 <p>Capilano Students' Union</p>	<b>Policy No.</b>	<b>Approval Authority</b>
	IS-01	Board of Directors
	<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
	<b>Student Housing</b>	October 4, 2019
	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Scheduled Review</b>
	Campaigns & Advocacy Committee	June 2022

## Summary

Capilano University is one of only three publicly-funded universities in British Columbia without dedicated on-campus residences, or nearby purpose-built student housing.<sup>1</sup> Students are forced into off-campus residences or market rental housing, which comes with negative impacts for students, the university and the North Shore community. The creation of purpose-built affordable student housing on the North Shore would allow students to live close to school and work, improving their overall quality of life on campus as well as helping to reduce congestion and filling crucial gaps in the economy.

Off-campus, market rental housing is rarely geared towards the needs or requirements of students and comes with problems such as rental affordability, roommates and neighbourhoods with mismatched schedules and lifestyles,<sup>2</sup> and challenges finding a subtenant for the summer months.<sup>3</sup> A lack of student housing on the North Shore also means that students must commute across the Lower Mainland, adding to the traffic and gridlock of the already congested local roads and highways.<sup>4</sup>

While off-campus residences attempt to remedy many of the above problems found in off-campus housing in general, problems still remain such as unsatisfactory food options and availability, long congested commutes to campus, as well as a lack of rental tenancy rights.<sup>5</sup>

The creation of on- or off-campus, purpose-built, affordable student housing on the North Shore would lower student dependence on roommates for housing security and create a safe environment in which students can be in close proximity to other individuals sharing similar lifestyles, goals and needs.<sup>6</sup> The North Shore, like many communities in Canada, is also facing a shortage of labour with high vacancies in lower paid, entry-level positions.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, young people are frequently priced out of the North Vancouver rental market,<sup>8</sup> making it hard for businesses to fill these positions.

<sup>1</sup> Meehan, Patrick, and Alex McGowan. "White Paper on On-Campus Housing", 9, Alliance of BC Students, accessed online: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a825096914e6b88f5457393/t/5a878a87f9619a0752036e8f/1518832272403/absc-housingwhitepaper.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>3</sup> "The Canadian Student Housing Market: Its Structure and Characteristics." *SVN Rock Advisors*. Web. 5, accessed online: <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/4353479/Reports%20and%20Whitepapers/SVN%20Rock%20Advisors%20Canadian%20Student%20Housing%20Whitepaper.pdf>


<sup>4</sup> Meehan and McGowan, "White Paper on On-Campus Housing", 11.

<sup>5</sup> Residential Tenancy Act. *Province of British Columbia*. Section 4(b), accessed online: [http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/02078\\_01](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/02078_01)

<sup>6</sup> "The Canadian Student Housing Market," *SVN Rock Advisors*, 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> Cocolakis-Wormstall, Michael. Business Development Bank of Canada. *Labour Shortage: Here to Stay*, 1. *Business Development Bank of Canada*, accessed online: [https://www.bdc.ca/en/documents/analysis\\_research/labour-shortage.pdf](https://www.bdc.ca/en/documents/analysis_research/labour-shortage.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Lundy, Matt. "Affordable Rental Housing Is Nearly Nonexistent for Minimum-wage Workers, Report Finds." *The Globe and Mail*, accessed online:

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## Definitions

In this policy:

**"Residential Tenancy Act"** means the British Columbia law that governs tenancy agreements, rental units, and residential properties – but which excludes any residence that is operated by a post-secondary institution (whether or not the housing is on or off campus).

**"on-campus housing"** means housing operated by a post-secondary institution for students that is located within the boundaries of one of the post-secondary institutions' campuses.

**"off-campus housing"** means housing operated by a post-secondary institution for students that is located outside of the boundaries of one of the post-secondary institutions' campuses.

**"student housing"** means housing that has been designed to specifically meet the unique needs of university and college students.

**"market rental housing"** means housing where the rent amount is generally similar to the rent of other units in the private (non-subsidized) housing market.

**"affordable housing"** means housing where the rent amount is 30 percent or less of a household's gross income.

## Rationale

The Capilano Students' Union has adopted these policy principles because:

- British Columbia has one of the highest costs of living in the country;<sup>9</sup>
- There is a lack of affordable housing in general, especially in North Vancouver.<sup>10</sup>
- There are a lack of housing projects at any Capilano University campus;<sup>11</sup>
- Students who live close to campus in purpose-built housing experience a higher quality of

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-affordable-rental-housing-is-nearly-nonexistent-for-minimum-wage/>


<sup>9</sup> Kurial, Alexander. "Cost of Living Stats Indicate Tough Road Ahead for Vancouver Families." *Vancouver Courier*, May 31, 2018, accessed online:

<https://www.vancourier.com/news/cost-of-living-stats-indicate-tough-road-ahead-for-vancouver-families-1.23281129>

<sup>10</sup> Kahrmann, Gerry. "Affordable Housing Still a Pressing Matter in North Van District, Council Says." *Vancouver Sun*, April 08, 2019, accessed online:

<https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/affordable-housing-still-a-pressing-matter-in-north-van-district-council-says>

<sup>11</sup> Meehan and McGowan, "White Paper on On-Campus Housing", 9.

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life, with unique student needs more likely to be met; and<sup>12</sup>

- Ensuring the North Shore has the necessary housing infrastructure to support its post-secondary institutions is a key part to reducing congestion and carbon emissions.<sup>13</sup>

## Policy Principles

1. The Capilano Students' Union supports the building of high-quality, purpose-built, affordable student housing.
2. The Capilano Students' Union supports initiatives that encourage:
  - a. access to high quality, affordable student housing for all students who require it;
  - b. educating students as to their rights as tenants;
  - c. legislation regulating on-campus housing similar to the *Residential Tenancy Act*; and
  - d. the setting of a reasonable cap on increases to rent;
  - e. student housing that is fully accessible to students with disabilities;
  - f. housing that takes into account the needs of student parents;
  - g. government support for public and not-for profit affordable housing;
  - h. student participation in neighborhood, community, and tenant groups; and
  - i. the maintenance of student residences as only owned and operated by public, community-based or non-profit organizations.
3. The Capilano Students' Union opposes initiatives involving:
  - a. increases to residence fees that go beyond the standard allowable rent increase in British Columbia, as defined by the *Residential Tenancy Act*;
  - b. landlords exploiting the unfamiliarity of students (and international students in particular) with tenants' rights to sidestep the Residential Tenancy Act, or otherwise intimidating student tenants; and
  - c. profit-generation from campus student housing of any kind, especially international students' residences.

<sup>12</sup> "The Canadian Student Housing Market," *SVN Rock Advisors*, 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> Meehan and McGowan, "White Paper on On-Campus Housing", 11.