



MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 20, 2018

Historic Housing Investment for Students in BC

VICTORIA, Post-secondary students now have reason to believe that affordability is on the horizon. The Alliance of BC Students (ABCS) is thrilled with the budget announcement today that \$450 million will be invested in student housing over the next three years. This massive investment will go a long way to improving affordability and reducing barriers for students across the province. **“We have long called for this and we are happy to see a government listen,”** said Caitlin McCutchen, ABCS Chairperson **“this has been an ABCS priority since 2014.”**

This is the first time that the provincial government will have a direct hand in the building of on-campus housing, including direct funding. **“This is a transformation in the way the provincial government views student housing and we have been working closely with them on this. We now have a government that is putting the focus on students, and that is a welcome benefit for access to education”** further stated McCutchen. Outside of the University of British Columbia, very few institutions have been able to build on-campus housing in the past ten years, despite increasing numbers of students and the rise of the housing crisis.

The budget announcement included 5,000 new spaces that will be directly funded by the province, with an additional 3,000 funded internally by institutions. On-campus housing, at below market rates, is crucial for students who scour the rental market and may still end up spending up to 50% of their incomes on housing that is sometimes crowded, unsafe, or inadequate.

“Moving students onto campus is an innovative solution to the housing crisis,” said McCutchen, **“this improves students’ lives, helps universities, and also frees market rental spaces for those that need it.”** The announced spaces will help students live closer to where they study, graduate with less debt, and work fewer hours while they are in school. On-campus housing is also beneficial for students who don’t live on campus, as it frees up space in the low cost rental market, reduces congestion on the overcrowded transit routes that service post-secondary institutions, and helps build campus culture.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Caitlin McCutchen, Chair
Alliance of BC Students
p. 778.998.1539
e. chairperson@bcstudents.ca

The Alliance of BC Students is a non-partisan society of 5 student societies representing over 60,000 students from across the province that exists to advocate on issues that affect post-secondary students in British Columbia.