



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Ensuring the continuum between K-12 and post-secondary French education in British Columbia: Simon Fraser University's Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs 2018-2023 Action Plan

Report prepared by:

The Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs (OFFA) at Simon Fraser University

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The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages

as part of its

“Study on the challenges associated with access to French-language schools
and French immersion programs in British Columbia”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[1] Simon Fraser University (SFU) is presenting this report to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages as part of the Committee's *Study on the challenges associated with access to French first-language and French immersion programs in British Columbia*.

[2] Based on SFU's extensive experience as a leader in offering teacher education in French and post-secondary education in French in British Columbia, the university has identified significant barriers that K-12 students face in accessing education in French in the province. These barriers include a lack of qualified French-language teachers, a low level of French language competence among in-service teachers and a lack of strategic planning to address student attrition rates in French education in British Columbia.

[3] This report is divided into six parts, as follows:

1. The challenges associated with access to K-12 French education in British Columbia;
2. SFU as an "engaged university" committed to quality French post-secondary education in British Columbia;
3. Post-secondary education in French in British Columbia;
4. Funding SFU: A necessary investment in K-12 French education in British Columbia;
5. Looking forward: SFU's *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan*; and
6. Conclusion.

[4] SFU has made great strides in developing university-level programs in French that inspire young people to continue their French education at the post-secondary level. SFU also provides teacher education that enables students to become highly-qualified teachers with the French language skills needed to teach in French minority-language schools, as well as in French-second language courses and programs. As well, SFU provides professional development programming in French to practicing (in-service) teachers to ensure that British Columbia's K-12 students are served by teachers with a high level of linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural competence.

[5] SFU's Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs (OFFA) works collaboratively with faculties and departments that offer French programming and with French-speaking communities in British Columbia to contribute to the vitality of French language and culture. This report demonstrates that the quality of K-12 French education in British Columbia depends largely on the continuum between K-12 French education and post-secondary education in French. The report also presents the necessity of close community connections at the post-secondary level that create opportunities for community engagement and experiential learning in French.

[6] This report includes SFU's *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan* which addresses not only barriers that K-12 students face in accessing education in French but proposes new program development to increase French-language programming at the university level.

[7] The *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan* provides a list of seven planned initiatives to be undertaken by OFFA, which is the administrative office at SFU in charge of developing, coordinating, and promoting programs and courses offered in French at the University.

[8] As part of its *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan*, SFU plans to add specialized programming for in-service teachers, develop new undergraduate programs and courses in French, attract and retain French-speaking teachers from other regions of Canada and from around the world. It also plans to foster and further develop links to French-speaking communities, and to create a flexible funding arrangement to allow for further program development.

[9] While SFU, despite its young history, has had a clear impact on improving French education in British Columbia, it must urgently extend its program offerings to reduce barriers that students face in accessing K-12 French education in British Columbia. The critical shortage of qualified French education teachers and the high attrition rate at the secondary level, due to limited post-secondary opportunities in French in the province, need to be addressed.

[10] To accomplish its *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan*, SFU requests additional funds from the federal government for the development, coordination and promotion of its future projects. This investment in high-quality post-secondary French education and programming at SFU will improve access to K-12 French education and will support a new generation of bilingual British Columbians.

INTRODUCTION

[11] Simon Fraser University (SFU) is one of Canada’s leading comprehensive universities, solidly anchored in three distinct communities with vibrant campuses in Vancouver, Burnaby, and Surrey. SFU offers a vast array of undergraduate and graduate programs to over 30,000 students.¹ As a university known for its high degree of community connectedness, SFU is defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research, and far-reaching community engagement.

[12] In line with this vision, SFU and its Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs (OFFA) have been committed to the development of post-secondary programming in French and to providing students with opportunities to contribute to the flourishing French-speaking communities in British Columbia.

[13] Based on its extensive experience as a leader in post-secondary education in French in British Columbia, SFU addresses not only challenges that K-12 students face in accessing education in French, but also proposes new program development to increase French-language programming at the university level.

[14] This report first presents K to 12 “French education” in British Columbia; second, the challenges associated with access to French-language schools and French Immersion programs in British Columbia; third, the initiatives put in place by SFU and OFFA in the last decade to meet the post-secondary education needs of Francophone and Francophile communities in British Columbia²; and forth, SFU’s *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan* to ensure a continuum between K to 12 and post-secondary French education.

¹ Simon Fraser University, *About SFU*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/about.html>> [About SFU].

² Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *About OFFA*, online: <<http://www.sfu.ca/baff-offa/en/about-offa.html>> [About OFFA].

1 THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH ACCESS TO K-12 FRENCH EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

1.1 K-12 EDUCATION IN FRENCH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

[15] In this report, British Columbia’s “French minority-language education” and “French second-language education” are examined and referred to collectively as “French education in British Columbia”.

[16] French minority-language education (also known as French first-language education) is offered by the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique* (CSFCB), the province’s only French minority-language publicly-funded school district. The CSFCB, known as “School District No. 93”, has 37 schools (including *École virtuelle*). The CSFCB’s curriculum is offered in French to the French official language minority population of British Columbia, which includes Canadian-born and immigrant students who qualify for education in French schools under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the “Charter”).

[17] In contrast, French second-language education refers to students enrolled in French immersion programs and the Core French curriculum offered in the 59 English-language school districts of British Columbia.

1.1.1 Historical overview of K-12 French Education in British Columbia

French minority-language schools

[18] British Columbia boasts a long history of French education that pre-dates Confederation. The presence of a significant French-speaking community can be traced to the beginnings of European colonization on Canada’s West Coast, when fur trading companies operating in the region were staffed primarily by French-Canadian and Métis employees.³ While French was the most commonly used non-Aboriginal language in the region at the time, waves of migration starting with the gold rush of 1858 transformed the cultural make-up of British Columbia.⁴ However, even in a minority-language situation, the French-speaking community has continued to thrive and contribute immensely to British Columbia’s economic, social, cultural, religious, and educational life.⁵

[19] Prior to British Columbia joining Confederation in 1871, French-speaking religious orders in the region had set up schools for the children of fur trade employees, which for a brief period, offered instruction in French.⁶ After Confederation, British Columbia established a non-

³ Nicolas Kenny, Expert Report tendered into evidence in British Columbia Supreme Court Matter no. S103975 (*Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v British Columbia (Minister of Education)*), at para 11 [Kenny Expert Report].

