 2	Retention to Year 2, term 1	Retention to Year 3, term 1
TRU	27 (59%)	27 (68%)	11 (44%)
UBC	48 (98%)	37 (90%)	21 (70%)
UVic	52 (91%)	41 (84%)	18 (75%)
Overall	**127 (84%)**	**105 (81%)**	**50 (63%)**

Note.

- *No Langara students were recorded as being enrolled in a program of three or more years.*

- *Data on students with no recorded expected program length were excluded.*

- *Since the data were collected in early 2021, the admission year 2020 was excluded from calculations of retention to Year 1, term 2; the years 2019 and 2020 were excluded from retention to Year 2, term 1; and the years 2018, 2019, and 2020 were excluded from calculation of retention to Year 3, term 2.*

The lowest retention rates in this group of students were seen at TRU, and the highest rates were at UBC.

Table 6

Retention Across Academic Years, Measured at Year 1, Term 2 for Students Seeking a Credential
of Two Years or Less in Length, by Institution

Institution	Retention to Year 1, term 2
Langara	57 (78%)
TRU	12 (52%)
UVic	<10
UBC	<10
Overall	**68 (74%)**

Note.
- *Data on students with no reported expected program length were excluded.*
- *Since the data were collected in 2020, data on students enrolled in 2020 were excluded from the analysis.*

Retention rates for students seeking credentials of two years or less were higher at Langara than at TRU.

Table 7 shows whether students included in this study transitioned from their institution to another PSI in a later term. STP data were used to calculate the results shown in this table. Langara offers a significant number of university transfer programs, which could mean that some students who do not persist at an individual institution, as indicated in **Table 6,** do persist in their studies but at a different institution.

The STP data included all 278 students from the four participating institutions. Thirty-two students (12%) pursued further studies following their enrolment at the participating institution. Over one-quarter (26%, 19) of Langara students transitioned to another institution. Very few students at TRU, UBC, and UVic (6%, 13 across all three institutions) transitioned to another institution.

Table 7

Students Who Transitioned to Another PSI, by Institution

Institution	Transitioned to Another Institution
Langara	19 (26%)
TRU, UBC, and UVic (total)	13 (6%)
Overall	**32 (12%)**

Note.

- *Data from students with no reported expected program length were excluded from the analysis.*
- *Since the data were collected in 2020, data from students enrolled in 2020 were excluded from the analysis.*
- *TRU, UBC, and UVic each had fewer than 10 students who transitioned to another institution.*

[Table 8](#) presents the retention rates for self-declared Aboriginal students, by institution and by length of credential program.

Table 8

Retention Across Academic Years 1, 2, and 3 for Self-Declared Aboriginal Students Seeking a Credential of Three or More Years in Length, Across all Institutions

Status	Persistence to Year 1, term 2	Persistence to Year 2, term 1	Persistence to Year 3, term 1
Self-declared Aboriginal	35 (80%)	30 (75%)	15 (63%)

Note.

- *Data on students with no recorded expected program length were excluded from the analysis.*
- *Since the data were collected in 2021, data for the years 2019 and 2020 were excluded from calculations of retention to Year 2, term 1, and data for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020 were excluded from calculations of retention to Year 3, term 2.*
- *No data were recorded at Langara for students with a program length of more than three years.*

The retention rate for self-declared Aboriginal students enrolled in a credential program of two years or less, measured at the end of Year 1, term 2, across all institutions, was 70% (19 students).

Retention rates for students identifying as Aboriginal were slightly lower than the overall retention rates for students at all four participating PSIs, except at Year 3, term 1 where the rates were identical. For students in programs with lengths of two years or less, the retention rate for Aboriginal students was 4% lower than overall retention rates as measured at the end of Year 1, term 2.

Financial Supports

At UVic, 49 of the students in the dataset (71%) received the PTW, and 64 (93%) received the UVic Youth in Care Tuition Award, with 64% receiving both. At UBC, roughly half of the students in the dataset (33, 51%) received the PTW, and half (32, 49%) received the UBC tuition waiver, with <10 receiving both. At Langara, 73% of the students in the dataset (53) received the PTW and 37% (27) received the Langara Youth in Care Bursary, with <10 receiving both. Every student in the TRU dataset received the provincial tuition waiver.

Since it is technically impossible to receive both the provincial waiver and an institutional waiver, it may be that some students at UVic, UBC and Langara became ineligible for the PTWP at some point and were then given their own institution's waiver. Nearly all student participants were also receiving financial support from other sources.

Student Survey

The student survey in this study serves two purposes. The first is to provide additional financial, demographic, and academic information on the student participants. The second is to provide both qualitative and quantitative information on the supports the participants are aware of and have accessed within their institution, and to assess their satisfaction with these supports.

The student survey was developed by Plaid Consulting and BCCAT, with feedback from the participating institutions and BCCAT. The survey tool is presented in **Appendix 2**. The survey instrument included an introduction to the research study and provided information about Plaid Consulting and the survey methodology. Respondents remained anonymous, with the exception of those who opted to provide their name to be contacted for a follow-up interview.

The survey includes questions about the financial, academic, and mental health supports students have accessed during their post-secondary journey, as well as their satisfaction with these supports. Academic supports include services such as academic advising; accessibility services and academic accommodations; math, writing and/or research support; orientation activities; and career counselling. Mental health supports include on-campus/phone/online counselling, peer-support gatherings, and social events. Peer support or mentoring was included in the category of mental health supports, since these programs are often focused on health and wellness, as well as on guiding students to appropriate services or resources.

All four participating PSIs offer similar forms of student support, although the organization of service departments and the specific services offered are different at each institution.

Survey respondents were asked whether they had used the supports and services at their institution, and whether they had encountered barriers in accessing any of them. They were also asked to make recommendations for how institutions could improve support for students with lived experience in care.

The survey instrument was posted online, and potential participants were given a link to open and complete the survey. The four participating institutions were asked to email survey invitations directly to students who met the eligibility criteria for the study. The survey was open for responses between January and April 2021. Forty students completed the survey, representing 14% of the students in the dataset.

Student Survey Results

Demographics

Of the 40 students completing the survey, 19 were from UBC (43%) and 11 were from TRU (28%). Fewer than 10 respondents were from UVic and from Langara, or indicated that they had most recently been enrolled in a non-participating institution.

Just over two-thirds of survey respondents (68%) identified as female. Fewer than 10 respondents indicated that they were non-binary or trans, or did not respond to this question.

Fewer than 10 survey respondents identified as Aboriginal. Thus, there was a lower percentage of students identifying as Aboriginal in the survey results than in the institutional datasets. There were more Aboriginal respondents from UBC and from TRU than from the other two institutions.

Academic Program

Thirty-one survey respondents were enrolled in a baccalaureate program; this was the same percentage (65%) as in the dataset. Fewer than 10 respondents were enrolled in programs leading to a certificate, diploma or associate degree. Fewer than 10 respondents did not answer the question about their academic program. The response percentages for this question total more than 100% because students may be working toward more than one credential.

Ten respondents were not currently enrolled in post-secondary studies; fewer than 10 had graduated from their post-secondary program. Among the 30 respondents currently enrolled, 20 (66%) had completed between 61 and 120 credits.

Twenty respondents (50%) indicated they were interested in eventually pursuing a master's degree. Sixteen respondents (40%) indicated they were interested in pursuing a PhD or EdD, or enrolling in a post-degree professional program such as law, medicine, or education.

Financial Supports

The amount of time spent in care is a significant factor in determining eligibility for post-secondary financial support. Twenty-three respondents (58%) indicated that they had spent at least three years in care. Fewer than 10 respondents had been in care for less than a year or for between one and two years.

Table 9 outlines the primary sources of financial supports for survey participants. Sixty-five percent of survey respondents (26) were receiving the PTW. About one-third of survey respondents (30%) were receiving the University of British Columbia Post Care Tuition Waiver. Others received tuition support through UBC or Langara and/or through a DAA.

Table 9
Reported Primary Source of Financial Supports for Survey Participants

Provincial Tuition Waiver	26 (65%)
University of British Columbia Post Care Tuition Waiver	12 (30%)
Langara Youth in Care Bursary	<10
Funding through a Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA)	<10
Unsure	<10

Note. Percentages total over 100% because respondents could identify multiple sources of support.

Table 10 outlines the sources of financial support for survey respondents that cover educational costs beyond tuition.

