

July 11, 2025



Greg Mather
Faculty and Staff Association President

Re: Implementation of minimum student thresholds, Article 18.9

“Without Prejudice”

I am following up on our meeting of June 17, 2025, where the University provided an update on projections for faculty meeting the 150 student threshold for the 2024/25 academic year (“the 150”). Recognizing that there are numerous new appointments to the FSA following the recent elections, a review of our journey to this point could be of assistance.

The collective agreement has contained workload and class size provisions for decades. The present configuration (7 sections per year and at least 150 students per year) was implemented in 2002, replacing the previous construct (8 sections with no minimum student threshold).

In the years since that significant revision in 2002, the 7 section requirement was maintained, but the University allowed the 150 to lapse.

In the lead up to bargaining for the previous round, the University gave notice in early 2023 that it intended to begin applying the language, which was duly negotiated. Seeking to do this in a deliberate and consultative way, UFV initiated a period of review and information exchange with a commitment to dialogue, followed by plans for a structured implementation for the fall 2025 semester.

We were buoyed to learned that dialogue did produce some results, with the number of eligible faculty not meeting the threshold moving from 27% (2022/23), to 26% (2023/24), to 20% (2024/25 projected).

Unfortunately, during that same span, significant changes in the post-secondary sector have materially altered the viability of existing collective agreement and operating structures. Among these changes are:

1. Major structural changes to immigration levels, work permitting processes and specific reductions in international student levels, designed to drive change in how Universities are able to accept non-Canadian students.
2. Significant increases in provincial deficits and demographic imperatives and changing government priorities.
3. Shifting public perception on the societal role of universities and the value proposition of a university education.

It is also apparent that changes to funding formulae are unlikely. The University is still subject to a 2% cap on domestic tuition and provincial core funding has remained static for a number of years. The University is legally obligated to present a balanced budget each year to the Board - expenses need to equal revenues. This means that with revenues decreasing due to declining international enrolments, expenses must also be equally adjusted.

Finally, while we have made progress around most of the KPI's in our integrated strategic plan ([ISP pages 25-26](#)), we have slipped, or stayed level in those KPIs measuring student satisfaction. In 2024, the survey by the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC), showed 57% of UFV graduate respondents indicated that they experienced barriers to graduating in a timely manner. This is 14% higher than at other similarly-sized, undergraduate universities. (In 2021, UFV's score was 57%, with the same 14% shortfall to the cohort). It is important that we name this challenge and collectively look for a way to improve it.

The Administration of UFV does have ideas for how this can be addressed. One of the largest expenses that we can control are the number of sections offered each year. With the average class size at UFV being 26, there is still institutional capacity to add additional students up to the collectively bargained number of 36 without increased expense (and, 36 is still considered a small class size: [Average Class Size by University - Macleans.ca](#))

However, we look forward to engaging directly with our faculty and staff, and with the FSA in collective bargaining, to hear from all concerned, and to deliberate upon and incorporate that feedback into our plan for the future.

For that reason, UFV formally advises the FSA that it plans to pause implementation of the 150 outcomes, pending deliberation on progress at bargaining when it begins sometime later this year. This pause is made under several explicit parameters:

1. Deans will review the 150 data and prepare the roster of faculty in their areas who might otherwise need to increase class size or take on additional sections. These additional sections will be accrued but not assigned, pending steps 2-4.
2. While implementation is paused, the University will reserve the right to implement the 150 outcomes, with 30 days' written notice, should it determine that is required.
3. The parties will meet in bargaining and work in good faith to find alternate mutually acceptable structures.
4. Should bargaining result in mutually agreeable alternatives, the implementation of outcomes arising from the 2024/25 academic year will not be required.

We look forward to working with the FSA executive, its bargaining committee and all our valued staff and faculty on the measures by which we will collectively address the structural challenges ahead. We are confident that with a commitment to examine all possibilities, a plan for those challenges can be adopted, such that we sustain our position as the most financially resilient university in our sector, and our 11-year run as "Best Employer in BC". By ensuring this

foundation remains strong, we enable the research needed in the Fraser Valley; we deliver courses sought by our students; and we maintain the stability of employment so critical to a teaching university.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Jeske", written in a cursive style.

Kevin Jeske,
Associate Vice President,
Human Resources