



UFV 2025: A Vision for our Future

by the UFV 2025 Visioning Committee

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Introduction

The current UFV Education Plan covers the period 2011 to 2015. Hence, we are now in need of a new 5-year plan covering the period 2016 to 2020.

As indicated a year ago, we decided to approach this task a bit differently. Dramatic change is happening in both higher education and society in general. This is prompting universities to respond proactively by engaging in longer-term visioning exercises focused not on the minutia of courses and programs, but on the very nature and organization of universities.

Responding to and anticipating change proactively means taking the time to think about where we want to be in the future; envisioning UFV ten years out—in 2025—so we can engage in the more immediate tasks of education planning guided by a clear and—one hopes—inspiring vision of our destination. The *Education Plan, 2016-20* then becomes an exercise in planning concrete and measurable goals to get there.

The UFV 2025 Visioning Committee was brought together with the purpose of imagining and articulating a broad vision of the future of universities, the future of learning, and, within this broader vision, the future of teaching- and regionally-focused institutions—more specifically, the future of the University for the Fraser Valley. The Committee is composed of students, members of every Faculty/College at UFV, administrators, and one community member.¹ It has met regularly since January 2015, read widely on the future of post-secondary education, and received and analyzed numerous presentations, submissions, and online comments from students, faculty, and staff.

The Committee has now collectively distilled all of this into this document, a vision for UFV in 2025. It represents our first concrete step in moving towards our new *Education Plan*. It outlines what we do well at UFV, as well as the external changes that are influencing our programs, faculty, and students. It provides a summary of the feedback received from the community, the students, the staff, the faculty, and administrators regarding UFV in the future. These three pieces, put together, generate four vision statements that will guide the Education Plan for 2016 – 2020, as well as 2021 – 2025. These four vision statements will then lead us into the development of our Education Plan Goals. We outline the shape of this education planning process in the last section of the document.

But visioning and planning also require a clear understanding of what should not change. *Changing Lives, Building Community*, the title of our Strategic Directions Statement and the unofficial motto of UFV, captures the core values and commitments that have endured through the first forty years of UFV's existence. "Changing Lives" refers to our twin commitments to **transformation** and **students**, to putting students and their success first and enabling them to transform themselves. But it also refers to our transformative role as leaders of the development of the Fraser Valley. "Building Community" makes this civic and community service function even more explicit while underlining UFV's integrative role in providing a physical and intellectual public space in which the diverse communities of the Valley

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can express and explain their identities for themselves and to each other. And it refers to our commitment to the building of community within UFV among faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

The UFV 2025 Visioning Committee believes that no matter how much we change over the next ten years, no matter which challenges we must overcome and opportunities we must seize, we will and must remain true to these values. They have enabled an identity and mission to endure through our evolution from Fraser Valley College to University College of the Fraser Valley to University of the Fraser Valley. We collectively chose to make profound organizational and mandate changes not to depart from these values, but to preserve them in a rapidly changing educational, political, social, and economic environment. All predictions are that the changes required in the next ten years are even more profound. As we navigate our way forward, our commitment to the values of **transformation**, **students**, and **community** must continue to guide us.

What we are doing well

As UFV works towards a vision of what it will be in 2025, it is important to recognize the things we are currently doing well. Guided by a vision to provide the best undergraduate education in Canada and to act as leaders in the Fraser Valley, by a mission to serve the diverse needs of our region, and by values and goals which prioritize students and student learning, UFV is doing many things well. These provide a solid foundation on which to build.