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid* at para 12.

confessional, public school system operating in English. At the time, education in French operated outside of the publicly-funded system and was only available in three Catholic parochial schools. The offerings of education in French continued to diminish until the 1970s, when only Kindergarten was available as a full-time French program.⁷

[20] It was not until 1978, over 100 years after the creation of a public school system in British Columbia that the *Programme cadre de français*, a curriculum taught entirely in French provided in the province's English school establishments was introduced to British Columbia's schools with 232 students across 9 school districts.⁸ While this represented a major step in the progression of French education in British Columbia, the facilities and resources were often lacking, and the local English-language school districts that administered the program were often resistant or unsupportive.⁹

[21] With the adoption of the *Charter* in 1982¹⁰, the French-speaking community of British Columbia began intensive lobbying efforts and court actions to obtain the right to manage and govern their own schools. Subsection 23(1)(a) of the *Charter* enshrines the right of citizens of Canada "whose first-language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside [...] to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province."¹¹ Today, over 5,700 students across 37 schools (including *École virtuelle*) receive French first-language education delivered by the CSFCB, School District No. 93.¹² Created in 1995, the CSFCB is the first and only French first-language K-12, publicly-funded school district in British Columbia and is managed and operated by the French-speaking community.

English-language schools

[22] In British Columbia's English-language schools, French language courses were commonly offered from the 1920s onward, particularly in Vancouver secondary schools.¹³ Following a 1961 curriculum change, French as a second language was introduced in primary schools at Grades 6 to 8.¹⁴

[23] With the passing of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969, the federal government began to actively promote bilingualism within schools from coast to coast.¹⁵ In the 1970s, British Columbia saw a dramatic increase in interest for French second-language education. By 1975, 56

⁷ *Ibid* at para 12.

⁸ Pierre Blouin, "A chronology of French-as-a-first-language education in BC" (2007) 19 Teacher Newsmagazine, online: BC Teachers' Federation <<http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsmagArticle.aspx?id=10464>>.

⁹ Kenny Expert Report, *supra* note 3 at para 13.

¹⁰ *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Part I of the *Constitution Act*, 1892, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act, 1982 (UK)*, 1982, c 11 [*Charter*].

¹¹ *Ibid* at s 23(1)(a).

¹² Government of British Columbia, "1701 Verification as of September 2015" (2015), online: Government of British Columbia <<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/data-collections/september>> [1701 Verification].

¹³ Kenny Expert Report, *supra* note 3 at para 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ *Ibid* at para 68.

of the 74 school districts in the province were offering some French classes to at least one grade level.¹⁶

[24] In 1977, British Columbia’s Minister of Education Pat McGeer recommended that French be added to the provincial curriculum as a required school subject.¹⁷ French classes became mandatory at the secondary school level and available in some elementary schools as a local option. The *BC Language Education Policy*, enacted in 1997 and revised in 2004, introduced a mandatory second language for Grades 5 to 8, a curriculum requirement still in place today.¹⁸ Core French is the most commonly chosen second language for this requirement in 58 school districts in the province currently. School districts can also offer courses in other languages to serve local communities.

[25] French immersion, a second-language program described in greater detail in the following section, was introduced in British Columbia’s schools starting in 1968.¹⁹ An ongoing challenge with French immersion programs that continues to limit its impact on students is the difficulty in recruiting qualified teachers with adequate French language skills to teach the French immersion curriculum.²⁰ Further, demand for places in French immersion programs across the province continues to outstrip supply.²¹

1.1.2 K-12 education in French in British Columbia today: program choices

French minority-language schools

[26] The CSFCB’s schools offer an exclusively French-speaking environment: in the classroom, during extracurricular activities, and in communications with parents. Of the 60 publicly-funded school districts established under British Columbia’s *School Act*, the CSFCB is the only one that covers the entire territory of the province and is not confined to a particular geographic area. The French first-language schools of the CSFCB are accessible to the children of rights-holders under section 23 of the *Charter* as a matter of right, and other students, such as the children of French-speaking immigrants, pursuant to the *School Act*.²²

[27] The number of students at the CSFCB continues to grow year after year. Indeed, the CSFCB is the fastest-growing school district in British Columbia. From the academic years

¹⁶ *Ibid* at para 69.

¹⁷ Wendy Carr, “Teaching Core French in British Columbia: Teachers’ Perspectives” (2007), online: British Columbia Association of Teachers of Modern Languages <<http://www.bcatml.org/uploads/3/9/5/8/39584835/cfinbc2007.pdf>> [Carr, Teaching Core French].

¹⁸ Government of British Columbia, “Required Areas of Study in an Education Program” online: Government of British Columbia <<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/legislation-policy/manual-of-school-law/school-act-ministerial-orders>> at s 4; Carr, Teaching Core French, *supra* note 17.

¹⁹ Canadian Parents for French, *Enrolment Statistics*, online: Canadian Parents for French <<http://bc-yk.cpf.ca/research-advocacy/enrolment-statistics>> [CPF Enrolment Statistics].

²⁰ Kenny Expert Report, *supra* note 3 at para 73.

²¹ Graham Fraser, “Sorry, I Don’t Speak French” (Toronto: Douglas Gibson Books, 2006), at 188 [Fraser].

²² *School Act*, RSBC 1996, c 412, s 166.25(9).

2012-2013 to 2015-2016, CSFCB had a growth in student enrolment of 12.9%.²³ Over the same time period, total K-12 student enrolment in the province declined by 1.4%.²⁴ In September 2015, the CSFCB's Grade 12 cohort was of 257 students.²⁵ The same year, the Kindergarten and Grade 1 levels had enrolments of 593 and 660 students respectively.²⁶ This growing pool of students will demand post-secondary options in French in British Columbia and is currently underserved in this area.

English-language schools

[28] The 59 other publicly-funded school districts in British Columbia are English-language school districts. These school districts each manage a particular defined geographic area of the province. The management of the school districts is conducted in English, as are communications with parents. While the school environment is in English overall, these school districts may also provide education in French through the following three main delivery models for French second-language education: “Core French,” “Intensive French,” and “French immersion,” defined below.²⁷

1. **“Core French”** is a French second language curriculum in which students are taught basic French communication skills, language knowledge, and presented with opportunities to experience Francophone cultures. The overriding aim of the Core French curriculum is communication as an appropriate and accessible goal. The curriculum is centered on the practical use of French language in “real life” situations.²⁸ By Grade 12, students are expected to use their French communications skills in common situations and conversations, be able to acquire information in French outside the classroom, experience creative works in French, and understand cultural references.²⁹

Core French typically begins in Grade 4 or 5 and is often limited to one or two classes per week. On average, there are 80 to 90 minutes of French instruction per week.³⁰ Due to Core French students' limited exposure to French, curriculum goals are often unmet. Graham Fraser, the Commissioner of Official Languages, notes that over half of Core French students in Grade 12 report that they cannot understand an oral conversation in

²³ Government of British Columbia, *2015/16 Final Operating Grants*, online: Government of British Columbia <<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/resource-management/k12funding/15-16/15-16-operating-grant-tables.pdf>>.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ 1701 Verification, *supra* note 12.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Canadian Parents for French, “2013 State of French Second Language Education in BC” (2013), online: Canadian Parents for French <<http://bc-yk.cpf.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2013-State-of-FSL-in-BC-A-Roadmap-Moving-Forward-English.pdf>> at 11 [2013 State of FSL].