Table 10

Additional Forms of Financial Support Reported by Survey Participants

Agreements with Young Adults (AYA)	30 (75%)
Youth Educational Assistance Fund (YAEF)	17 (43%)
Scholarships and other financial support based on previous or current academic performance	12 (30%)
Government loans and grants (e.g., SABC)	10 (25%)
Bursaries and other financial support based on financial need	<10
Youth Futures Education Fund (YFEF)	<10
I received additional funding but I'm not sure of the source	<10

Note. Percentages total over 100% because respondents could identify multiple sources of support.

Beyond educational costs, students must pay living expenses such as rent and food. Twenty-two participants indicated that they received partial reimbursement or payment to cover living expenses. Fewer than 10 respondents indicated that they were fully paid or reimbursed for their living expenses.

Interviews

Student Interviews

Students who completed the survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in a virtual interview with a Plaid Consulting researcher, and were asked to provide their name and contact information for follow-up if they were interested in being interviewed. Student interviews were held between January and May of 2021, using the Microsoft Teams platform. Participant consent was obtained using a digital form completed and returned by participants prior to their interviews, and again verbally at the beginning of the interview. To preserve anonymity, online cameras were disabled, and student participants were given the option to use pseudonyms when registering. All interview participants were offered a $25 gift card or e-transfer for their participation. The student interview questions are presented in **Appendix 3**.

Twenty of the 40 survey respondents (50%) agreed to be interviewed. Twelve of the interviewees attended UBC Vancouver, and fewer than 10 attended UBC Okanagan and UVic. Unfortunately, no interviewees attended TRU or Langara. Eighty percent of interviewees were enrolled at the time the interview was conducted. Eleven interviewees (55%) were transfer students. Fewer than 10 interviewees self-identified as Aboriginal.

Institutional Expert Interviews

To gain a better understanding of the institutional policies, practices, and services that support students and/or prospective students with lived experience in care, interviews were conducted with 13 institutional experts working with, or in support of, these students. Potential interviewees were identified by the participating institutions or through online research on staffing in relevant service areas. Interviews were held online in the spring of 2021; each interview was approximately 30 minutes long and was conducted by a project researcher, using Microsoft Teams. The interview questions were scripted, based on research about the interviewees' roles and where they worked. The list of interviewees, and their position titles, is presented in **Appendix 4**.

Limitations of the Study

BC's 25 public PSIs all differ from each other in size, location, budget, student demographics, types of programs offered, and amount of experience with students with lived experience in care. This study investigates the experiences of students at only four of these 25 institutions. The four institutions participating in this study represent some, but not all, of the diversity in the BC post-secondary system.

There are other limitations to the study. Seventy-two (26%) of the 278 students in the datasets self-identified as Aboriginal. Fewer than 10 of the students who agreed to participate in the student survey and in the interviews were Aboriginal. This suggests that Indigenous students may be less likely than their non-Indigenous peers to agree to be surveyed or interviewed; that level of participation may also just be an artifact of this study. Either way, these small numbers mean that generalizations about the Indigenous experience from the results of this one study are not recommended.

Eighty percent of participants in the student interviews were from UBC. No students from TRU or Langara agreed to be interviewed, so the only non-UBC voices were from UVic. The institutional demographics of survey participants were somewhat less skewed, with 49% of the participants from UBC, 16% from UVic, 24% from TRU, and fewer than 10% from Langara, even though the four participating institutions each contributed about one-quarter of the institutional data. The perspectives of UBC students may therefore be overrepresented in this study.

This research was conducted in 2020 and 2021, so the global COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on participation in the study and on the length of time to survey and interview participants. We thank all of those who were willing to share their time and their passion to address this important topic.

BC's 25 public PSIs all differ from each other in size, location, budget, student demographics, types of programs offered, and amount of experience with students with lived experience in care. This study investigates the experiences of students at only four of these 25 institutions. The four institutions participating in this study represent some, but not all, of the diversity in the BC post-secondary system.

Results

The results of the data analysis and the interviews will be presented in four sections. The first section outlines each participating institution's support systems for students with lived experience in care. The other three sections explore what students told us, through surveys and interviews, about their awareness of, use of, and satisfaction with academic, mental health and financial supports at their institutions.

Supports at Participating Institutions

University of British Columbia

In 2018, UBC Vancouver hired a dedicated Enrolment Services Advisor to support students with lived experience in care. At UBC Okanagan, an existing Admissions & Awards Administrator was assigned to work directly with students with lived experience in care. Once a UBC student is identified as having lived experience in care (usually through self-identification on UBC's online application), the designated staff member contacts the student and guides them through the process of applying for financial supports. Staff also host orientation events, study sessions, and peer events, and share information with students regarding financial support and academic opportunities. In a 2019 report to the UBC Board of Governors, the specialized enrolment services role at UBC Vancouver is described as:

> [a] hybrid of financial advising, student support and recruitment with the education and experience of a child protection social worker. The role encompasses the expansion of the program through outreach within UBC and the broader community to develop partnerships in order to enhance the recruitment, retention, and experiences of students with lived experience in care at UBC. (Szeri et al. 2019, p.2)

Student survey respondents and interviewees stated that access to an enrolment advisor was a crucial factor in making the transition into PSE, as well as obtaining the ongoing supports they needed to be successful in their studies.

The community of youth in care has grown through an enrolment advisor, who is doing an excellent job
of facilitating workshops, [and providing] a social space to get to know each other,
connect with [the support person], and find out about supports.
– Interview Respondent

FYIC need an academic adviser that can help fill out applications and find bursaries,
scholarships, tuition waiver, student loans, and other community resources.
It's too much of a cognitive load and work load for most youth to have to learn a bureaucratic landscape
to make gambles on applying for financial support that get in the way of studying and working.
– Survey Respondent

UBC introduced the University of British Columbia Post Care Tuition Waiver (UBCW) in 2014, in response to a call to action for post-secondary institutions from BC's Representative for Children and Youth. The eligibility requirements for the UBCW are broader than those of the PTWP, so UBC continued offering its waiver even after the PTWP began in 2017. Students are eligible for UBCW funding if they were in care for at least 12 consecutive or accumulated months; there are no age restrictions for eligibility. Students who meet eligibility requirements for both the UBCW and the provincial tuition waiver receive funding only through the PTWP.

University of Victoria

At UVic, a support team for students with lived experience in care was piloted in early 2020 and formally launched in the fall of 2020. Twenty-two students with lived experience in care were consulted individually and through a survey about the program. The support team includes UVic personnel already employed in other positions. The team assists these students throughout their time at UVic with access to financial supports, registration, academic advising, and the mental health services provided to the general student population at UVic.

To ensure student representation and facilitate community connections among students with lived experience in care, UVic created a student leadership committee, consisting of six students who had formerly been in care. The committee meets once a month under the leadership of a new-student program manager. The committee has a voice in institutional programming and in its community. In addition to the student leadership committee, an online discussion board has been created to facilitate peer support. Students can share information on the board, ask questions regarding supports and support processes, and have online chats. The support team holds a monthly community meeting to build better connections between students, with the goal of facilitating peer-to-peer mentorship networks.

UVic students with lived experience in care who are not eligible for the PTWP may be eligible for the UVic Youth in Care Tuition Award (UVICTA) (University of Victoria, n.d.). This award has similar eligibility requirements to UBC's tuition award; students are eligible if they were in care for one year or longer. Students must be at least 19 years of age to be eligible, but there is no upper age limit. The award covers the entire cost of tuition fees for students taking at least a 60% course load, or a 40% course load for students with a permanent disability, and may also cover the costs of textbooks, supplies, and living expenses.

Langara College

At Langara, staff in the Financial Aid Office support students with lived experience in care. The financial aid office becomes aware of a student having lived experience in care if the student self-declares on the College's application form, or if the student submits an application for financial support designated for students with that status. The financial aid office assists students with lived experience in care, as well as all other Langara students, in finding awards and bursaries they might be eligible for, completing applications for provincial student aid, and obtaining advice on financial management.

At Langara, students who are not eligible for the PTWP may be eligible for the Langara Youth in Care Bursary (YICBUR). Like the UBC and UVic tuition waiver programs, students are eligible for the YICBUR if they were in care for a minimum of 12 months and are at least 19 years of age. Students cannot receive support from both YICBUR and the PTWP. Students with lived experience in care can also use Langara's Community Cupboard Program, which provides Langara students in financial need with non-perishable food items and toiletries (Langara College, n.d.).

