

EDUCATION SUMMIT:

Commitment to Student Success



A Collaborative K-16 Framework Between UFV and Fraser Valley School Districts



PREAMBLE

In November 2023, UFV and Fraser Valley School District leaders convened at the first Education Summit, hosted at the Clarion Hotel in Abbotsford, BC. Attendees included School District superintendents, district principals, and specialists in assessment, curriculum, and inclusive education from Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Mission, Fraser-Cascade, Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows, and Langley. The UFV attendees included representatives from senior leadership, Deans, and Special Advisors, and representatives from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, and the Ministry of Education and Child Care also attended. The purpose of the Summit was four-fold:

Goal 1

- To be intentional in our purpose and collective commitment to building pathways of success for all students in the Fraser Valley.

Goal 2

- To develop an understanding of the K-12 and post-secondary education systems by sharing new trends and challenges that are impacting both systems and recognizing key differences that set our systems apart.

Goal 3

- To develop a shared understanding and definition of the five key areas of concern: Equity-seeking and underrepresented groups, Indigenous student success, cohort-based learning, learner-centered pedagogies, and assessment practices.

Goal 4

- To identify at least one doable action item related to each of the five areas of concern for each SD/UFV inter-institutional team.

The K-12 and post-secondary educational leaders engaged in generative conversations about the ways in which their sectors were attempting to address the key areas of focus for the Summit, and exposed the barriers and challenges they continue to face in supporting learners. Through table group activities and prompts for generating ideas, the Summit fostered renewed commitment and emerging partnerships that aimed at supporting successful transition experiences for all learners. This Summit laid the foundation for a series of learning exchange webinars, academic collaborations, student events, and two more Summits over the period of two years.

WHAT WE KNOW

The percentage of secondary students who did not transition to post-secondary education within 3 years of graduating from high school has been gradually increasing across BC over the past 20 years. Non-transition rates for secondary students over this period have increased from 32% to 36% based on the most recent reports available. For Indigenous learners and students with disabilities or diverse abilities, transition rates to post-secondary education can be 10-15% lower than the provincial average.

Across the six local school districts of the Fraser Valley, student transition rates have increased 1% to 4% in the last five years (2017/18 to 2021/22) compared to transitions in the previous five years (2012/13 and 2016/17), while the overall provincial numbers have decreased by 2%. Of the Fraser Valley School Districts, Abbotsford sees the highest rates of immediate transitions, some years eclipsing the provincial rate. Chilliwack, on the other hand, has, on average, seen the lowest rates of immediate transitions from 2012/13 to 2021/22, but is now trending upward. The Langley and Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School Districts have consistent rates of immediate transitions and are also on a slightly increasing trend. Fraser-Cascade sees the most significant level of fluctuation, with immediate transition rates ranging from 31% to over 50%. Mission has seen a fairly stable rate of high school graduates immediately transitioning to post-secondary. The Fraser Valley College Region has seen fluctuations from 2012/13 to 2021/22, but has increased, while the gap to the provincial rate has narrowed.



These transition rates do not tell the full story. The transition from high school to a post-secondary institution can be daunting for students. There are myriad challenges ranging from socio-economic, equity and diversity, accessibility, first-generation student issues, and transportation. In addition, students need to learn a new vocabulary of grants, scholarships, and credits, and move to a structure that sometimes includes longer and more dispersed class schedules. Between these challenges, the expectations that have been created by secondary school teachers who may not be familiar with today's post-secondary pedagogical practices, students are not set up for a successful first year. Addressing these issues to help students succeed is a growing imperative.

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

In response to these challenges, the University of the Fraser Valley has sought to reframe its relationship with feeder school districts with the aim of transforming the student experience as they move between systems. During the initial Education Leadership Summit in 2023, discussions focused on student transitions and identifying opportunities to enhance students' learning journeys. The Summit proved an invaluable step forward and highlighted several critical areas worthy of ongoing discussion:

Learner-centred pedagogies:

Identifying the common threads of sound instructional practices.

Assessment practices:

Dispelling myths and illuminating good practice.