²⁸ British Columbia Ministry of Education, “Core French 5 to 12 Integrated Resource Package 2001” (2001), online: <<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/cf512.pdf>>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Vancouver School Board, *Intensive French Grade 6 and 7*, online: <<http://www.vsb.bc.ca/programs/intensive-french-grade-6-and-7>> [VSB Intensive French].

French.³¹ Attrition rates are extremely high in Core French. Of the students who begin Core French in Grade 5, only 10% complete the Core French Grade 12 course.³²

2. **“Intensive French”** is an option available for students in Grades 6 and 7. During the first half of Grade 6, the main language of instruction is French and the focus is on learning to communicate. After completion of Grade 6, the students “can engage in a general conversation.”³³ The goal is to provide a period of intensive exposure to French, with 80% French instruction in the first half of Grade 6, and 20% French instruction (1 hour per day) in the second half.³⁴ In order to accommodate the intensive French programming in students’ schedules in the first half of Grade 6, the other courses are compressed in the second half of the school year. In Grade 7, the regular curriculum is taught in English with 1 hour of advanced French instruction per day. While the regular Core French curriculum would have about 100 hours of French instruction in Grades 6 and 7, Intensive French offers 600 hours of French instruction over the two years.

In British Columbia, Intensive French was first introduced in the Surrey school district in 2004 and has shown promising results with “students speaking at a level equivalent to Grade 10 Core French and writing at the level of Grade 3 Québécois students.”³⁵ Since Intensive French is not offered in all schools, results about its effectiveness are limited.

3. **“French immersion”** programming aims to make students who are not native French speakers “functionally bilingual”, defined as having “oral fluency and literacy in both English and French.”³⁶ To achieve this goal, the basic curriculum is taught entirely in French during the first years of the program, and instruction in English is gradually introduced after students have established a strong base in French. For students who complete the French immersion program in Grade 12, proficiency in both languages should be attained. An overarching goal of the program is to “help strengthen links and increase understanding among French- and English-speaking communities in Canada.”³⁷

Two models of French immersion exist in the province: Early French immersion and Late French immersion. Early French immersion begins in Kindergarten or Grade 1 and English is not introduced into the curriculum until Grade 3, where it appears for English Language Arts. Late French immersion begins in Grade 6, during which year almost all is taught entirely in French, and English re-enters the curriculum by no more than 20% in Grade 7. In Grade 8, both Early and Late French Immersion classes may merge for

³¹ Fraser, *supra* note 21 at 198.

³² Wendy Carr, “Intensive French...a BC perspective” (2007) 19 Teacher Newsmagazine, online: BC Teachers’ Federation <<http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsmagArticle.aspx?id=12418>> [Carr, Intensive French].

³³ Carr, Teaching Core French, *supra* note 17.

³⁴ VSB Intensive French, *supra* note 30.

³⁵ Carr, Teaching Core French, *supra* note 17.

³⁶ Government of British Columbia, *Glossary*, online: Government of British Columbia <<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/legislation-policy/glossary#bilingualism>>.

³⁷ Government of British Columbia, “French Immersion Strengthens Student Achievement” (2003), online: Government of British Columbia <<http://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/archive/2001-2005/2003bced0010-000240.htm>>.

secondary school instruction. In Grades 8 to 10, 50-75% of the instruction is in French. This figure is reduced to 25% in Grades 11 and 12.

Upon graduation from French immersion, students “should be able to participate easily in French conversations, take post-secondary courses with French as the language of instruction, and accept employment with French as the language of work.”³⁸ However, this is far from the reality of French immersion graduating classes. Graham Fraser notes that the quality of French spoken by French immersion students is often lacking due to students’ repetition of errors made by their peers and even their teachers.³⁹ OFFA notices first-hand that graduates of French immersion often still need considerable support to be able to successfully continue taking courses in French at the university level.

[29] The 2013-14 academic year saw 175,371 K-12 students enrolled in Core French, representing 31.37% of the student body of British Columbia’s school districts.⁴⁰ In the 2003-04 academic year, the percentage of K-12 students taking Core French was 36.52%.⁴¹ The proportion of British Columbia’s students in Core French has remained steady over the past decade, and the small decrease is explained by the increase of students in French immersion programs.

[30] In the 2014-15 academic year, 8.03% of students in British Columbia’s public school districts were enrolled in French immersion, representing 50,308 of 633,428 students.⁴² However, of this number, a large proportion is enrolled in early grades, and student numbers diminish year after year as students drop out, with the exception of Grade 6 when some students begin Late French Immersion. The same year, while 4,720 students were enrolled in Kindergarten French immersion programs, only 2,371 were enrolled at the Grade 12 level.⁴³

[31] Demand for French immersion programs in British Columbia is growing rapidly and the province has not kept up. In British Columbia, overnight lineups, school lotteries, and waiting lists are a reality for parents trying to enrol their children in French immersion programs.⁴⁴ In 2015, 799 Vancouver students applied for 529 French immersion Kindergarten places, and 403 Surrey students applied for 280 places.⁴⁵ In 2014, for example, parents in Salmon Arm, in North

³⁸ Government of British Columbia, *French Immersion Program*, online: Government of British Columbia <<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/french-immersion-program>> [BC French Immersion Program].

³⁹ Fraser, *supra* note 21 at 185.

⁴⁰ CPF Enrolment Statistics, *supra* note 19.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Tracy Sherlock, “Shortage of French teachers acute across B.C.”, *Vancouver Sun* (21 April 2015), online: Vancouver Sun

<<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Shortage+French+teachers+acute+across+report+finds/10992557/story.html>, cited in “Canadian Parents for French September 2015 newsletter”, online: Canadian Parents for French <[http://www.sd43.bc.ca/middle/maplecreek/Publications/Canadian%20Parents%20for%20French%20\(CPF\)/CPF%20Newsletter%20sept%202015.pdf](http://www.sd43.bc.ca/middle/maplecreek/Publications/Canadian%20Parents%20for%20French%20(CPF)/CPF%20Newsletter%20sept%202015.pdf)>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Okanagan, began camping out on a Sunday for a registration opening the following Wednesday. In that town, only 12 French immersion spaces were available.⁴⁶

[32] The constant demand from parents who wish to have their children educated in French immersion and the difficulty to recruit qualified teachers with adequate French language skills to teach French immersion and Core French curricula, are indicators of the barriers that French education in British Columbia is facing.