Examining various surveys and reports, it is clear that *UFV provides quality education*. According to the BC Outcomes Surveys, our two-year out graduates are satisfied with the education they received, with 90% students stating they are satisfied or very satisfied with the education they received. For many programs, more than 95% of students note they are satisfied or very satisfied. Beyond the BC Outcome Survey, first-year and senior-year UFV students who responded to the 2013 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) rated UFV very highly in effective teaching. More recently, the 2015 Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) surveyed both graduating UFV students and UFV students in their “middle years” – those in their second and third years of study. 96% of graduating students and 90% of middle-years students were satisfied with the overall quality of their education at UFV. Within the same surveys, the students were asked to rate their professors. They rated them very highly in several areas, including knowledge of subject, accessibility outside of class, encouraging participation, and treating students as individuals rather than as numbers. Graduating student respondents rated their professors higher in all categories than other respondents across Canada. Middle-years students also rated their faculty very highly and were at least as satisfied and, in some cases, more satisfied than others across Canada. These findings are often echoed in program reviews, with students regularly praising their faculty and the quality of education at UFV.

When identifying the features of quality education, NSSE and CUSC respondents also pointed to the quality of interactions they have at UFV, whether with faculty, staff, or one another. NSSE respondents rated quality of interactions very highly; 75% of CUSC respondents felt that the university showed concern for them as students. The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) also supports quality interactions at UFV. Faculty, too, feel that they enjoy positive interactions with their students both in and beyond the classroom. Often, students and faculty point to small class sizes as facilitating such positive interactions. UFV respondents to the Canadian Satisfaction Survey further support that small class sizes have a positive effect on the overall quality of education provided at UFV.

It is apparent, also, that many *faculty are providing excellent opportunities for students* beyond the classroom. FSSE respondents, for example, pointed to their work supervising undergraduate research, internships, practicums, and field activities. Departmental and institutional reports highlight faculty who hire student researchers, who engage students in applied learning, and who encourage their students to cross the boundary between school and community in order to engage in social learning and civic engagement. Some do this by partnering with community groups. Many work to support UFV's indigenization goals as UFV strives to be a place of learning that recognizes, respects and includes Indigenous ways of knowing. Other faculty work to provide international experiences for students, whether through internships, practicums, study abroad, or study tours. Finally, some also engage students in producing publications, portfolios, productions, and exhibits for internal and external audiences. Students regularly note how valuable such experiences are and identify the need for more support and more opportunities across all programs.

Faculty research also contributes to the overall quality of education at UFV. Not only does faculty research enhance classroom learning and provide opportunities for students, researchers also build connections between UFV, the community, and beyond. They contribute to knowledge building, transfer of knowledge, and innovation. They explore the big challenges facing our community and our world, engaging students in the process.

Learning beyond the classroom is a growing trend at UFV. There is increasing recognition that student learning which takes place outside of the classroom and which is not for academic credit is also important and should be recognized, as evidenced by the creation of the co-curricular record (CCR). The CCR is an official transcript of students' out-of-classroom learning, measured against the institutional learning outcomes. Students can receive CCR credit for activities such as paid and unpaid work on campus, participation in campus activities, taking on roles in the Student Union or in UFV clubs, planning departmental or institutional events, athletics, or acting as peer mentors, tutors, or new student orientation leaders. To date, 5000 students have created a CCR and 1000 of those students have validated activities on their records. The number of validated activities is at 500 and growing. Students are drawing on their records to apply for graduate studies, professional programs, and employment.

UFV also provides significant support for students on campus. Students appreciate access to counsellors, librarians, educational technologists, Aboriginal Elders-in-Residence, and a wide range of advisors: academic, career, disability, international, and financial aid. PASS – Priority Access for Student Success – provides early intervention for students in need of support. Students also have access to a new Academic Success Centre and to various mentoring programs, whether program specific or institutional-wide, and to a growing range of workshops on student success and student leadership. Faculty respondents to the FSSE also note their role in supporting and advising students outside of the classroom.

All of this contributes to student success, as evidenced in a range of UFV Today posts, departmental updates, Board reports, and local news stories. UFV students do well in their classes and in their programs, engage in undergraduate research, represent UFV at domestic and international conferences, and win prestigious awards and honours at UFV and at the local, national, and international level. Some of our undergraduate student researchers receive awards typically given to graduate students. Our students also go on to professional programs and graduate studies, earn high marks on a variety of accreditation and entrance examinations, and make meaningful contributions to our communities. They participate in faculty- and/or community-based research projects and participate actively in UFV-led

initiatives. They perform well in a range of athletic programs and they represent UFV well as ambassadors, leaders, and entrepreneurs. We are proud of our students.