Thompson Rivers University

At TRU, financial support for students with lived experience in care is provided through the Student Awards & Financial Aid Office. This office provides financial and budgeting advice, and works with students to access PTWP, YFEF, and other bursary and grant options. Non-financial student supports are provided through the Office of Student Affairs.

TRU does not have a tuition waiver program of its own, but provides additional financial help through bursaries. All TRU students in this study's dataset receive tuition support from the PTWP.

Student Experience with Academic Supports

Table 11 shows the awareness of academic support reported by survey respondents. These responses were around awareness of forms of support; the rate of use of these supports was covered in another survey question. The service with the highest awareness among the respondents was academic advising. Thirty-seven respondents (93%) indicated they were aware of academic advising services, while the lowest rate of awareness was for support around transitioning out of post-secondary studies.

Table 11

Reported Awareness of Academic Supports

Academic advising	37 (93%)
On-campus writing support	23 (58%)
Disability services, center for accessibility, or academic accommodations	22 (55%)
On-campus math support	19 (48%)
Support in transitioning into post-secondary studies	16 (40%)
On-campus research support	13 (33%)
Support in transitioning out of post-secondary studies	<10

When asked about their use of campus academic supports, the highest number of respondents (26, 65%) said they had accessed academic advising services. Fewer than 10 respondents used accessibility services or academic accommodations; on-campus math, writing or research support; or services supporting transitions out of post-secondary studies.

Table 12 shows survey participants' reported satisfaction with general on-campus academic supports, communication about those supports, obtaining support, and support for transitioning into and out of PSE.

Table 12

Survey Respondents' Satisfaction with On-Campus Academic Supports

	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied or very satisfied	Unsure or n/a
Academic advising	11 (28%)	14 (36%)	14 (36%)
Communication about on-campus academic support	10 (26%)	20 (50%)	10 (26%)
Process of obtaining academic support	<10	16 (40%)	17 (43%)
Support in transitioning into PSE	18 (46%)	11 (28%)	11 (28%)
Support in transitioning out of PSE	13 (34%)	<10	24 (62%)

Survey respondents were most satisfied with communication about on-campus academic supports and the process of obtaining academic support. They were somewhat less satisfied with academic advising and with support for transitioning into PSE. Nearly a third of respondents or more were unsure about these services, or indicated that these services were not applicable to them. The number of "unsure" responses was particularly high for "support for transitioning out of PSE", so it is possible that respondents were unaware of where to find such services, which are usually located in Academic Advising or Career Services units.

In interviews, nearly half of the respondents discussed the difficulty of "aging out" of the government care system at the same time as they were transitioning into PSE. "Aging out" occurs when an individual in care reaches the age of 19 and is then required to exit the child-welfare support system. Students and institutional interviewees reported that aging out of care was an unstable and uncertain time for youth, especially if those individuals are simultaneously entering PSE.

Many young people are leaving care without anything or anybody. The stress of post-secondary is enough for anybody, much less people who have had extreme trauma experiences.
Institutional Interview Respondent

Fewer than ten interview participants indicated they live with learning disabilities, with some mentioning that being undiagnosed made it difficult to obtain support. In order to receive academic accommodations for a disability, post-secondary students are usually required to register with their institution's Accessibility/Disability Services office and may need to update their high school paperwork. A student who has aged out of care and is struggling to manage their own financial affairs as well as the complexities of the post-secondary educational system may find these challenges especially daunting.

A higher proportion of student interviewees than survey respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the supports they had received, suggesting that students may have agreed to be interviewed in order to voice their frustrations. Some students may have felt more able to express their concerns in an interview format than in a written survey.

Student Experience with Mental Health Supports

Table 13 shows survey respondents' awareness of specific types of mental health support at their PSI. On-campus counselling was the mental health support that respondents were most aware of (28 respondents, 70%). Only one-quarter of respondents indicated they were aware of online counselling, and fewer than 10 respondents were aware of phone counselling. Three of the four participating institutions (UBC, Langara, and UVic) provide phone and/or online counselling services.

Table 13
Survey Respondents' Awareness of Specific Mental Health Supports

On-campus counselling	28 (70%)
Organized peer support gatherings and social events	13 (33%)
Online counselling	10 (25%)
Phone counselling	<10
Other	<10

Table 14 shows the respondents' utilization of mental health supports in general. Fourteen of the survey respondents (35%) had used their institution's mental health support services, while 16 (40%) indicated they had not. Thirteen (33%) respondents had used on-campus counselling, and fewer than 10 had used online counselling, organized peer-support gatherings, phone counselling, or other types of mental health supports.

Table 14

Survey Respondents' Utilization of Institutional Mental Health Supports

Yes	14 (35%)
No	16 (40%)
Not aware of mental health supports	<10
Did not respond	<10

Eighteen of 20 interviewees (90%) stated they were aware of mental health supports offered by their institution, and 15 (75%) discussed using these supports. Students who had used mental health supports said they had used counseling, psychology, and/or psychiatry services. A few discussed using online mental health support networks, such as Facebook groups or Zoom meetings with peers and professionals.

Of the 15 student interviewees who utilized on-campus mental health supports, very few were satisfied with the services they received. The dissatisfied students indicated that the mental health services at their PSIs were not equipped to support them. Several interviewees described the difficulty of dealing with trauma as a post-secondary student, and indicated that the counsellors available to them at their PSI did not understand the trauma experiences of a former youth in care. Both survey respondents and interviewees identified a need for on-campus mental health professionals who are trauma-informed and who have experience in supporting students with lived experience in care.

> *I always felt that counsellors and other mainstream mental health supports offered for free or at school*
> *didn't quite suit [or] understand my mental health concerns.*
> *– Survey Respondent*

> *I went to see a counsellor-in-residence, who was helpful, but who I also am not sure was equipped*
> *for the trauma/experiences of a youth in care.*
> *– Survey Respondent*

> *No trauma-informed services that can provide longer term persistent support.*
> *The ignorance around trauma caused serious harm [to] my mental health.*
> *– Survey Respondent*

> *It was very difficult to get an appointment with a counselor. The wait times were too long*
> *and few times [were] available.*
> *– Survey Respondent*

> *The waitlist...[for] mental health is so long that it was daunting to get myself on the waitlist*
> *and opted not to get support because of it.*
> *– Interview Participant*

All four participating institutions have peer-support or peer-mentoring programs. Eighteen survey participants (45%) mentioned being aware of their PSI helping to facilitate peer connections. However, fewer than 10 respondents reported using these connections. The reasons for not using this type of support included time, inconvenience, and social anxiety.

Student Experience with Financial Supports

Table 15 illustrates respondents' satisfaction with supports for tuition and other educational costs, as well as their satisfaction with communication about government and PSI financial supports, the process of obtaining financial supports, and support for additional PSE costs.

Table 15

Respondent Satisfaction with Financial Supports, Communication, and the Process of Obtaining Support

	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied or very satisfied	Unsure or n/a
Tuition support	<10	36 (90%)	<10
Communication about government financial support	11 (28%)	20 (50%)	<10
Communication about institutional financial support	<10	17 (43%)	15 (38%)
Process of obtaining financial support	14 (36%)	19 (48%)	<10
Support for additional costs associated with PSE	11 (28%)	22 (55%)	<10

Generally, respondents were satisfied with the tuition support they received. Thirty-six respondents (90%) who were receiving tuition support were either satisfied or very satisfied with such support. Twenty-two respondents (55%) were satisfied with the support they received for additional costs associated with post-secondary study.

Eleven respondents (28%) expressed some dissatisfaction with the communication about government financial supports; 11 (28%) expressed dissatisfaction with support for additional costs of PSE; and 14 (37%) expressed dissatisfaction with the process of obtaining the supports. However, more than 40% of respondents expressed some satisfaction with communication about financial supports and with the process of obtaining those supports.

Survey respondents were given the option to provide more information on their ratings. Sixteen respondents (40%) provided additional information. Reasons for dissatisfaction included a lack of coverage for the cost of textbooks (the most commonly mentioned expense that was not waived or reimbursed); a lack of coverage for rent and related expenses, such as renter insurance and appliances; and a lack of coverage for the cost of application fees, lab equipment, driver's license fees, and learning-disability assessments.