Dual credit:

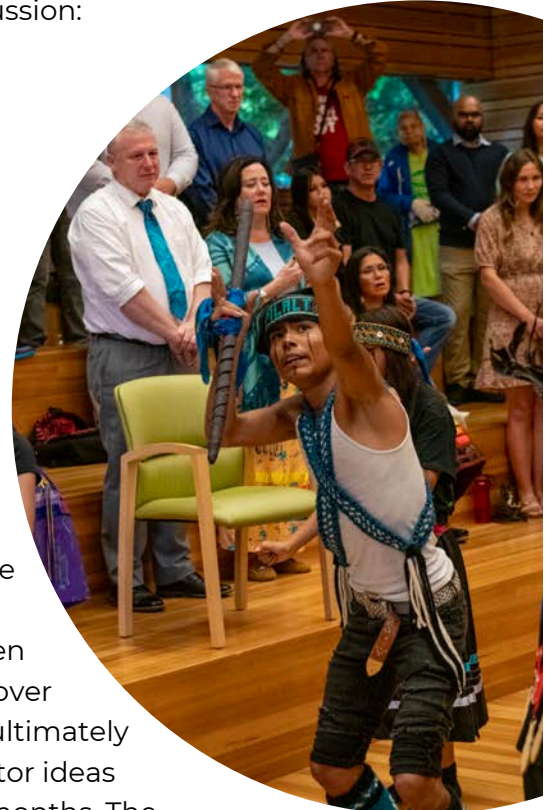
Building on the rich legacy of cohort-based dual credit programming.

Indigenization and Indigenous education:

Capitalizing on the historical wisdom of Sto:lo Territory as a place of learning and research.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

Dismantling systemic barriers to access for historically marginalized learners from equity-deserving groups.



To that end, a number of follow-up learning exchange webinars were hosted between UFV and school districts in early 2024, focusing on the five areas of concern. These exchanges were opportunities to deepen collective understanding about the challenges and barriers, strengthen existing practices designed to bridge across the two sectors, and uncover new opportunities for deeper adult and student learning that would ultimately transform the student experience. Critical cross-district and cross-sector ideas were incubated by school district and UFV staff in these intervening months. The initial round of learning exchanges was followed by ongoing collaborations between UFV academic and service areas and their respective counterparts in school districts over the remainder of 2024. As the momentum grew, the work being done to bridge across sectors culminated in a second Summit (2.0), which was hosted in May 2025. This summit was an opportunity for practitioners to share what they had learned in these exchanges, showcase the strategies and opportunities that had been engaged in to support student transition, and for senior-level leaders from both systems to reflect on how these practices might be diffused across the region. Specifically, emergent learning was clustered around three themes of dual credit, assessment, and artificial intelligence, and supporting Indigenous learners. Practitioners, consisting of UFV and school district faculty, shared the successful outcomes they had realized and provided insight into possible next steps to improve student transitions.

A highlight of the second Summit was the opportunity for senior-level leaders from feeder districts and UFV to jointly reflect on the work of these practitioners in terms of their strategic aspirations. Several important themes emerged from this conversation, and are captured below as “big ideas” that will drive the future work of the partnership:

- Strong relationships between K–12 and post-secondary educators are the foundation of successful student transitions.
- Student identity is shaped by how we invite learners to see themselves in post-secondary spaces.
- Equity requires dismantling structural barriers and expanding access beyond traditional pathways.
- Instructional delivery should focus on the application of learning and real-world connections for relevance and currency.

- Assessment must evolve to value process, relevance, and coherence across educational systems.
- Artificial intelligence can be a “companion” in personalizing learning and is a transformative tool that demands ethical, inclusive, and aligned educational practices.
- Culturally responsive programming and diversity pedagogies create welcoming, empowering bridges for all learners.
- Innovative program models for open houses, campus visits, and peer mentoring can support Indigenous and all learners.

These big ideas affirm the joint commitment between the University of the Fraser Valley and the Fraser Valley school districts to foster seamless, equitable, and empowering transitions for students from secondary to post-secondary education. A framework for advancing this work builds on the outcomes of Education Leadership Summits, the big ideas emerging from cross-sectoral collaborations, and the model of Learning Exchanges, and is grounded in relationship-building, early engagement, and shared responsibility.

WHERE WE ARE GOING: A FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENT TRANSITIONS

We envision a region where every student is supported to grow, thrive, and transition confidently from high school to post-secondary education. Our partnership will ensure that students experience continuity in learning, advancing their academic goals, culturally responsive and evidence-informed pedagogy, and access to opportunities that reflect their identities and aspirations.