1.2 CURRENT BARRIERS TO ACCESSIBLE, HIGH-QUALITY K-12 FRENCH EDUCATION

1.2.1 K-12 barrier #1: Lack of qualified French language teachers

[33] The need for qualified French education teachers has been expressed in many studies conducted by the French-speaking community, organizations such as Canadian Parents for French, as well as by the federal government. In British Columbia, there is a strong demand for a greater number of teachers qualified to teach French minority-language and French second-language education. As reported by Canadian Parents for French, the quality of French immersion programs is threatened as “school districts indicate that limited physical classroom space, unique start-up costs, and the shortage of qualified French immersion teachers is hindering their ability to provide equitable access to this well established and life-changing language program.”⁴⁷

[34] In 2003, the federal government’s action plan drew attention to the growing shortage of French education teachers, as previously reported in the Canadian Parents for French 2001 study on the state of French second-language education in Canada.⁴⁸ More recently, in a 2013 study conducted by Canadian Parents for French, it was found that demand for French immersion programs continues to outstrip capacity in many of British Columbia’s communities. The study indicated the shortage of qualified French second-language teachers as a key area for continued improvement.⁴⁹ Eighty-six percent of British Columbia and Yukon’s school districts indicated that it is “very challenging” or “challenging” to fill all available French immersion teaching positions with qualified teachers.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Tracy Sherlock, “Annual lineups begin for B.C. French Immersion Spots”, *Vancouver Sun* (2 April 2014), online: Vancouver Sun

<<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/Annual+lineups+begin+French+Immersion+spots/9687686/story.html>>.

⁴⁷ Canadian Parents for French, “Falling Behind: 2014 Report on the Shortage of Teachers in French Immersion and Core French in British Columbia and Yukon” (2014), online: Canadian Parents for French <<http://bc-yk.cpf.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2014-FSL-Teacher-Shortage-Survey-v3-for-web-small.pdf>> [CPF Falling Behind].

⁴⁸ 2013 State of FSL, *supra* note 27.

⁴⁹ Canadian Parents for French, “35 Years Strong: Then, Now and a Roadmap Moving Forward” (2013), online: Canadian Parents for French <<http://bc-yk.cpf.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/CPF-BC-Yukon-35-Years-Strong-English.pdf>> at 16 [CPF Roadmap].

⁵⁰ CPF Falling Behind, *supra* note 47 at 2.

[35] In 2012 and 2013, *Make a Future*, British Columbia’s job posting website for careers in education, had 234 and 245 postings for French immersion teachers, respectively.⁵¹ By contrast, two of British Columbia’s major universities, UBC and SFU, only graduated around 60 qualified teachers per year for French immersion and Core French.

[36] In its 2015 report entitled *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom*, the British Columbia Ministry of Education states that it is “embedding Aboriginal perspectives into all parts of the curriculum in a meaningful and authentic manner.”⁵² However, at present, British Columbia’s teachers often do not have the required training and knowledge to adequately teach students about the history and culture of Aboriginal peoples. This problem is magnified in French education programs as French-language resources on Aboriginal topics are severely lacking within Teacher Education. SFU has been adding Aboriginal topics and workshops within Teacher Education to ensure its graduates are knowledgeable and culturally aware in their future careers. More must be done in Teacher Education programs to prepare future teachers to teach the Aboriginal perspectives of the new curriculum in French to students.

[37] SFU’s Professional Development Program (PDP) taught in French addresses these obstacles head-on. Graduates of this program obtain the skills necessary to fill the open positions for French immersion teachers. These qualified graduates are in such high demand that many receive full-time job offers before completing their teacher education program at SFU. They are highly competent educators who can teach the French-language curriculum effectively, with knowledge of the cultural context and methodology of minority-language and second-language learning. But there is no doubt that the number of French-speaking PDP graduates needs to increase.

1.2.2 K-12 barrier #2: Low level of language competence of in-service teachers

[38] Once students have completed teacher education and are working in schools, there is still a continued need for language training and skills enhancement throughout their teaching careers.

[39] A 2007 UBC survey of 800 Core French teachers found that “only 22% of elementary school teachers reported being at ‘ease in conversing or reading’ in French. This number increased to 29% for middle school teachers. By contrast, on a national level, 75% of elementary and middle school Core French teachers reported being at ease in conversing or reading French.”⁵³ There is no doubt that this alarming lack of French language proficiency amongst elementary and middle school Core French teachers in British Columbia impacts the quality of French second-language instruction. The way Core French teachers perceive their language

⁵¹ Andrea Woo, “B.C. seeks French teachers – and finds those who can, won’t” *The Globe and Mail* (7 April 2014) online: The Globe and Mail <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-seeks-french-teachers-and-finds-those-who-can-wont/article17853640>>.

⁵² British Columbia Ministry of Education, “Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward” (2015), online: British Columbia Ministry of Education <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/awp_moving_forward.pdf> [Aboriginal Worldviews].

⁵³ CPF Roadmap, *supra* note 49 at 20.

competence in French influences how their students feel about French second-language education. Students in French teacher education programs share the same lack of confidence.⁵⁴

[40] Further, as noted by Canadian Parents for French, poor knowledge of French also limits the “growth and vitality of the French language” in British Columbia.⁵⁵ Without the necessary French-language skills, these teachers are simply unable to meet the curriculum objectives, and French knowledge and culture are not properly imparted to students.

[41] The reality is that many generalist teachers at the Grades 5 to 8 level are asked to teach Core French. Most generalist teachers are certified with methods coursework in all subject areas except French.⁵⁶ There is usually no proficiency screening for Core French teachers.⁵⁷ And, even though Core French is now commonly offered from Grades 5 to 8, no French course or even second language methodology course is required as a part of teacher education.⁵⁸ Therefore, unfortunately, most Core French teachers are generalists with little linguistic and methodological background.⁵⁹

[42] According to the Government of British Columbia, teachers in French immersion programs “should have a high degree of oral and written proficiency in the French language”, as well as a “sound knowledge of the culture of French-speaking peoples.” To achieve this, they should have taken a course in immersion methodology and continued to develop their skills through professional development. In order to effectively communicate with parents, teachers “are expected to also have a good working knowledge of English.”⁶⁰ Principals of French immersion schools should also be functionally bilingual. However, proficiency standards for French immersion teachers and principals vary by school district and these goals outlined by the Ministry of Education are often unmet.⁶¹

[43] The 2015 report of the Senate Committee states that more must be done to support current teachers, arguing “the shortage of second-language teachers creates barriers to access, and that is why the vast majority of the testimonies cited the importance of supporting teachers. Underlying this issue is a need to revitalize the second-language teaching profession.”⁶²

[44] SFU currently provides support to teachers by way of its graduate programs, workshops or professional learning series, and French courses for teachers, and will increase these offerings to meet the pressing need of teachers to continue their professional development in French. This

⁵⁴ Cécile Sabatier, “La formation des professeurs de français de base en Colombie-Britannique. Représentations, identités, et empowerment” (2011), cited in Anne-Marie de Mejia et Christine Helot (Ed.), “Empowering Teachers across Cultures” (Bern: Peter Lange, 2011) at 179-206.

⁵⁵ CPF Roadmap, *supra* note 49 at 16.

⁵⁶ Carr, Teaching Core French, *supra* note 17.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Carr, Intensive French, *supra* note 32.