Faculty, staff, and administrative support, engagement, and commitment are all possible because UFV is a great place to work. In 2015, UFV was named one of BC's Top Employers. As noted in the press release, "UFV was selected for the list because of the overall employee experience it offers, including competitive salaries, an excellent benefits package, professional development support, commitment to employment equity and workplace diversity, campus amenities, family-support initiatives such as maternity and paternity top-up, and employee assistance programs. It was also chosen for fostering a work climate that encourages and enables its employees to do meaningful work contributing to the positive development of surrounding communities." This supportive environment allows all to develop and foster their passions, enhancing the educational and overall experience at UFV.

UFV students, faculty, staff, and administration regularly point to the things that UFV is doing well. The UFV 2025 Visioning Committee is committed to retaining and building on our strong foundation.

What is changing?

The "strong foundation" of strengths identified in the previous section, as well as the core values of "students, community, and transformation" acknowledged in the "Introduction," will be invaluable as we navigate our way through a period of dramatic change and unprecedented pressures to change.

What is changing?

1. **Learners:** The digitization of everything and changing demographics are transforming the nature of both learning and learners.

While there are fewer full-time students, there are many more non-traditional students, including first-generation students, working adults, Indigenous students, immigrant and international students, students with disabilities, and female students. Students are becoming older and more diverse.

At the same time, the traditional student has become a digital native who, since a very early age, has regularly engaged in collaborative, participatory, social, and networked learning—the exact opposite of learning in a traditional lecture format.

2. **Learning:** We are in the midst of a paradigm shift from teaching to learning, from students as passive consumers of knowledge to active agents in their own learning, from universities organized around *instruction by faculty in the classroom*, to universities organized around *learning by students—everywhere*. This is driven partly by the changing nature and expectations of learners and partly by our more sophisticated understanding of student learning thanks to cognitive science research and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Increasingly, there are research-supported calls to adopt "learner-centred teaching": teaching focused on the development of skilled, autonomous learners. There is a growing emphasis on peer-to-peer rather than teacher to student relationships, and on *personalized learning*, adapting education to the distinct learning needs and styles of each learner while giving them greater control over the learning process.

The expectations of business and industry are changing and this affects learning and what learners want. According to numerous surveys, employers say they want employees who have graduated from universities that integrate applied and liberal learning, stress cross-disciplinary breadth over specialization, provide students with collaborative and community-engaged learning and research opportunities, as well as internships and co-op experiences, and enable them to develop transferable life skills like reliability and resilience, as well as transferable cognitive skills like problem-solving and communication. They value learning outcomes and e-portfolios because they want graduates who can demonstrate and apply their learning. Above all, perhaps, they want employees who want and have learned how to learn and re-learn, who can adapt to the constant change that characterizes the 21st-century working experience.

Learning in K-12 is changing. These changes not only echo the changes outlined for post-secondary education; in many cases, they are much further developed. The changes include the shift from a content-based to a competency-based system; personalized, self-paced learning (each student is designing their own educational path and is accountable for their own learning success; they get help from mentors, peers, and study groups to achieve their goals); flexible learning spaces; student-driven, teacher-facilitated learning; and interdisciplinary/cross-curricular communication. The expectations of K-12 graduates with these experiences will be another factor driving change in post-secondary education.

- 3. Faculty:** As the hierarchical model of pedagogy, where the teacher is broadcaster, is replaced by an increasingly horizontal and interactive model, faculty are more often playing the role of coaches, mentors, and facilitators. Their focus is less on content delivery and more on inquiry-based learning and mentoring undergraduate research.

Faculty are increasingly required to collaborate with others. Within institutions, they are working with librarians, learning technologists, advisors, career centre and faculty development staff to design the optimal learning conditions for students. They are also developing collaborative relationships with other institutions (post-secondary, K-12, and industry).