Just under half of interviewees were not eligible for the PTWP because they did not meet the program's requirements relating to length of time in care, age, or type of care placement, or because they had not been in care in British Columbia. Fourteen interviewees (70%) stated that a lack of awareness of financial support was a substantial barrier to entering PSE. Some interviewees indicated they became aware of supports through their social worker, secondary-school teacher, or counsellor, but most found out about supports from a PSI counsellor, from discussion with peers, or through their own research. Interviewees who enrolled after the PTWP was implemented were more aware of supports than those who enrolled prior to the PTWP.

Because of my experiences as a youth, I have had to overcome many more internal + external struggles than the average person, and these all take time to work through. As a recovering addict, I was unable to continue with my studies in my early twenties in order to achieve stability. I took three years off school, and during this time it was a constant source of anxiety thinking that I would age out of the tuition waiver program and be unable to return to finish my degree.

– Survey Respondent

Most interviewees were satisfied with tuition support once it was received. Thirteen interviewees received AYA funding. Some students supported by AYA said additional funds were necessary to fully cover their living costs. Some interviewees indicated that they needed to have a job while studying, and believed that to be a hindrance to their education.

Interviewees who attended post-secondary after the PTWP was implemented were more satisfied with the financial support they received than those who attended before the PTWP was available. Nineteen of the 20 students interviewed expressed a desire to pursue further education beyond their current degree, and of these, 18 stated that the availability of financial supports would affect their decision.

Table 16 presents the reported satisfaction of survey respondents with financial supports. The table compares responses from students who first enrolled between 2010 and 2016, prior to the implementation of the PTWP, with those who first enrolled between 2017 and 2020, after the PTWP became available.

Table 16

Respondents' Satisfaction with Financial Supports, by Time of First PSE Enrollment

	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied		Satisfied or very satisfied		Unsure or n/a	
	2010-16	2017-20	2010-16	2017-20	2010-16	2017-20
Tuition support	<10	0	<10	17 (100%)	<10	0
Communication about government financial support	<10	<10	10 (43%)	10 (59%)	<10	<10
Communication about institutional financial support	<10	<10	<10	10 (59%)	11 (47%)	<10
Process of obtaining financial support	<10	<10	10 (59%)	<10	<10	<10
Support for additional costs associated with PSE	<10	<10	11 (47%)	11 (54%)	<10	<10

Note. For 2010-16, n=25; for 2017-20, n=17

Categorizing the survey respondents by year of first PSE enrolment results in small numbers of respondents in each category. This makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from any comparison between categories. However, in general, the responses from the group that first enrolled between 2017 and 2020 are more positive than the responses from the group whose first enrollment was before 2017. A similar change in satisfaction after the introduction of the PTWP was also apparent in the interview data. The survey results also show higher satisfaction rates with actual financial supports than with communication about supports, or with the process of obtaining supports.

It is challenging to compare the satisfaction of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents with financial supports because of the small number of Aboriginal survey respondents. Generally, though, Aboriginal respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the tuition support they received, and Aboriginal respondents were generally more satisfied than non-Aboriginal students with financial support for additional PSE costs. Aboriginal respondents had higher rates of dissatisfaction than non-Aboriginal respondents with communication about government financial support and with the process of obtaining financial support.

More interviewees than survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with financial supports. Just under half of the interviewees said they were not eligible for the PTWP because they had not been in care for a full two years; because

they were too young (17 or 18) or too old (27 or older) to qualify when they first enrolled; because the type of care they had been in was not on the list of eligible care arrangements; or because they had been in care in another province. Thirteen of the 20 interviewees received AYA funding in addition to the provincial tuition waiver.

Respondents were asked if they would have enrolled in PSE without financial or academic supports specific to students with lived experience in care. As shown in **Table 17**, 12 (53%) indicated that they would have been either likely or extremely unlikely to enroll without specific financial supports. The same number indicated that they would have been likely to enroll without specific academic supports.

Table 17

Respondents' Likelihood of Attending PSE Without Financial or Academic Support

	Extremely Likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Extremely Unlikely
Would have enrolled in PSE without financial support being provided specifically for students with lived experience in care	<10	12 (30%)	<10	<10	12 (30%)
Would have enrolled in PSE without academic support being provided specifically for students with lived experience in care	<10	14 (37%)	<10	<10	<10

When student interviewees were asked about their experience of being admitted to or transferring to UBC and navigating the support system, 12 of the UBC participants said they benefited from what they called the "navigator" (enrolment services advisor) role, especially in relation to receiving financial supports. The navigator helped them fill out financial support paperwork, shared information with them, and helped them to access different types of financial support. Participants also discussed the navigator facilitating peer connections, as well as providing safe, knowledgeable, and understanding support.

I had someone specifically for me at UBC that contacted me right away as I was admitted. This step is the most important, I think, because this helps the student with a lot of the confusion they may have.
– Survey Respondent

Fourteen student interview participants (70%) stated that their lack of awareness of financial support was a substantial barrier to attending PSE.

There is not a very clear explanation about the financial aid that's available, so perhaps more communication with kids in care prior to aging out would be beneficial to help decrease the anxiety about the lack of financial aid in attending post-secondary.
– Survey Respondent

I fell through the cracks because I didn't know what I didn't know [of the existence of the financial supports].
– Survey Respondent

I was never made aware of these [supports] in high school and paid a lot of tuition until I found them.
– Survey Respondent

Barriers, Challenges, and Student Recommendations

Survey respondents were asked to discuss barriers or challenges they experienced as a student with lived experience in care. They were also asked to recommend improvements in PSE supports for this group of students. Respondents could identify as many barriers or challenges as they wished.

Of the 40 survey participants, 20 (50%) identified at least one barrier they had encountered.

- 12 respondents (30%) cited a lack of support in navigating available resources during their post-secondary transition;
- 10 respondents (25%) cited a lack of awareness of supports;
- Fewer than 10 respondents cited delays in processing funding; and,
- Fewer than 10 respondents discussed age-related eligibility barriers to financial support.

Other barriers cited by some respondents included:
- lack of financial literacy;
- course loads that were too large; and,
- mental health and addiction issues affecting their opportunities for academic success.

Ten interviewees (20%) stated that COVID-19 has made their education experience more difficult, and others stated that they have felt less connected to their PSE community during the pandemic. When asked about their experience with support during COVID-19, participants mentioned that they were already fatigued by online course meetings and thus were not interested in attending online support meetings. A small number of students said that taking courses online had been beneficial to their education. These experiences reflect what all BC post-secondary students have had to grapple with over the past two years.

Twenty-eight survey respondents (70%) provided recommendations for improving supports for students with lived experience in care. The more commonly mentioned recommendations have been grouped into categories, and each category has been identified with the type of organization (PSI or government) that is most likely to be able to act on these recommendations.

Wrap-Around Support Services (PSIs)
- Designated support staff for students with lived experience in care.
- Mentorship programs and connection opportunities.
- Post-secondary informational workshops for prospective students, their guardians, and support staff.

Improvements to Financial Supports (PSIs and Government)
- Raising awareness of supports available to students with lived experience in care.
- Reducing or removing age-related eligibility requirements, and/or allowing appeals when applicants were excluded because of age.
- Improved processes for obtaining financial supports.
- Solving the problem of account freezes at PSIs. (Tuition waivers or funds for other educational or living costs sometimes are finalized with the institution late in the enrolment cycle. These days may cause accounts to be frozen, causing students to be unable to register on time.)

Changes to Mental Health Supports (PSIs)
- Access to targeted, trauma-informed, mental health supports.
- Reduction and/or elimination of wait times for mental health supports.

Fewer than three respondents made one or more of the following recommendations:
- Guaranteed on-campus housing for students with lived experience in care.
- Work-learn opportunities.
- Improved confidentiality regarding status as a "student with lived experience in care".
- Better training for PSI staff in supporting these students.
- Improved processes to address complaints.

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to identify the financial, academic, and mental health supports that are helpful to students with lived experience in care during their post-secondary experience, as well as to make recommendations to PSIs and government for improving these supports. Seventy percent of the students responding to the survey had received the provincial tuition waiver. Those who received support from the PTWP were generally satisfied with it, but they were less satisfied with the process of obtaining that support. Many students indicated that finding out about financial supports was difficult, and that funding for non-tuition costs often did not cover all of their living expenses and/or the costs of lab equipment, supplies, and textbooks. Many told us that transitioning out of the care of the BC government and into PSE had been difficult, in part because they did not have sufficient information to make good decisions about funding their post-secondary studies.

