SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thank you for your continued engagement and thoughtful feedback regarding UFV's financial sustainability and the budgeting process. We appreciate the commitment to strengthening our university's financial stewardship and operational effectiveness.

We are pleased to share that many of the suggestions raised are already part of our ongoing efforts. Here's a summary of the feedback themes and planned initiatives that are aligned with these themes, along with areas where we plan to deepen our work and evaluate opportunities.

<u>Overarching Themes</u>

- **Efficiencies Before Cuts:** Prioritize opportunities for operational efficiencies before position reductions.

- **Transparency & Collaboration:** Engage stakeholders in open, data-informed decision-making.

- **Balanced Approach:** Combine short-term cost controls with long-term revenue strategies to maintain academic quality and institutional reputation.

Theme 1. Institutional Efficiency & Structural Reform

- **Bottom-Up Review:** Conduct a comprehensive systems review to reduce silos, improve efficiency, and unify processes while including input from frontline staff and leveraging existing tracking systems.

- **Administrative Streamlining:** Merge overlapping management layers and reduce course releases for administrative roles.

- **Leadership Review:** Audit senior management for redundancies and consider tiered salary reductions for higher earners.

- **Transparency & Collaboration:** Establish joint working groups for budget consultation and maintain open communication to reduce fear and misinformation.

Response

We recognize the importance of a transparent, efficient, and collaborative financial framework. We have enhanced visibility into budget developments and strategic priorities by holding a preliminary budget town hall with opportunity for Q&A and feedback submissions, expanding communication touchpoints throughout the budgeting process, and will continue to explore inclusive forums that support meaningful engagement.

Many administrative units across the university regularly assess their operations to identify opportunities for cost savings and improved efficiencies—both within and between their departments and through cross-functional collaboration. These efforts are undertaken with a commitment to maintaining service standards for students, staff, and faculty, and ensuring compliance with government and legislative requirements.

UFV recognizes that the roles of Department Chair and Centre Director involve substantial administrative responsibilities that go beyond typical faculty service expectations. Course releases allow these individuals to dedicate the necessary time to leadership, strategic planning, accreditation, and other essential functions without compromising instructional quality. This balance is crucial for sustaining institutional effectiveness and meeting strategic goals.

We recognize that there is always room for improvement and encourage departments to engage their teams in ongoing dialogue and collaboration to generate ideas for enhancement.

In alignment with regulatory requirements, the university's compensation structures—covering salary scales, job evaluations, and administrative salaries—are developed under the oversight and approval of the Post-Secondary Employers' Association (PSEA).

Theme 2. Revenue Enhancement

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Develop corporate partnerships, sponsorships, and opportunities for naming rights.

- **Program Innovation:** Launch high-demand programs (AI, Applied Technology, Business Analytics, Health Informatics) and expand micro-credentials.

- **International & Domestic Recruitment:** Grow online/hybrid programs to overcome visa barriers, diversify markets, and strengthen domestic enrollment through applied technical and adult education.

- **Ancillary Services:** Optimize revenue generating opportunities including food services, housing, and bookstore; monetize idle assets like housing, meeting and event spaces, and parking spaces utilized for non-university purposes.

- **Fundraising:** Expand donor engagement and alumni outreach; consider donor-driven campaigns for sustainability.

Response

Many of the ideas shared reflect work that is already underway at UFV, while others are informing new actions and planning. Below are examples of how these strategies are being implemented across the university.

Strategic Partnerships: UFV continues to grow relationships with community organizations, businesses, and donors that align with our academic mission and values. These partnerships have supported new research projects, student awards, and facility improvements in areas such as sustainable food systems, health sciences, athletics, and Indigenous student success.

Program Innovation: UFV is developing new credentials that respond to labour-market needs, including offerings in applied technology, business analytics, and health informatics. We are also expanding micro-credential programs and short-form learning options to help people upgrade their skills throughout their careers.

International & Domestic Recruitment: To support both international and local learners, UFV is increasing flexible delivery. For Fall 2025, about 22 percent of courses are online and nearly 12 percent use blended formats. These options help international students facing visa delays and give working professionals greater access to UFV programs.