- 4. The discipline-based organization of universities:** Building the university around the student learning journey and an educational model that is learner-centered and increasingly learner-controlled means that the student's learning journey is becoming the key organizing principle of universities. This requires systematic collaboration across institutions, leading to a blurring of boundaries among departments, disciplines, Faculties, and support units. Hence, interdisciplinary collaboration is becoming a norm (both inside and outside the university, as off-campus learning requires collaboration with a variety of organizations, industries, and individuals).
- 5. Funding and the university business model:** When public funding over a three-decade span drops from about 80% to below 50%, and in many cases, well below 50% (while the costs of running a post-secondary institution grow ever larger), the traditional business model of public universities becomes unsustainable. This decline is an international phenomenon and shows no signs of reversing or even slowing.

Government also controls a university's other major source of funding—tuition—and significantly raising tuition is now politically impossible. Rising tuition rates and levels of student debt, combined with increasing pressures on family finances, are weighing heavily on student/family post-secondary education choices.

There is a trend towards performance-based funding: funding institutions based on outcomes like graduation rates, rather than inputs like applications or enrolments. This is most noticeable in 35 states in the U.S., but it is also beginning in Ontario and Alberta. In British Columbia, the Province ties 25% of our funding to programs deemed relevant to the labour market, which is perhaps one step shy of linking it to actual student employability outcomes. In Canada, provincial governments, including B.C., are also using the squeeze on financial resources to drive system differentiation (for example, distinguishing between teaching-focused and research-focused universities).

- 6. The impact of information technology:** The application of computers to education is also changing the economics of post-secondary education, but the changes are larger than this. They encompass everything from the digitization of all aspects of university life and business, to the internet and universities' lost monopoly on knowledge and credentialing, to the role of social media and mobile devices in education, to ever-important and dramatically changing educational technology. Technology is breaking the barriers of time and geography, enabling learning and the acquisition of almost every credential anytime, anywhere, and sometimes at little cost to the student. Computers will provide a more mobile and personalized educational experience. Unlike previous technology (like the printing press or television), computers can not only store or move information; they can process, analyze, and act on it. They can analyze the unique strengths, weaknesses, learning history, and learning styles of each student and respond differently for each student. They can change the very design of a course to fit each learner. We have only begun to see the revolutionary implications of computers on individualized learning.

Of course, all of the above are placing greater demands on campus IT infrastructure and a university's budget.

- 7. Competition:** This is increasing and intensifying. Universities used to know their competitors; for the most part they were local and physical. Now they are ubiquitous, increasingly private, and increasingly online. At the same time, globalization is dramatically increasing the competitive environment while creating more access and learning opportunities. Maximum student mobility, requiring the recognition of all kinds of learning—formal and informal—is becoming an international norm and an absolute requirement if universities are to remain competitive. Hence, universities are streamlining requirements and prerequisites, ramping up prior learning assessment and recognition capacity, partnering with school districts to create a seamless K-16 system in the regions they serve, and much more. Lastly, it is unclear how far the “unbundling” of higher education will go: already much of the content, services and experiences of a university are offered by—and sometimes contracted out to—private companies and industries.
- 8. Accountability and Quality Assurance:** Against a backdrop of public and media questioning of the value and quality (and cost) of postsecondary education and, more specifically, a national discourse on the deterioration of the quality of undergraduate education, universities are being pressured to be more “accountable” to taxpayers, governments, parents, and students, and to provide assurances as to the quality of the education and services they provide. In response, universities are focusing more on quality and trying to demonstrate it—especially, for teaching-focused institutions, teaching quality. This is complicated by the political hegemony of a neo-liberal or managerialist perspective that understands teaching as performance and assesses its quality solely in terms of its relevance to the labour market and industry. Universities need to assess, measure, and demonstrate quality in their own educational terms (including learning outcomes) if they are to avoid having a

narrower understanding imposed on them. At the same time, universities are wrestling with the challenge of increasing quality without increasing costs.

As the following section indicates, students, faculty, staff, and administrators at UFV have recognized the changes outlined here.

What did we hear from you?