Of the academic supports offered by PSIs, students were most aware of academic advising and on-campus writing supports; it's likely that both were pointed out by their instructors. Academic advising was the most used academic resource. Thirty percent of survey respondents told us they had used the services provided by their institution's accessibility/disability office. In general, students said they were not always aware of the resources and supports available to them through their PSI, but they also told us that academic supports were not critical to their decision to undertake post-secondary studies.

A majority of students were aware of on-campus mental health supports, and 35% of survey respondents and 75% of interviewees had utilized these supports at their PSI. Students were less aware of other forms of mental health resources, such as phone and online counselling. Peer support and mentoring programs were offered by PSIs, and students often knew about them, but few students actually made use of them. Students who used on-campus counselling resources were often dissatisfied with the services. Some students complained about long wait times to see a counsellor, and about counsellors who did not understand their backgrounds as students with lived experience in care.

UBC and UVic students made up a high proportion of the student interviewees. Many of those discussed these institutions' "wrap-around" support models for students with lived experience in care. At UBC, all undergraduate students are assigned to an enrolment services advisor with a background in social work and in assisting youth in care. UBC interviewees referred to these staff as "navigators." The navigators work with students to help them find the supports and resources they need to be successful. At UVic, a leadership committee has been created to give these students the opportunity to connect with one another, talk about the issues they face, and discuss possible solutions. It is clear from the voices we heard that UBC's and UVic's support systems work well for this group of students.

Given the timing of the student surveys and interviews, it is not surprising that students told us their post-secondary experiences during COVID-19 had been difficult. Some spoke about "Zoom fatigue". Some enjoyed their online courses, some did not.

The student voices from this study confirmed very clearly that this population—students with lived experience in care—is by no means homogeneous. These students come from different backgrounds and have spent different amounts of time in government care. Like other first-time post-secondary students, they have to quickly learn how to navigate a new educational system, as well as how to navigate their particular PSI. They move from being "cared for" by the system to being considered an adult and having to identify and advocate for their own wants and needs. Many came from trauma-filled backgrounds; some did not speak about trauma at all. Like other students, the students in

this study had different reasons for being in PSE, and different academic interests. This is an important message for our understanding of this student population. We cannot assume this population speaks with a single voice, or that there will be one-size-fits-all solutions to improving their post-secondary experiences.

Aboriginal students make up a significant percentage of post-secondary students with lived experience in care. Slightly more than one-quarter of the students identified by UBC, UVic, TRU, and Langara as having lived experience in care were self-declared Aboriginal students. There was some evidence in our analyses that the retention rate for Indigenous students with lived experience in care may be lower than the rate for non-Indigenous students with a similar background. This is clearly a topic of concern, and lays out an important path for future research to support Aboriginal students' access to post-secondary education.

The results of this study show a challenging environment for students with lived experience in care who transition out of government care and into the BC post-secondary system. On their 19th birthdays, youth in care become "adults" and no longer receive the supports they had while in care. There may be many reasons these students choose to enter PSE; one may be that a financial support system is available. Like other first-time post-secondary students, students with lived experience in care may not be prepared for what will be asked of them in their academic programs. The post-secondary sector, then, has a responsibility to ensure that the transition from one system to another is as safe and supportive as possible for these students.

The results of this study are not all bad news. Students who received the provincial tuition waiver and other provincial financial supports were generally happy with the available supports, and a majority indicated it was unlikely they would have enrolled in post-secondary education without having these financial supports. This adds to the evidence that the PTWP, coupled with support from individual PSIs, is helping to expand access to BC post-secondary education for students with lived experience in care.

The results of this study, and the voices of the students identified here, lead to a number of recommendations relating to the most effective types of supports for post-secondary students with lived experience in care. Each recommendation will require a commitment on the part of government and/or PSIs to undertake changes that can improve the educational journeys of this important, but vulnerable, population of young adults.

The six recommendations made below are grouped into three categories: *Create Wrap-Around Supports at All PSIs*, *Review and Align Mental Health Supports*, and *Review and Align Financial Supports*. Some of these recommendations will require additional financial resources to implement, and some will require additional staff resources or time.

Each recommendation below is identified by whether it requires actions by individual PSIs, by government, or by both.

> *The results of this study, and the voices of the students identified here, lead to a number of recommendations relating to the most effective types of supports for post-secondary students with lived experience in care. Each recommendation will require a commitment on the part of government and/or PSIs to undertake changes that can improve the educational journeys of this important, but vulnerable, population of young adults.*

Create Wrap-Around Support Models

1. Create "Navigator" Positions – PSIs

Each PSI should have at least one expert staff member, or "navigator," who would be responsible for helping students with lived experience in care make the transition into PSE, and helping them to secure the ongoing services they need to be successful in their studies. This individual would make contact with students after they are identified through their application for admission (if that institution has a self-identification question on its application form) or through the PSI's Financial Aid office.

"Navigators" would be responsible for providing or supporting specialized on-campus programs that provide formal and informal support to students. These staff could also work to ensure that recruiters, financial-aid staff, registrars and associate registrars, deans' offices, and other areas within the institution have considered how they can respond and adapt to the needs of this vulnerable population. "Navigators" could also be responsible for outreach to external organizations such as transfer partners, government ministries, and community resources.

Students in this study spoke highly of their experiences with the UBC and UVic "navigator" model, and this recommendation is based on those positive experiences.

2. Identify Students with Lived Experience in Care Upon Admission – Government and PSIs

A critical part of better supporting students with lived experience in care is knowing when they have applied to a PSI, so that a support person can make immediate contact with them. UBC offers applicants with lived experience in care the option to indicate that status on applications for admission. This self-identification allows the navigator to connect with these applicants, and to offer transition support to new students.

Given that increasing access to PSE is a provincial priority, it is important to have an across-the-board means of early identification for these students. PSIs alone, or in conjunction with the provincial government, could ask for a self-identifier option to indicate lived experience in care to be added to the EducationPlannerBC provincial post-secondary application service. Self-identification through this process would allow PSIs to immediately know which new applicants have lived experience in care, and to assist them in navigating the application/admissions cycle and learning about relevant supports. The institutions that are not currently a part of EducationPlannerBC could add a self-identification option on their own applications to serve this purpose.

The self-identification option for applicants with lived experience in care would be similar to the current Aboriginal self-identification option, and the information could be treated the same way as the Aboriginal self-identification data, to ensure applicant privacy. This identification could also be used to determine whether this group of students is having difficulty in starting or submitting an application. If these difficulties occur, EducationPlannerBC could create targeted supports for these students to assist them in completing their applications.

3. Identify Key Organizational Contacts – PSIs

A navigator should not be the only individual within a PSI responsible for students with lived experience in care. Specific individuals within key service areas should be identified and tasked with recognizing the needs of this group of students, familiarizing them with their area's services, and being the key contact for naviga-

tors and/or students. Designated key contacts would be helpful within Student Affairs' Offices, Registrar's offices, academic advising offices, accessibility and disability services, counselling services, career centres, and writing centres. Key contacts would support the work of the navigator and the staff within their own areas, and work toward ensuring that operations and practices in these areas are not barriers to student success. Key contacts would also ensure that students with lived experience in care, and those who work with them, are aware of the services their area provides and how to access those services.

Review and Align Mental Health Supports

4. Review and Align Mental Health Supports – PSIs

To ensure that this group of students, and other students with complex mental health needs, receive the mental health supports they require, post-secondary mental health services should be reviewed and aligned with the changing needs of students. A small percentage of students participating in this study make use of phone or online counselling services, but the majority want on-campus, face-to-face mental health supports, without long wait times and with access to a trauma-informed counsellor.

The experts within each PSI will need to do this review and decide upon an appropriate service model for their institution. Many PSIs are already doing this important work to address student needs. When institutions admit students with complex needs, they cannot ignore these students' needs, and mental health support is a high priority for many students with lived experience in care.

Review and Align Financial Supports

5. Review and Align Government Financial Supports – Government

To ensure supports are extended to students with the broadest range of circumstances, eligibility requirements for the PTWP and other forms of government support must be reviewed and aligned with students' needs and situations, so that students receive appropriate financial support. Alignment of financial supports for students with lived experience in care would likely require a broadening of eligibility requirements for the PTWP, as well as alignment of the AYA and YEAF and other provincial support mechanisms for post-secondary students with those students' needs. Reviewing and aligning these multiple sources of funding could lead to a more supportive financial model, allowing students to plan and manage their education more effectively.