Ancillary Services: The completion of UFV's new Student Housing building and Dining Hall creates new opportunities to generate revenue through summer housing, conferences, and external event rentals, while improving the overall student experience during the academic year.

Fundraising: UFV is expanding donor and alumni engagement through targeted campaigns that focus on sustainability, student support, and community innovation. The university is also developing a long-term legacy-giving strategy with initiatives that will engage alumni, retirees, and community partners in creating lasting impact through bequests, endowments, and memorial gifts. UFV is co-developing a Community Engagement Framework to launch in Spring 2026, which will deepen partnerships, strengthen our culture of philanthropy, and connect teaching, learning, and research to community priorities.

Across the university, teams are identifying creative ways to generate revenue, operate efficiently, and strengthen UFV's financial sustainability. These efforts ensure that every dollar directly supports student learning, community impact, and the university's long-term success.

Theme 3. Expense Management & Cost-Saving Measures

- **Capital & Operational Spending:** Pause non-essential projects, defer cosmetic upgrades, and implement spending freezes on discretionary items.

- **Energy & Facilities:** Install motion sensors, adjust thermostats, close lab fume hoods, and pursue green building grants.

- **Technology:** Extend computer refresh cycles and audit software licenses.

- **Event Austerity:** Scale back events, use internal venues, and minimize catering.

- **Travel & Meetings:** Default to virtual meetings and restrict travel.

Response

In response to the current fiscal environment, the university has implemented a reduction on discretionary spending—including but not limited to travel, mileage, catering, special events, office supplies, training, one-time projects, and professional development for administrators—as part of a broader effort to manage costs responsibly across all areas. These measures and budget adjustments for 2026/27 are being applied equitably, including within administrative units, to ensure consistency and transparency.

At the same time, we remain committed to preserving budgets for critical student and staff events that support engagement, community-building, and institutional priorities. These activities are essential to the university experience and will continue to be supported where they align with strategic goals and demonstrate clear value. At the same time, we are actively seeking opportunities to deliver these events more efficiently and cost-effectively, and on-campus.

UFV has adopted a proactive approach to evaluating technology solutions, with a focus on effectiveness, cost efficiency, and return on investment. Under the leadership of the Chief Information Officer (CIO), potential savings in software licensing and computer refresh cycles have been identified. Further opportunities are being explored such as capitalizing on existing licenses to improve service delivery in other areas and assessing the development of in-house systems where appropriate.

We are assessing building data to determine occupancy levels during operating hours with the intent of reducing building operating costs.

Capital projects are mainly funded through restricted funds. We are assessing projects through the lens of campus renewal, managing deferred maintenance priorities, and providing appropriate academic spaces.

We will continue to review these measures regularly and engage departments in identifying efficiencies and opportunities for innovation, while ensuring service levels and compliance requirements are upheld.

Theme 4. Staffing & Workforce Strategies

- **Voluntary Options:** Offer workload reduction, unpaid leaves, job sharing, and retirement incentives with clear policies and recall rights.
- **Guardrails:** Ensure all voluntary measures include written rights, no loss of benefits, and sunset clauses for fairness.
- **Hiring Freeze:** Suspend new hires and renewals for limited-term appointments.
- **Role Adjustments:** Redistribute workloads, reduce overload, and ensure qualifications align with roles.

- **Student Workers:** Utilize students for operational gaps to preserve permanent positions.

Response

General measures: We are well underway with identifying and adjusting workforce processes and mitigation strategies. Common HR approvals have been mapped and adapted to ensure senior level review and to control cost. This includes processes such as postings, new job descriptions, reclasses, extra duties pay, travel, stipends, and requests for contract.

Vacancy Management: This is currently in effect. All current and future vacancies require SRAC (Senior Resource Allocation Committee) approval prior to posting. Written rationale must be submitted for advancing the posting.

Student workers: Role adjustments and the strategic use of student workers are important considerations. We encourage all departments to actively explore these and similar opportunities during the annual budget development process, as well as through ongoing reviews of their operations contributing to both cost savings and improved service delivery, while keeping in mind there are limits to the extent that student workers can be utilized due to the collective agreement.