⁶⁰ BC French Immersion Program, *supra* note 38.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, “Aiming Higher: Increasing bilingualism of our Canadian youth” (2015), online: The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/412/ollo/rep/rep06jun15-e.pdf>> at 41 [Aiming Higher].

programming allows teachers to develop their French-language skills throughout their careers and to feel connected to the French-speaking community. At present, SFU is primarily reaching out to Greater Vancouver area teachers. Increasing program offering is necessary to reach a larger range of teachers in all regions of British Columbia.

1.2.3 K-12 barrier #3: Lack of strategic planning to address attrition rates

[45] Beyond ensuring that French education programs are accessible throughout the province and staffed by qualified instructors, more must be done to retain students and reduce attrition rates in French education programs.

[46] Retaining French education students through to secondary school graduation is a Canada-wide problem. “This loss is very clear during the transition between primary and secondary school and is even more evident among students in Core French. Nationally, only 38% of students continue to study Core French through to the end of Grade 12. The challenge is similar at immersion schools. And it remains after secondary school, as only a few students outside Quebec continue to study in French at the post-secondary level.”⁶³

[47] In CSFCB’s French minority-language program, there were currently 257 students in Grade 12 in the 2015-2016 academic year. However, this cohort began with 379 students, meaning the attrition rate was of 32.19%. French immersion programs face similar attrition rates, with many more students starting the program but a much smaller number completing it to Grade 12. Attrition levels are particularly high after Grade 7. For example, between the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years, 17.49% of French immersion students did not continue to Grade 8.⁶⁴

[48] The 2003 federal action plan highlighted the negative impact of the absence of continuity of education in French from elementary and secondary schools by indicating that “limited access to post-secondary education in French discourages students from completing their secondary school education in that language.”⁶⁵ When students in French minority-language and French immersion programs look ahead to prepare their plans for post-secondary education, they are faced with very limited French language options and question the long-term usefulness of their participation in French education.

[49] By implementing its upcoming *2018-203 OFFA Action Plan*, SFU wishes to provide a direct solution the attrition issue by adding new programs and courses offered in French at SFU, as well as maintaining current French programs such as the unique French Cohort Program in Public Administration and Community Services. SFU’s OFFA is marketing its programs to French education students in British Columbia’s secondary schools so they are aware of the continued opportunities to apply their French language skills in higher education. The student recruitment activities include, for example, visiting Grade 10, 11 and 12 classes across the

⁶³ *Ibid* at 27.

⁶⁴ CPF Enrolment Statistics, *supra* note 19.

⁶⁵ Government of Canada, “The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada’s Linguistic Duality, The Action Plan for Official Languages” (2003), online: <<http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/244759/publication.html>> at 18 [The Next Act].

province, offering campus tours in French, and promoting the programs at teachers' conferences, university fairs, and community cultural events.⁶⁶ With a range of courses available at SFU, French education students interested in a diversity of university-level subjects will receive French programming at the post-secondary level. Furthermore, students interested in continuing post-secondary education in French will do so in their home province.

⁶⁶ Caroline Ventézou & Anne Marie Gagné, "Rapport : Activités de recrutement et communication" (2016) at 14-19 [Recruitment Report].

2 SFU AS AN “ENGAGED UNIVERSITY” COMMITTED TO QUALITY FRENCH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

2.1 SFU’S CONNECTION TO THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRANCOPHONIE

[50] SFU was founded on September 9, 1965, with an initial population of 2,500 students. With over 50 years of growth, SFU is now host to 30,000 students and 6,500 faculty and staff across three campuses in Vancouver, Burnaby, and Surrey and is considered one of the world’s leading teaching and research universities.⁶⁷

[51] As “Canada’s most community-engaged research university”⁶⁸, SFU is committed to enhancing the social and cultural well-being of the communities it serves, and as such, is committed to providing post-secondary education in French and opportunities to participate in French-language community-based activities both on and off campus.

[52] SFU’s connection to the global community is reflected in its tagline “Engaging the World.”⁶⁹ “*Le monde en tête*”, the tagline’s French version, is an indication of SFU’s desire to connect with the Francophonie at the provincial, national and international levels.

[53] For instance, in 2006, SFU became a member of the *Agence universitaire de la Francophonie* (AUF),⁷⁰ an international association with members established in 106 countries, helping connect SFU Francophone colleagues to international researchers. The following year, in 2007, SFU joined the *Association internationale des études québécoises* (AIEQ).⁷¹ The AIEQ is an international network with 3,000 members in 82 countries who work in 40 different disciplines including literature, linguistics, history, sociology, and political science. Through the AIEQ’s *Programme de tournées des auteurs québécois*⁷², SFU has welcomed, over the years, numerous Québec authors and writers.

⁶⁷ About SFU, *supra* note 1.

⁶⁸ Simon Fraser University, *Engage with Us*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/engage/strategy.html>>.

⁶⁹ Simon Fraser University, *Strategic Vision Background*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/engage/background.html>>.

⁷⁰ Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, *Étudier au Canada*, online: Agence universitaire de la Francophonie <<http://www.auf.org/bureau/bureau-ameriques/propos/etudier-au-canada>>.

⁷¹ Association internationale des études québécoises, *Partenaires*, online: Association internationale des études québécoises <<http://www.aieq.qc.ca/partenaires>>.

⁷² Association internationale des études québécoises, *Programme de tournées d’auteurs québécois*, online: Association internationale des études québécoises <<http://www.aieq.qc.ca/programme-de-tournees-dauteurs-quebecois>>.

[54] SFU is a member of the *Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne* (ACUFC⁷³, formerly known as AUFC) since 2012. The ACUFC is an association of twenty-one Francophone or bilingual post-secondary institutions in various minority-language communities from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. The ACUFC’s goal is to provide increased access to quality post-secondary education in French throughout Canada. College and University members of the ACUFC are “economic, social and cultural engines contributing to the vitality and influence of francophone communities.” Notably, SFU is the only Anglophone member of the ACUFC and contributes its unique perspective as an institution that successfully integrates both Francophone and Francophile students in its programs offered in French.

[55] In 2014, based on the findings of a feasibility study led by Ronald Bisson of the ACUFC, a number of agencies and institutions across Canada created the *Réseau national de formation en justice* (RNFJ), a national network for enhancing access to justice in both official languages.⁷⁴ The RNFJ’s goals are to increase the number of individuals that can offer legal services in French by providing tools for French-language skills development in the legal context. SFU joined the RNFJ in 2014, offering the research and expertise of its School of Criminology, including the contribution of a number of faculty members who can teach in French.

2.2 A TURNING POINT IN FRENCH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: THE CREATION OF OFFA AT SFU

[56] The creation of the Office of Francophone and Francophiles Affairs (OFFA) in 2004 was the result of a lengthy process undertaken by the French-speaking community in British Columbia in order to first obtain K-12 French minority-language education, followed by post-secondary education in French.