Changing the requirements of the PTWP to align with student needs could mean that PSIs may no longer need to provide their own internal waiver programs. Internal funding set aside by institutions to provide waivers could be repurposed in other ways to support these students, such as supporting their living costs, providing capital to create safe and welcoming social spaces, or creating new support staff positions. It is acknowledged that shifting funds across budget lines or categories may be difficult.

6. Review and Align Operational Financial Processes Relating to Students with Lived Experience in Care – PSIs

To ensure students with lived experience in care do not face potential account freezes or other negative finance-related interactions with their PSIs, registrars' offices, financial aid offices, and financial services units should review and align their operational procedures and timelines for fee payments, to ensure students receiving external support such as the PTW are not disadvantaged. There may be instances where the student

is at fault for a late registration, but it is the responsibility of PSIs to ensure that their business practices align with external funding timelines, and to ensure as much as possible that students are not disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control, such as external funding arriving after the due date for tuition payments. PSIs should also ensure that students know where to go if they have questions or concerns about these processes.

In solidarity with Czeck's recommendation for additional research, we offer a seventh recommendation.

7. Provide Additional Support for Research into Improving Post-Secondary Outcomes of Students with Lived Experience in Care – PSIs and Government

The six recommendations presented above are closely aligned with the recommendations made by Czeck (2015):

- Creating more flexibility in eligibility criteria for major supports such as AYA and YEAF;
- Expanding and promoting existing programs that bolster the social supports of FYIC with caring adults (i.e., mentoring programs and youth-in-transition conferences);
- Creating specialized on-campus support programs that provide formal and informal support to FYIC and promote a sense of community;
- Providing more mental health supports on campus that are trauma-informed;
- Providing staff at PSIs with professional development about the unique challenges faced by FYIC; and,
- Supporting the development of more academic research on improving the adult outcomes of FYIC in the province.

This study, like Czeck's, highlights the need for additional research on the educational outcomes of students with lived experience in care. If provincial funds were made available to support this research, research could be undertaken directly through PSIs or government agencies. The more we know about the interests and needs of these students, the more that PSIs and government can fine-tune services and supports to improve the experience of this important, but vulnerable, student population. It would be helpful, for example, to know more about the population of students with lived experience in care at every PSI in BC, and across multiple PSIs in BC. What does persistence and success look like for these students? What supports at PSIs are most used by this group? It would also be helpful to know what these students do after they leave PSE. Do they go on to graduate school, as many in this study suggested they would like to? While this study points to answers to some questions about appropriate supports, there are many additional research topics that should be investigated.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Institutional Data Request Template

About: We ask that INSTITUTION provide an anonymized case-level dataset with the information listed below. This template will be sent as part of the REB package, and subsequently, as a request to the Institutional Research office or the Registrar's Office, as appropriate for the institution. Any data used for this project will be stored in Canada in accordance with privacy legislation and institutional requirements. Students to be included in the study are those who began studying at your institution between September 2015 and August 2020 inclusive. **Please exclude students who are under 18 years of age.**

Instructions: Characteristics contained in the template are described below. We are flexible regarding data formatting and are open to working with data in the format that works best for your institution.

Characteristic	Column	Description
Anonymous ID	A	Please provide an anonymized identification code for each student included in the dataset.
Admission Year	B	Academic year in which student was admitted.
Admission Session	C	Academic session in which student was admitted.
Received Provincial Waiver	D	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student has received the Provincial Tuition Waiver.
Received Institution Waiver / Bursary	E	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student has received an Institutional Tuition Waiver / Bursary.
Other Specialized Financial Aid	F	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student received others waivers or bursaries that are offered specifically to students with lived experience in care. Any other financial aid received by the student (scholarships, awards, bursaries, loans, grants, or other) should not be included.
Transfer or Direct Entry	G	TRANSFER STUDENT: An undergraduate student admitted with the basis of admission "transfer from a college," "transfer from a university," "transfer with associate degree" or similar, or a student admitted with more than 15 transfer credits. DIRECT-ENTRY STUDENTS: Students admitted without prior enrolment at or credits from another post-secondary institution. Note: students who have transfer credits but do not meet the definition of "Transfer" above can be excluded.
Self-Declared Aboriginal Status	H	A student who is a Canadian citizen and has declared (either on an application for admission or at a later time) themselves to be Aboriginal.
Gender	I	Gender
Faculty At Admission	J	Faculty of the program to which the student was admitted.
CIP2 At Admission	K	CIP2 code of the program to which the student was admitted.

Credential Type At Admission	L	Undergraduate credential (degree, certificate, diploma, etc.) that would be received at the end of the program to which the student was admitted.
Expected Program Length	M	The expected amount of time (in months or years, please specify) for the student to complete the program to which they were admitted.
Age at Admission	N	Age at the beginning of the academic year in which the student was admitted (that is, September 1). Please exclude students who are 18 or under at the time of data collection.
Persistence to Start of Year 1 Term 2	O	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student persisted to Year 1 Term 2.
Persistence to Start of Year 2 Term 1	P	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student persisted to Year 2 Term 1.
Persistence to Start of Year 3 Term 1	Q	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student persisted to Year 3 Term 1.
Number of Credits Accumulated at Start of Year 1 Term 2	R	Number of Credits Accumulated for student persisting to Year 1 Term 2.
Number of Credits Accumulated at Start of Year 2 Term 1	S	Number of Credits Accumulated for student persisting to Year 2 Term 1.
Number of Credits Accumulated at Year 3 Term 1	T	Number of Credits Accumulated for student persisting to Year 3 Term 1.
Student Still Enrolled	U	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student is still enrolled.
Student Enrolled Again/ Program Switch	V	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if the student is currently in a different program than at admission.
Current Faculty of Re-Enrolled Student	W	For students who are marked TRUE in variable W (Student Enrolled Again), please list the current Faculty.
Current CIP2 of Re-Enrolled Student	X	For students who are marked TRUE in variable W (Student Enrolled Again), please list the current CIP2.
Student Graduated	Y	Please indicate as TRUE or FALSE if student has graduated.
Transfer Students (STP)	Z	True/false indicator for students transferring out of the institution; this is particularly aimed at Langara. If possible, we would appreciate if the PEN numbers of the students could be provided to the STP and they could indicate the number in each group that are known to have transferred to another BC public post-secondary institution.

Appendix 2: Student Survey Questions

Successful Practices in Supporting Students with Lived Experience in Care

MAIN SURVEY

Our offices are located on the traditional and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), Qayqayt, Stz'uminus, sc̓əwaθena?ɬ (Tsawwassen), Kwantlen, Stó:lō,Snaw-naw-as and Snuneymuxw nations. We wish to acknowledge this unceded territory and express our gratitude to all Coast Salish peoples.

The British Columbia Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT) and Plaid Consulting Inc. are conducting research on the academic and financial supports offered to students with lived experience in care. This includes students with lived experience in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency.

This research is funded by the British Columbia Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT), and conducted by Plaid Consulting Inc. The primary investigator of this research is Anya Goldin of Plaid Consulting.

We are contacting you, as a student with lived experience in care, to request your participation in a survey for this project. This survey aims to learn more about the academic and financial educational supports you have received as a student, and your perceptions of those supports. Your feedback will help to improve programs and supports for all post-secondary students with lived experience in care.

The survey will take approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and your identity will remain anonymous (including to us). Your information, participation or feedback will not be shared with your institution. Your survey responses will not be linked to performance data such as grade point averages. Survey responses will be encrypted and stored securely in Microsoft's Canadian data centre and on the researcher's password-protected and encrypted devices. Following completion of the study, the responses will be securely destroyed.

By completing the survey, you are indicating that you have given your informed consent to participate in the project and to have your survey responses included in the project data. "Informed consent" means that you have read the survey information, understand how your information will be used, and agree to have your responses included in the survey data. At the end of the survey, you will have the option to revoke your participation. Revoking your participation means that your survey responses will not be used in the study and will be securely destroyed. After completing the survey, you can enter a draw to win one of 10 gift cards (value $25). You can also provide your email address to receive a notification when the project outcomes are published. Your contact information will be entered on a separate page that is not tied to your survey responses. Contact information will be destroyed after we have sent you the gift card(s), or, if you choose, after we have sent you the final report.