Guiding Principles

Relationship Building:

- Foster strong relationships between UFV, school districts, and students through campus presence, early engagement, professional development opportunities, and ongoing dialogue.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

- Recognize the unique individual gifts that each student has and find ways to nurture, support, and celebrate these gifts along their educational journey.

Truth and Reconciliation:

- Support the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action as they pertain to education.

Access:

- Identify and redress barriers that students may face in being able to access educational opportunities and supports.

Future Ready Knowledge and Skills:

- Foster opportunities for students to enhance their employability skills and success in the labour market.

HOW WILL WE GET THERE: STRATEGIC AREAS OF COLLABORATION

A multi-pronged strategy is crucial in fostering meaningful collaboration, pathways, and transition experiences for students moving from secondary to post-secondary. The following areas reflect key strategies emerging from meaningful sharing at the Education Summits and during the multiple opportunities for Learning Exchanges.



Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation

- Formalize “Indigenous Student Transition Teams” and expand culturally grounded programming (e.g., land-based learning, language revitalization, family visits) through joint funding and shared leadership.
- Adopt culturally appropriate approaches and protocols in recognition of diversity within Indigenous communities across the region.
- Support language revitalization, celebrate culture, and decolonize educational practices.
- Implement Universal Design for Learning, Indigenous Principles of Learning, and land-based pedagogy.

Dual Credit Expansion

- Expand funded seats for dual credit programs, including trades and Indigenous language courses (e.g., Halqemeylem) to celebrate student identity and improve access.
- Address structural barriers such as scheduling and transportation challenges to support student access
- Launch a joint “Equity Expansion Initiative” to identify underserved student groups and co-create new dual credit pathways in fields beyond trades, with targeted outreach and culturally responsive supports.



Professional Learning and Pedagogical Exchange

- Continue to facilitate educator exchanges and collaborative planning sessions and leverage cross-pollination between K-12 and UFV faculty.
- Create communities of practice amongst subject groups between K-12 and UFV faculty to facilitate the exchange of pedagogical approaches, assessment practices, and promising ideas specific to curriculum areas (e.g., math, science, language arts, health sciences, etc.).
- Design opportunities for students from high school and UFV to jointly participate in field experiences and land-based learning.



Future Ready Skills

- Collaborate with local businesses and industries to provide work-integrated learning opportunities for students
- Create learning exchanges with the employers to support the alignment of student learning with important employability skills necessary for successful career development.
- Design activities for students from high school and UFV to shadow career professionals.





Technology Integration

- Jointly develop an “AI in Learning” student toolkit and educator guide, co-authored by K–12 and UFV faculty, to promote ethical use, critical thinking, and culturally inclusive practices.
- Share practices on how technology is being utilized in the classroom to support student learning and success.
- Foster exchange of practices of how educators are leveraging the ethical use of AI to enhance critical thinking and digital literacy.

Bridging Gaps and Early Engagement

- Establish a cross-sector “Transition Advisory Team” with rotating representation from K–12 and UFV educators, students, and parents to guide initiatives, troubleshoot barriers, and sustain relational momentum.
- Create opportunities for younger students to actively engage with UFV (e.g., tours, camps, and exploration programs) and build confidence in opportunities to pursue post-secondary education.
- Form a “Secondary/Post-Secondary Student Council” with students from both sectors meeting regularly to explore opportunities for continued collaboration and learning exchange.



Next Steps

In order to realize these aspirations, several critical steps are needed

- Present the draft MoC to the UFV Board and District Leadership for approval.
- Develop a Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) based on this Commitment Paper.
- Formalize the signing of the MoC at “Education Summit 3.0: Pathways, Partnerships, and Promise” on the proposed day of April 29, 2026.
- Prioritize and launch strategies for collaboration in Fall 2026 with ongoing evaluation and community feedback.
- Submit to the Ministry of Education and Child Services and the Ministry of Post-Secondary and Future Skills a funding proposal based on the success of the implemented strategies that will support sustainable collaboration leading to enhanced student transition.



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FRASER-CASCADE
EVERYONE PULLING TOGETHER



ABBOTSFORD
SCHOOL DISTRICT



School District 42
Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows
Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow



Mission
Public Schools



Langley
Schools



Chilliwack
School District



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