Voluntary options: These options involve consultation and approvals across several levels including government and FSA. We are developing our options, including a retirement incentive/voluntary departure program, as part of a broader workforce planning strategy. Updates will be provided as soon as we are able.

Impact: It is important to reiterate the cautionary message from the Town Hall that these mitigation measures, while critical, will not be sufficient to fully close the budget gap. We are working to minimize staffing impacts, though reductions may be unavoidable as part of this process. Our monthly meetings with the FSA have been heavily focused on the evolving budget challenges, and we have also commenced monthly consultations with the FSA specifically focused on the budget, the collective agreement and how we can work together to minimize impacts.

Theme 5. Academic Program Realignment

- **Program Review:** Phase out low-demand programs, consolidate underperforming sections, and cross-list courses to reduce duplication.

- **Interdisciplinary Integration:** Protect smaller units by embedding them into broader pathways; maintain flexibility in BA programs.

Response

UFV conducts regular Academic Program Reviews under Policy 189, approved by the Senate and Board of Governors. Beyond fulfilling UFV's commitments to continuous program improvement, the

program reviews are essential opportunities for academic units to reimagine and refine their programs and align them more clearly to UFV's strategic vision of engaging learners, transforming lives, and building community. To better improve our review processes, the Program Development and Quality Assurance Office, working alongside other areas of UFV including Faculty areas, Institutional Research, and the Registrar's Office, have created a proposed template and platform to assist areas in their program reviews so that they are more efficient, accountable, and speak to program alignment.

Outside of the program review process, the Deans have been working with their respective Departments and Schools to review and to put into place strategies to address low enrollment in programs and courses including the potential for consolidation where appropriate. The outcomes of these conversations are making their way through various consultation and approval processes.

This review also includes a focus on realignment of academic units. Deans are in conversations with their Faculty areas around what might work best to support the work of their areas. For example, the Faculty of Education, Community, and Human Development has been working collaboratively on a reimagining of their Departments and Schools which will result in serving their students and community in a way that supports both their strategic plan, budget forecast, and UFV mission, values and goals.

Theme 6. Sustainability & Long-Term Planning

- **Energy Transition:** Explore solar energy adoption and leverage government rebates.

- **Research Expansion:** Increase research activity through partnerships, grants, and institutional journals.

- **Community Engagement:** Strengthen relationships with local organizations, better understand and leverage workforce needs to increase enrollment, institutional resilience, and community impact.

Response

UFV has benefited from several energy efficiency grants over the past few years, such as the Fortis grant for the Gas Absorption Heat Pump (GAHP) at TTC and the partnership with BC Hydro to install additional EV charging stations. We continue to look for opportunities for further grant funding to improve building efficiency and performance.

The current structure of Research and Graduate Studies at UFV is focused on fostering innovation and supporting research and graduate education across the university. Partnerships with other academic institutions, community organizations, public and private agencies, and regional business and industries, supports knowledge transfer, technological innovation, and multidisciplinary research. Research and Graduate Studies plays a central role in facilitating these connections through assistance with grant applications, Research Options, and in connecting

researchers with national funding bodies such as NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR. However, there is always room for improvement and with this in mind, we are working collaboratively with Research and Graduate Studies to review the activities and practices currently engaged in to consider ways to better support faculty in their pursuit of funding from external partnerships and national funding bodies.

Theme 7. Governance & Accountability

- **Shared Responsibility:** Promote balanced accountability across administration, faculty, and staff.

- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Use predictive analytics, automate workflows, and create performance dashboards.

Response

Promoting balanced accountability across administration, faculty, and staff is a strong step toward fostering a more collaborative and transparent institutional culture. We will be addressing the budget challenge guided by our approved budget principles, including aligning resources with strategic goals, considering the relationship between support costs and instruction, and managing the risk to the university.

Regarding the use of data-driven decision-making, focus on predictive analytics, workflow automation, and performance dashboards, the university has already made strides in these areas. We recognize the value of continuing to expand and refine these tools.