The report resulting from this research will be open access on the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer publications page, meaning that it can be available to everyone who visits the website. You will have an option to be notified when the report is published via email at the end of the survey.

Virtual interviews on this topic will also be held. Details are discussed at the end of the survey, where you will be asked if you are interested in participating. You may also choose to participate in the interview without completing the survey.

Who can I contact if I have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

If you have questions about the research in general, please contact Plaid at info@plaid.is.

To learn more about Plaid's privacy policy, click here.

Where can I find resources for students with lived experience in care?

For resources for students with lived experience in care, please contact your institution. We also recommend agedout.com as a resource for students with lived experience in care. You can find their landing page on education here.

We appreciate your time. Thank you in advance for contributing to this project

You can skip any question by leaving the response blank.

Proceed to Survey?

- Yes, take me to the survey
- No, I do not want to complete the survey
- I would like to participate in an interview to discuss my experiences over the phone, but do not want to complete the survey

[IF STRAIGHT TO INTERVIEW]: Thank you for choosing to participate in an interview! Please use the following link for more interview information and to sign up for an interview: [LINK]

If you decide you would like to complete the survey, you can use the link provided to you again at any time during the survey period, or change your answer above now.

If you have questions about the research, please contact Plaid at info@plaid.is.

To learn more about Plaid's privacy policy click here (link to https://plaid.is/privacy/).

You may now close your browser

[IF NO TO ABOVE]: Thank you for your time. If you decide you would like to complete the survey, you can use the link provided to you again at any time during the survey period.

If you have any concerns or complaints about this research, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

If you have questions about the research, please contact Plaid at info@plaid.is.

You may now close your browser

[IF YES TO ABOVE]: [straight to survey]:

Select your gender identity:
- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Other
- Choose not to disclose

Are you someone with Trans experience?
- Yes
- No
- Choose not to disclose

What year were you born?

[Slider]

Do you identify yourself as an Aboriginal person of Canada?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to disclose

[IF YES]

- Do you identify as First Nations?
- Do you identify as Métis?
- Do you identify as Inuit?

What year did you first enroll in post-secondary education?

[Slider]

Which post-secondary institution did you attend most recently?

[Institution list drop down]

Which other post-secondary institution(s) have you previously attended? (please select all that apply)

- I have not attended any institutions other than the institution listed above
- [Institution list drop down]

What is the subject of the program you were most recently enrolled in?

[Text box]

What credential is awarded by the program you were most recently enrolled in?

[Credential list drop-down]

Are you currently enrolled in a post-secondary program?

- Yes
- No

[Shows only if NO to above] *Which of the following options best describes you?*

- I have graduated from a post-secondary program
- I am not currently enrolled, but I plan to re-enrol
- I am not currently enrolled and I do not plan to re-enrol

How many academic credits have you completed?

- 0-30
- 31-60
- 61-90
- 91-120

Have you received a tuition waiver, bursary, award, or other type of educational funding for students with lived experience in care? If so, which of these waivers did you receive? (Select all that apply)

- Provincial Tuition Waiver
- Other funding through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (not including the Provincial Tuition Waiver)
- Funding through a Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA)
- University of British Columbia Post Care Tuition Waiver
- Langara Youth in Care Bursary

- I did not receive a tuition waiver, bursary, or award
- Unsure
- Other (please specify)

Did you receive any other types of financial support for your post-secondary education?
(Select all that apply)
- I received additional funding, but I'm not sure of the source
- Youth Educational Assistance Fund (YEAF)
- Agreements with Young Adults (AYA)
- Youth Futures Education Fund (YFEF)
- Scholarships or other financial support based on previous or current academic performance
- Bursaries or other financial support based on financial need (please specify below)
- Government loans (e.g. StudentAid BC) (please specify below)
- Other types of loans (please specify below)
- Other (please specify below)

[If Other]: Funding Name(s):

[If Other:] Source(s):
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
- A Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA)
- My institution
- My Aboriginal band
- Other (please specify)

How did you find out about the tuition waiver, bursary, or award program(s) for students with lived experience in care that you have used? (Select all that apply)
- High school teacher
- High school counsellor
- Post-secondary financial aid advisor
- Post-secondary academic advisor
- Post-secondary faculty member
- Post-secondary registrar's office
- Friend
- Parent or guardian
- Social or support worker
- Post-secondary institution website
- Government website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Other

Were any of the following types of fees waived (you did not pay) or reimbursed (you paid, and the institution paid you back)?

	Fully Waived	Partially Waived	Fully Reimbursed	Partially Reimbursed	Unsure	N/A
Application fees						
Registration fees						
Assessment fees (e.g. placement tests)						
Health/dental insurance fees						
Student union fees						
Textbook purchases						
Laboratory equipment/ supplies fees						
Additional program-specific fees						

Did you receive any financial support for your living costs (excluding on-campus housing and childcare) while studying? (Select all that apply)

- Fully paid
- Fully reimbursed
- Partially paid
- Partially reimbursed

Did you receive any financial support for the living costs of children and/or dependents (excluding on-campus housing and childcare) while studying?

- Fully paid
- Fully reimbursed
- Partially paid
- Partially reimbursed

Were there other costs related to your post-secondary education that were not partially or fully waived or reimbursed for you? Please list them.

[Text box]

*During your post-secondary studies, which types of **academic** support were you aware of?*

(Select all that apply)

- Academic advising
- Disability Services, Centre for Accessibility, or Academic Accommodation
- On-campus math support
- On-campus writing support
- On-campus research support
- Support in transitioning into post-secondary studies (such as orientation events or peer guides)
- Support in transitioning out of post-secondary studies (such as career counseling or support in finding employment)
- Other

During your post-secondary studies, did you use any of these academic supports? (Select all that apply)

- Academic advising
- Disability Services, Centre for Accessibility, or Academic Accommodations
- On-campus math support
- On-campus writing support
- On-campus research support
- Support in transitioning into post-secondary studies (such as orientation events or peer guides)
- Support in transitioning out of post-secondary studies (such as career counseling or support in finding employment)
- Other

*Were any of the **academic** supports you received specifically for students with lived experience in care?*

- No
- Yes (please specify below)

Have you ever participated in a mentoring program at your institution specifically for students with lived experience in care?

- Yes, peer mentoring
- Yes, professional mentoring
- No, this was not offered/I was not aware this was offered
- No, I opted not to participate in a mentorship program

Are you currently participating in a mentoring program at your institution specifically for students with lived experience in care?

- Yes, peer mentoring
- Yes, professional mentoring
- No, this was not offered/I was not aware this was offered
- No, I opted not to participate in a mentorship program

Do you feel participating in the mentoring program was beneficial to your educational experience?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree

Please use the following text box if you would like to elaborate on the question above.

[Text box]

Were/are you aware of mental health support services, such as counselling, offered by your institution?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to respond
  - **[Expands ONLY if YES]** On-campus counselling
  - Online counselling
  - Phone counselling
  - Organized peer support gatherings and social events
  - Other (please specify)

Have you utilized any mental health support services, such as counselling, offered by your institution?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to respond
  - **[Expands ONLY if YES]** On-campus counselling
  - Online counselling
  - Phone counselling
  - Organized peer support gatherings and social events
  - Other (please specify)

[ONLY SHOW IF YES TO ABOVE] *How satisfied were/are you with the mental health support services that were/are offered?*

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A
The **number** of mental health supports offered						
The **range** of mental health support services offered						
The **quality** of the mental health support services offered						

[ONLY SHOWS IF YES TO ABOVE]: *Please use the following text-box if you would like to elaborate on the question above.*

[Text Box]

	Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Extremely Likely	N/A
Would you have enrolled in post-secondary education if no financial support was provided for you?						
Would you have enrolled in post-secondary education if no academic support was available specifically for students with lived experience in care?						

At what age did you apply for the financial aid you received?

[Slider]

For how long were you in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency?

- 0-11 months
- 1 year or more
- 2 years or more
- 3 years or more
- Prefer not to disclose

Are you interested in pursuing further education beyond your current program?

- Yes
- No
- I have not decided yet

What program(s) are you interested in attending?