[57] SFU’s OFFA, known in French as the *Bureau des affaires francophones et francophiles* (BAFF), develops, coordinates, and promotes programs taught in French at SFU while engaging with the French-speaking communities of British Columbia, Canada, and the world.⁷⁵ Its creation represented a historical milestone for post-secondary education in French in British Columbia and Western Canada more generally. Prior to 2004, few undergraduate programs were offered in French in the province. Today, SFU boasts a range of program options taught in French. The best known is the unique French Cohort Program in Public Administration and Community Services⁷⁶.

⁷³ Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, *About the ACUFC*, online: Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne <<http://www.acufc.ca/about-us/acufc>>.

⁷⁴ Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, *Réseau national de formation en justice* (RNFJ), online: Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne <<http://www.acufc.ca/1-acufc-et-la-justice/le-reseau-national-de-formation-en-justice>>.

⁷⁵ About OFFA, *supra* note 2.

⁷⁶ Simon Fraser University, *About the French Cohort Program*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/fassfr/en/frcohort.html>> [About the FCP].

2.2.1 *The history leading to the creation of OFFA*

[58] Historically, SFU has offered programs in French for over 25 years. The Department of French, founded in 1989, offers a number of program options where students can take language, literature, and linguistics courses. SFU's Faculty of Education has offered courses taught in French as part of its Teacher Education programs since 1986, a Master of Education (M. Ed) and Master of Arts (M.A) since 1994, programs to support in-service teachers since 2005 and a Doctor of Education (Ed. D) since 2007. However, it was not until 2004 that post-secondary education in French made a fundamental breakthrough in British Columbia.

[59] In 2004, SFU established OFFA, a collaborative office tasked with administering the post-secondary French education programs at SFU, working with partners in the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS).⁷⁷ OFFA is tasked with developing, coordinating, and promoting programming in French at SFU. OFFA's key objective was, and continues to be, to help provide post-secondary education in French to students from across the province.

[60] OFFA is also pursuing SFU's mission of community collaboration and engagement with the French-speaking communities throughout British Columbia. In that regard, OFFA works closely with the OFFA Advisory Committee.⁷⁸ This committee composed of 20 members includes SFU administrators and faculty members, as well as Francophone and Francophile community representatives from British Columbia. The committee meets biannually to discuss issues related to post-secondary education in the province.

[61] The *Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique* (FFCB) was founded in 1945 with the goal of promoting, representing and defending the rights and interests of Francophones in British Columbia. The FFCB also takes on the mission of preserving the Francophone linguistic and cultural heritage and serves as an "umbrella organization, bringing together over 40 associations from different regions and sectors across British Columbia."⁷⁹ In June 1998, the FFCB appointed a Working Committee that studied the state of post-secondary education in French in British Columbia. Following the report of this Working Committee, a study was conducted by the FFCB to measure the training needs and level of interest among the potential post-secondary student clientele. Serge Corbeil, the FFCB Coordinator of Government Relations and Research, presented the results of the study in *Post-secondary Education in French in British Columbia: What do Students Think?*⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Administration*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/baff-offa/en/about-offa/administration.html>>.

⁷⁸ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Committees*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/baff-offa/en/about-offa/committees.html>>.

⁷⁹ La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, *About us*, online: La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique <<http://www.ffcb.ca/about-us>>.

⁸⁰ La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, "Post-secondary Education in French in British Columbia: What do Students Think? Final Report" (2000) [FFCB Report]; Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *SFU and la Francophonie*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/baff-offa/en/about-sfu.html>>.

[62] In September 2002, an action plan was proposed to the FFCB by Dr. Jean Watters, former superintendent of the CSFCB and past President of Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario, in a document on programs and university activities for Francophones and Francophiles in British Columbia.⁸¹ Entitled *University Level Programs and Activities for Francophone and Francophile Students in British Columbia: A Call to Action*, the report proposed that “Simon Fraser University become the lead university for French activities on a university level for Francophones and Francophiles in British Columbia.”⁸² The explanation and justification for SFU as the chosen university was that “[t]he heart of British Columbia’s Francophone community is located within the area served by Simon Fraser University. Forty-five percent of British Columbia’s Francophone population lives in the Vancouver region.”⁸³

[63] The document also proposed that “Simon Fraser University create an Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs and hire an Executive Director”.⁸⁴ Along with these proposals were the recommendations that SFU offer Francophones and Francophiles an undergraduate degree program in community development and public administration in French, that SFU expand its undergraduate Faculty of Education Professional Development Program (PDP) for future French education teachers at the elementary level, and its Master of Arts and Master of Education programs in French Education.⁸⁵ The report emphasized that the “realisation of these proposals depends on the official approval of Simon Fraser University, the support of the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, and the acquisition of necessary funds from the federal government in order to bring the proposed activities to fruition and manage them over time.”⁸⁶

[64] SFU promptly responded to this call to action and together, members of SFU and the FFCB, as well as representatives from the British Columbia Ministries of Education and Advanced Education and the Department of Canadian Heritage, developed a business plan in order to examine the feasibility of creating programs in French at SFU, including professional teacher education. The association Canadian Parents for French was very supportive of this initiative.⁸⁷

[65] The necessary funding for the creation of OFFA was obtained largely as a result of the efforts of the FFCB and Dr. Roger Blackman, then Dean of the Faculty of Arts at SFU, who referred Dr. Jean Watters’ work to the provincial and federal governments. Significantly, in 2003, the Honourable Stéphane Dion oversaw the publication, by the Federal Liberal government, of *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada’s Linguistic Duality, The Action Plan for Official Languages*, which recognized the importance of access to post-secondary education

⁸¹ Jean Watters, “University Level Activities and Programs for Francophones and Francophiles in British Columbia: A Call to Action” (2002), online: Simon Fraser University <http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/baff-offa/English/History-%20A_Call_to_Action.pdf>.

⁸² *Ibid* at 17.

⁸³ *Ibid*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*.

⁸⁵ *Ibid* at 19.

⁸⁶ *Ibid* at 2.

⁸⁷ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *History*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/baff-offa/en/about-offa/history.html>> [OFFA History].

in French outside Québec.⁸⁸ This action plan was essential to British Columbia's progress in terms of post-secondary education in French as the governments of British Columbia and Canada signed the bilateral *Canada-British Columbia Auxiliary Agreement for the Development of Postsecondary Education in French at Simon Fraser University, 2003-2004 to 2007-2008*⁸⁹, along with an "Action Plan" in February 2004.⁹⁰

[66] Finally, in April 2004, OFFA's implementation began under the academic supervision of Dr. Bill Krane, SFU Associate Vice-President, Academic. Dr. Maureen Covell was appointed as Interim Director of OFFA, assisted by two Associate Directors: Danielle Arcand and Claire Trépanier. The Director and Associate Directors coordinated the courses and programs in French in the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. In September 2004, the first students were registered in the multidisciplinary program in Public Administration and Community Services, part of a bachelor degree taught predominantly in French. As well, the Teacher Education program increased its enrollment with the goal of doubling the number of graduates in the program.

⁸⁸ The Next Act, *supra* note 65.