Over the past year the UFV 2025 Visioning Committee solicited feedback from numerous sources. To gather faculty voices we solicited department feedback from all Faculties and also received submissions from staff and support units. To gather student, staff, and community voices we conducted a number of forums, an on-line “have your say,” a number of comment walls throughout UFV, a few student focus groups, a submission and presentation from the Student Union, and an EDUC/PHIL 362 student submission. To engage our administrative bodies we solicited presentations and written submissions from Advising through to University Relations and everything in-between. Even though we were gathering a variety of perspectives, there was a great deal of consistency across these different voices. The key themes that persisted throughout these diverse groups are detailed below and represent what we heard from you.² It is important to note that these descriptions are not comparative in nature. Some of what is listed below, we do well already; some require some work on our part to accomplish. *This feedback describes a UFV for 2025*; it does not compare it to UFV today.

- 1. We want a strong and vibrant UFV community:** UFV will not be somewhere we just attend classes. It will be a community that supports diverse students, learners, and faculty by providing more than just academic content: it will provide the university experience. UFV will be fully indigenized with Indigenous worldviews permeating classwork, recreation, ceremonies, and programs. There will be more community and gathering spaces, more food and library options and access, more recreation opportunities, and more events that engage and develop school spirit. It will support diverse transportation needs including bike lanes, affordable parking, and a comprehensive shuttle service. There will be a strong and accessible wi-fi service that connects students, faculty, and the surrounding U-district. It will engage the local Fraser Valley businesses and services on campus, supporting connections between community, students, and faculty. Faculty will be involved in student activities both inside and outside of the classroom. UFV will recognize that a university is responsible for more than academics.
- 2. We want to be connected to the field:** University will not just be about preparing for work; it will be about bringing the workplace into the university. Faculty will be engaged and connected with the field, not just academia. Students, no matter what their discipline, will have opportunities to complete work and field experiences, co-ops, and/or service learning while enrolled in their program. Research in our local community will involve faculty and students, with students having the opportunity to drive that research. The administrative units at UFV will be quick and nimble, able to respond to the emerging needs of local businesses and services in the Fraser Valley, BC, Canada, and the world. Partnerships with the local community, including the Stó:lō Nation, will be fostered and supported at every level. Departments will be involved in partnerships with trades, job markets, and alumni working in the field. UFV will be a part of the field, not separate from it.

² Those who would like to consult the data analysis summaries created by the UFV 2025 Visioning Committee see H:/Temp/UFV 2025.

- 3. We want flexibility and accessibility:** UFV will support a diverse group of students, learners, and faculty which means that programming and administration will need to be responsive. We recognize the changing demographics of age, race, culture, ethnicity, and ability are factors to consider in our population. Programs will need to be flexible enabling different entry points; personalized advising, learning, and assessments; blended, on-line, and flipped classrooms; increased course offerings, including certificates, diplomas, and graduate programs; and the ability to evaluate more than just credits and hours. This will require that more information is available in a variety of formats, from a variety of locations. So, whether a student is meeting with someone in person at the UFV campus or is connecting on-line, they will be able to get the information and support they need. This includes registration, academic content, research support, digital library collections, and advising. To accomplish this, technology and IT support will be critical. They will be reliable, user-friendly, and comprehensive. In addition, administrative units like the registrar's office, finance, program development, ITS, ETS, etc. will need to be nimble and accommodating. The development of flexible programs, delivery methods, and supports means that all UFV services will figure out how to make things possible, rather than put up roadblocks that halt innovation.

- 4. We want to support lifelong learning:** UFV will support the lifelong learning of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The scholarship of teaching and learning will be a priority. Faculty will engage in continual professional development to ensure that classes are relevant, engaging, and active. Students will recognize faculty for their roles as coaches, facilitators, and guides, their implementation of active learning, and their effective use of technology. Students will be involved in research, both at UFV and in the community. Co-curricular records, e-portfolios, and capstone projects will be recognized as part of the learning journey. Faculty and students will learn from each other through engagement in interdisciplinary projects, programming, and research. Quality teaching will remain a priority, with small classes, involved faculty, and a strong academic community.