- Diploma
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree (PhD or EdD)
- Professional post-secondary programs (such as law, medicine, teaching) (please specify below)
- Other professional programs or certifications (e.g. Certified Public Accountant) (please specify below)

In your experience as a post-secondary student with lived experience in care, how satisfied were you with:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A
Tuition support						
Academic advising						
Communication about on-campus academic support services						
Communication about on-campus financial support						
The process of obtaining financial support						
The process of obtaining academic support						
Supporting in transitioning into post-secondary						
Support in transitioning out of post-secondary (if graduate or left studies)						
Protection of my privacy as a student with lived experience in care						

Were there any barriers you encountered in receiving academic or financial support during your post-secondary education? Please specify the type of support involved and the barriers you encountered.

[Text Box]

How do you think post-secondary institutions could improve their support for students with lived experience in care?

[Text Box]

If you would like to add any other comments regarding your experiences as a post-secondary student with lived experiences in care, please use this space to do so.

[Text Box]

Appendix 3: Student Interview Questions

QUESTIONS

Background

1) *Are you currently a post-secondary student?*
    a) If no - Have you graduated?
    b) If yes - What year?

2) *What post-secondary institution did/do you attend?*

3) *What year did you first attend post-secondary?*
    a) Was there a gap between the time you graduated high school and when you began attending post-secondary?

4) *What program did you/are you taking?*
    a) What credential does this program lead to?

5) *Do you identify as an Aboriginal Person of Canada?*

6) *Please describe your experience of moving from high school to post-secondary education. Was there anything you found particularly difficult to navigate?*
    a) In these situations, did your high school, institution, and any/or any other organization do anything to support you?

Experience

1) *What academic supports were offered to you as a post-secondary student?*
    a) How was your experience with these supports?
    b) Are there any supports that were not available but which would have helped you?

2) (If graduated) *Did your institution support you in the transition out of post-secondary? Was there anything you found particularly difficult to navigate?*
    a) In these situations, did your institution, or any other organization support you?
    b) (If went on to further education, as indicated above) How did your institution support you in transitioning to your further education?

3) (If identified as Aboriginal, as stated above): *Has your institution supported you as an Aboriginal student with lived experience in care?*

4) *What sources of educational funding were available to you?*
    a) Was it difficult to obtain this funding? If so, why?
    b) Did you have trouble with any of the requirements of the funding that was provided to you?
    c) Were there any sources of funding which you looked into that you did not meet the requirements for?
    d) What expenses are covered by the funding you received?
    e) Did you receive any funding in a form other than financial allocations to pay for expenses? (e.g. tuition waiver)
    f) Were there other expenses that your funding did not cover?
    g) Did funding affect which institution or program you decided to attend? If so, how?
    h) Overall, how satisfied were you with the funding you received?

5) (Depending on further education answer above): *Do you hope to / do you attend or have you attended graduate school? Does funding affect your decision? For example, will it/did it affect your choice of institution or program?*

6) *Do you feel comfortable with your <u>institution</u> knowing your status as a Student with Lived Experience in care as part of the funding process?*

The next questions will ask about your experience with mental health supports at your institution. As with the other sections, you may choose to skip any questions in this section, or to skip this section entirely. Would you like to continue with the questions on mental health support, or skip to the next set of questions?

7) *Did your institution offer mental health supports to you?*
   a) What kind of supports?
   b) Did you utilize any of these supports?
   c) How was your experience with these supports? Were you satisfied with the supports provided to you?
   d) Are there any other ways in which your institution could have supported your mental health?

8) *Have you participated in a peer mentorship/support program at your institution?*
   a) What kind of program?
   b) How was your experience in this program? Do you recommend it for other students?
   c) Have you participated in a professional mentorship/support program at your institution?
   d) What kind of program?

9) *How was your experience in this program? Do you recommend it for other students?*

10) *Have there been any ways your institution has helped you feel socially connected on campus?*
    a) Does your institution hold events for students with lived experiences in care? Have you attended these events? If so, have you found them beneficial?
    b) Is there a dedicated space for students with lived experiences in care at your institution?

11) *Have there been any ways your institution has helped you feel socially connected in your community?*

12) *Has COVID-19 changed your educational journey?*
    a) Do you still find that you are able to access the supports that were available to you before COVID-19?
    b) Have there been any additional supports available for you during COVID-19?

13) *Are there any other barriers you experienced or are experiencing in your time at your post-secondary institution?*

14) *Is there anything we have not asked or discussed today that is important for us to know, or that might be useful for other students or post-secondary institutions to know?*

15) *Would you like to be notified via email when the report is published? You may skip this if you have already requested to be notified through the survey.*

Appendix 4: List of Institutional Interview Participants

Institution	Name	Position
University of British Columbia	Hala Nugent	Enrolment Services Advisor
	Christopher Rambaran	Enrolment Services Advisor
	Linda Hallam	Enrolment Services Advisor
	Magdalena Moore	Arts Academic Advisor, Aboriginal Students
	Teneille Shea	Academic Initiatives Project Manager
Langara College	Jordan Berger	Assistant Registrar, Financial Aid and Information Services
	Anna Beck	Supervisor, Financial Aid
	Andrea Kristina Biason	Financial Aid Officer
University of Victoria	Jessica Gelowsky	Project Manager, Student Affairs
	Angi Ross	Program Manager, New Student Connect
	Paisley Pelletier	UVic graduate student and member of UVic SWLEC Support Team
Thompson Rivers University	Gordon Down	Director, Student Awards and Financial Aid
Vancouver Island University*	William Litchfield	Associate Vice-President and Chief Advancement Officer

*Though Vancouver Island University was not an institutional participant in the study, a staff member was interviewed because of the large number of VIU students receiving the PTW, and the institution's history of supporting students with lived experience in care.
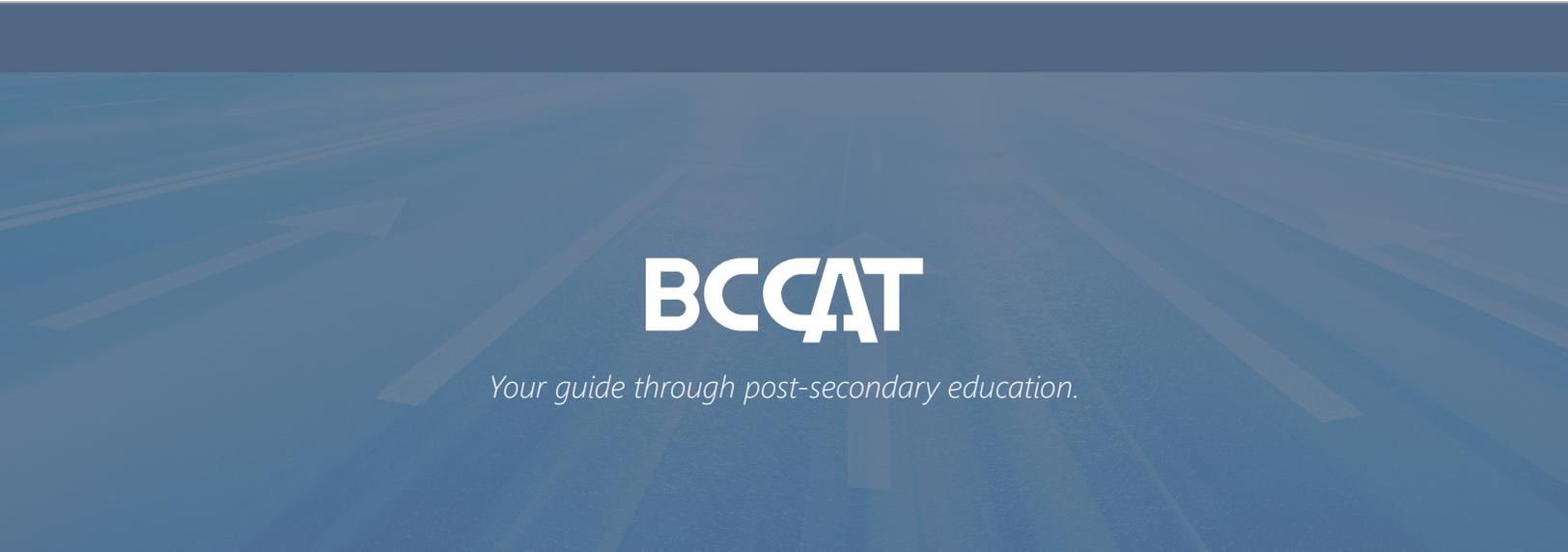
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