⁸⁹ Government of British Columbia, *Canada-British Columbia Auxiliary Agreement for the Development of Postsecondary Education in French at Simon Fraser University, 2003-2004 to 2007-2008*, online: Government of British Columbia <<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/french-funding/13-18/2013-2018-canada-bc-agreement.pdf>> [*Canada-British Columbia Agreement*].

⁹⁰ OFFA History, *supra* note 87.

3 POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN FRENCH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

3.1 THE FIRST DECADE: PROGRAMS DEVELOPED AT SFU SINCE 2004

[67] Programs taught in French at SFU fall into two broad categories. The first is geared towards students, mainly at the undergraduate level, who wish to take courses taught in French in various academic subjects. These include the programs and courses taught in French at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). Second, the Faculty of Education offers several program options for students to become teachers (pre-service teachers), as well as current French minority-language and French second-language teachers (in-service teachers) who wish to continue their professional development. Below are examples of programs delivered.

3.1.1 *Programs in French in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Examples*

[68] At the FASS, the **French Cohort Program (FCP) in Public Administration and Community Services** allows students to complete a four-year program in both official languages. The FCP is taught primarily in French and leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree in one of the following three options: a Major in Political Science with an Extended Minor in French; a Major in French with an Extended Minor in Political Science; and a double Major in Political Science and in French.⁹¹ Students in the FCP are required to participate in field studies and community-based projects. The FCP is supported by program-related and cultural activities in French. Students are also required to spend one or two semesters in their third year of the FCP at a host university, where they study and are immersed in a French-speaking environment. The Canadian exchange partners are *Université de Montréal* and *Université Laval*, in Québec City. Students may also travel abroad to several participating French-language universities in France, Belgium, and Switzerland.⁹²

[69] The **Curriculum in the Other Official Language (COOL) Option** allows any current SFU student who passes a French language proficiency test, to enrol in elective courses offered in French. The COOL Option is also targeted to graduates of French minority-language and French immersion secondary school programs who wish to maintain some level of French-language proficiency during their post-secondary studies. The COOL Option allows students across the university studying a wide range of disciplines that are not currently offered in French in British Columbia to continue using the French language skills they developed at the K-12 level. With the COOL Option, SFU wishes to reach a larger number of students beyond those enrolled in FCP and education programs, and encourage them to view learning and eventually working in French in British Columbia as a lifelong experience.

⁹¹ About the FCP, *supra* note 76.

⁹² Simon Fraser University, *French Language Cohort Program in Public Administration and Community Services French Major with a Political Science Extended Minor*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2016/fall/programs/french-language-cohort-program-in-public-administration-and-community-services-french-major-with-a-political-science-extended-minor/bachelor-of-arts.html>>.

[70] Within the Department of French, a **French Major with Concentration for Prospective Teachers** is available since 2016, with required courses from both the FASS and the Faculty of Education. This program requires a student exchange at either *Université François-Rabelais de Tours* (UFRT) in France, or *Université de Sherbrooke* in Québec.⁹³ As a substantial proportion of students majoring in French intend to become teachers, this Major is a bridging program towards entering Teacher Education.

3.1.2 Programs in French in the Faculty of Education: Examples

[71] At SFU, Teacher Education programs in French are structured in such a way to answer the needs of two categories of teachers: Pre-service teachers and In-service teachers.

Programs in French for Pre-service teachers

[72] To respond to the need for qualified individuals with the ability to teach British Columbia's curriculum in French, SFU's Faculty of Education offers "Teacher Education" programs in French, known as the **Professional Development Programs (PDP) French Module**: a 12-month full-time PDP, and a 16-month part-time **Professional Linking Program (PLP)**. Following the successful completion of the Teacher Education programs, graduates are eligible to receive a teaching certificate issued by the Teacher Regulation Branch of the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

[73] The PDP French Module is taught in French and prepares students for teaching either in French minority-language or French second-language elementary and secondary schools in British Columbia. Beyond the traditional coursework requirements, the program also allows aspiring teachers to explore the teaching profession by providing opportunities to plan and teach in classroom settings.⁹⁴ For additional immersion in a French environment, students may enrol in the "Dual Program", allowing them to first spend one semester at *Université François Rabelais à Tours* (UFRT) in France, taking graduate-level courses in the *Faculté des Lettres et Langues*, before beginning the regular PDP curriculum at SFU. Students in the Dual Program obtain a *Master 1 en Didactique du Français langue étrangère* from *Université François-Rabelais à Tours*, in addition to the SFU's PDP certificate.⁹⁵ PDP students are also encouraged to participate in the *Explore* program, a five-week immersive French-language program offered at *Université Laval's École de langues* in Québec City.⁹⁶

⁹³ Simon Fraser University, *French Major with Concentration for Prospective Teachers*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/french/en/undergrad/french-major-with-concentrations-for-prospective-teachers.html>>.

⁹⁴ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Professional Development Program*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/pp/pdp/overview.html>>.

⁹⁵ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Dual Program*, online: Simon Fraser University <http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/pp/options/dual.html#main_content_text>.

⁹⁶ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Explore Program*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/pp/options/explore.html>>.

[74] The PLP is designed for students who already have a minimum of two years' work experience in the education sector in roles such as student support workers, special education assistants, adult educators, and child and youth care workers. Taught entirely in French, the program aims to build on the skills and experience of these paraprofessionals to allow them to obtain the requirements for teacher certification in British Columbia. Graduates of the PLP French Module are qualified for teaching in French, whether within a French minority-language or French second-language program depending on their French language skill level.⁹⁷

[75] The PDP and PLP both include an important experiential learning component: a 10 to 12 week practicum. The practicum is a teaching semester in which each student is placed with a practicing teacher in the British Columbia school system (School Associate), to become acquainted with the school district, students, staff, and observe curriculum development, instructional strategies, as well as evaluation methods. The practicum includes an extended period during which the student teacher assumes primary instructional responsibilities of the classroom.⁹⁸ For students, the practicum also represents a transition into the workforce as many are hired after graduation as full-time teachers in the schools where they completed their practicum. In fact, given the critical shortage of French teachers in British Columbia, the majority of graduates from SFU's French modules are hired in the following months of completion of their teacher education program.

Programs in French for In-service teachers

[76] The Faculty of Education graduate level programming is offered in French to teachers. These programs contribute to the professional development of current teachers, known as "in-service" teachers, as part of their Professional Development (Pro-D).

[77] The Pro-D for in-service teachers programming includes Workshop Series, a Bootcamp FrancoFUN, and the Intensive Language Education Activity Program (ILEAP). The Workshop Series are professional development workshops for teachers developed in collaboration with British Columbia's school districts and are designed to meet specific needs identified by the school districts. The Bootcamp FrancoFUN is targeted to Core French teachers, allowing them to practice their French skills, network with colleagues, and focus on developing French language resources for their classrooms. The three-day program consists of a wide range of curriculum-centered linguistic and cultural activities.⁹⁹ British Columbia's school districts provide some financial support for the professional development of their teachers. However, the cost of the programming exceeds the funding granted by the school districts and SFU and OFFA funding covers the difference. Finally, ILEAP is an 8-week French language course designed for Core French teachers. The program allows teachers to develop their French language skills with

⁹⁷ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Professional Linking Program*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/pp/plp.html>>.