Whether faculty, students, community member, or staff, your voices were clear regarding a vision for UFV in 2025.

What are we going to be in 2025?

The UFV 2025 Visioning Committee has reviewed the literature on the future of post-secondary education in North America, listened to student, staff, and faculty voices describe their concerns and dreams for the university, and engaged the surrounding communities to understand how they view the role of UFV in the region. We heard from UFV that we want a strong and vibrant UFV community; we want to be connected to the field; we want flexibility and accessibility; and we want to support lifelong learning. All of the information and data was integrated with the strengths and mandate of the institution to envision what UFV will and can be in 2025:

UFV in 2025 will be a community- and regionally-based university that is learner- and student-centred, whereby the learning drives the system and structure of the institution. Students and local communities will view UFV as a centre for intellectual and social development throughout their lifetimes, and as a place to learn how they can be better global citizens.

A community and regionally based university builds new relationships, and builds from existing relationships linking students, communities, and industry to be able to provide learning opportunities throughout the lifetime of our students. We use the word “community” because we have strong relationships with the communities around UFV. Furthermore, UFV will engage with our region through internal and public events, projects, and programs that resonate with the needs and interests of our UFV community (faculty, staff, administrators). Partnerships with business, industry, health, social services, and government will provide basic and applied research opportunities for students and results that will help grow the economy, strengthen our cultural capital, and maintain environmental sustainability. The university will easily respond and adapt to the changing needs of students and external pressures facing our region, and still provide a high quality education.

To accomplish this UFV will be a *learner- and student-centred university* where faculty engage students with interdisciplinary problem-based learning that brings the community inside the classroom and concurrently expands the classroom outside the walls of the university. Learning will include traditional face-to-face classroom and lab-based formats, a spectrum of technology-enhanced options, and applied opportunities that match learning outcomes. Learning will also be adaptable to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population that reflects the age, ethnicity, ability, and cultural characteristics of our growing communities. Faculty will want to be at UFV because they can be engaged in applied research, and they can work with students on a variety of learning projects. UFV will be a leader in the professional development of teaching and research skills matched with work-place principles that encourages the mentoring of students through teaching, research, and projects. UFV will continue to be recognized as a good place to work.

UFV will be a *university of social and intellectual development that supports lifelong learning and engaged global citizenship*. The campus will be more than a space for commuter students to consume education components. Instead, UFV students will possess a sense of identity and belonging through the creation of spaces that encourage collaboration, provide places and opportunity for social activities and collaborative learning experiences. Students will come back to campus to participate in activities outside of formal learning and class requirements, while alumni and community members will engage in public events and activities because UFV is a part of their community and regional identity. UFV will provide education and services that meet more than just the education needs of students, but prepare them for sustainable, fulfilling livelihoods that also contribute to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the region.

However, this will only be possible if *learning drives the system and structure* of the university, rather than the structure shaping the learning. Programming and services will be relevant, flexible, timely, and accessible by all that comprise the broad spectrum of students. Programs will be flexible, interdisciplinary, and recognized by other universities as meeting the highest standards. Programming will be designed to meet the needs of the learner rather than prioritizing the needs of administration, faculty, and organizational structure.

Conclusion

The visioning exercise began with the question, *What should UFV look like in 2025?* The next step, creating the *Education Plan, 2016-20* began with the question:

What are the five goals that UFV must achieve from 2016-20 to set ourselves up for 2025?

Once again, the entire UFV community was invited to address this question. The products of this phase of our visioning and planning exercise were, first, the five goals for the Education Plan and, second, the Plan itself.

The involvement of the students, staff, faculty, administrators, and members of the local Fraser Valley community in developing the UFV 2025 Vision was essential. It has been a first of its kind for UFV and it could not have happened without their support and creativity. The Visioning Committee heard from them through presentations, department submissions, forum discussions, an on-line “have your say,” a blog, comment walls, student focus groups, and student papers for a philosophy of education course. The Committee listened to what they had to say and are very grateful for their participation.