⁹⁸ Simon Fraser University, Experience and Practicum Information for School Associates, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/education/teachersed/fa-sa/school-associates/sa-practicum-info.html>>.

⁹⁹ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Bootcamp FrancoFUN*, online: Simon Fraser University <http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/pro-D/bootcamp.html#main_content_text>.

courses based on the British Columbia Core French curriculum and demonstrates language learning tools and activities that can be transferred to the classroom setting.¹⁰⁰

[78] Three graduate programs are offered in French at the Faculty of Education. First, the two-year **Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education** is designed for teachers whose primary focus is a school-based practice. This program enables teachers to improve their practice in teaching French, whether at the French minority-language or second-language level.¹⁰¹ Completion of this program allows teachers to upgrade their Teacher Qualification Service (TQS) category, leading to more senior and better-paid positions within British Columbia's school districts. All teachers in British Columbia are assigned a TQS category used by school boards for salary placement.¹⁰² Second, two **Master of Education in Contexts of Diversity** programs are offered at SFU, one in a face-to-face format at Burnaby campus and the other in an online format to students outside the Greater Vancouver area. These two-year programs are targeted to teachers who are seeking to ground their practice in theoretical and research knowledge.¹⁰³ Third, the **Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership** is delivered over three years in a hybrid face-to-face/online format and designed for current and future educational leaders interested in grounding their work in research and theories in diverse and multicultural contexts.¹⁰⁴ Currently, students coming from New Brunswick, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia are enrolled in the program. This is an example of SFU's success in reaching out to a student population, current and future educational leaders, from across Canada.

3.1.3 Other Teacher Education Programs in French in British Columbia

[79] In British Columbia, SFU and the University of British Columbia (UBC) are the two institutions providing teacher education in French. UBC offers an Elementary French and a Secondary French stream within the 12-month Bachelor of Education program, preparing students for teaching French immersion or Core French. For students training to become elementary and middle school teachers, a Core French methodology course is mandatory as part of the Teacher Education Program.¹⁰⁵ At the graduate level, UBC offers a two-year Master of Education in Modern Languages Education for French first-language and second-language

¹⁰⁰ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *ILEAP – Intensive Language Education Activity Program*, online: Simon Fraser University <<http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/pro-D/ileap.html>>.

¹⁰¹ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Graduate Diploma*, online: Simon Fraser University <http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/grad/gdip.html#main_content_text>.

¹⁰² BC Teachers' Federation, *Teaching in British Columbia—A Backgrounder*, online: BC Teachers' Federation <<http://www.bctf.ca/OpportunitiesForMembers.aspx?id=5504%20>>.

¹⁰³ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Master of Education in Contexts of Diversity*, online: Simon Fraser University <http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/grad/master.html#main_content_text>.

¹⁰⁴ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, *Doctor in Education (EdD) Educational Leadership*, online: Simon Fraser University <http://www.sfu.ca/educfr/en/grad/doctor/overview.html#main_content_text>.

¹⁰⁵ The University of British Columbia, *Bachelor of Education Program*, online: The University of British Columbia <<http://teach.educ.ubc.ca/bachelor-of-education-program>>.

teachers, taught entirely in French.¹⁰⁶ For in-service teachers, a three-week intensive French-language summer course is available, taught in Québec City.¹⁰⁷

[80] SFU and UBC work in partnership to assess the language competence of prospective students wishing to enter the Teacher Education programs at either institution. Both institutions use a common and collaboratively developed test called the *Appréciation du niveau de français (ANF)*. Both universities accept the results obtained by students in the international *Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF)* and *Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF)*.

[81] Two of the most urgent challenges facing access to K-12 French education in British Columbia are the lack of adequately qualified teachers for K-12 French immersion programs and Core French, and a dropout rate caused in part by the lack of post-secondary educational opportunities for students in French. Through its programming, SFU continues to raise the quality of British Columbia's French education teachers to directly address the issue of the lack of teacher qualifications. A stronger link between the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels provides also a solution to many of these pressing challenges by showing students first-hand that bilingualism is valued at the post-secondary level, in the labour market, and in the community at large.

3.2 FRENCH EDUCATION AS A CONTINUUM: THE IMPORTANCE OF LINKING K-12 TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN FRENCH

[82] The importance of post-secondary education in French has been widely recognized in academic studies on institutional completeness¹⁰⁸ as well as by the federal government in various studies, action plans, and roadmaps. The Government of Canada's *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018* emphasizes the importance of post-secondary education in the French language outside Québec by stating that "[i]n order for official language minority communities to thrive, there must be a continuum of educational opportunities in the minority language, from pre-school to the post-secondary level."¹⁰⁹ This is precisely the continuum that SFU enriches through its academic programming and fostering of the Francophone and Francophile communities.

[83] A 2001 Canadian Parents for French report notes that the quality of French second-language instruction is threatened by inadequate teaching materials, a lack of qualified French immersion programs and Core French teachers, and the high dropout rate among students at the

¹⁰⁶ The University of British Columbia, *MEd in Modern Languages Education*, online: The University of British Columbia <<http://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/med-in-modern-languages-education-frm5>>.

¹⁰⁷ The University of British Columbia, *Institut de Français, UBC à Québec*, online: The University of British Columbia <quebec.frenchcentre.ubc.ca>.

¹⁰⁸ Adriana Dudas & Kina Chenard, "La création de la première structure administrative postsecondaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique : une étude de cas dans le domaine de la francophonie" (2009) 42 *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 3 at 768.

¹⁰⁹ Government of Canada, "Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities" (2013), online: Government of Canada <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/DAMAssetPub/DAM-PCH2-Identity-OfficialLanguages/STAGING/texte-text/roadmap2013-2018_1456958190186_eng.pdf> at 6 [Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages].

secondary school level, often due to the perception that they will not be able to access post-secondary education in French.¹¹⁰ In 2009, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages conducted a study on post-secondary education in French, and put forth the following call to action: “the time has come for Canada to ensure that a true continuum of second-language learning opportunities is available for all Canadians from elementary school through to the labour market, as an important and integral part of meeting the challenge of preparing our young people for the future.”¹¹¹ Unfortunately, several years later, the problems of attrition rates and teacher qualifications continue to limit the success of French second-language programs.

[84] SFU has begun to strengthen the indispensable continuum linking K-12 and post-secondary French education in three distinct ways. First, SFU provides teacher education to highly competent French education teachers, who, in turn, provide high-quality instruction in French education programs to K-12 students. Second, SFU provides a number of programs and courses in French at the university-level that motivate young students by demonstrating that second-language learning is a lifelong exercise and that there will be opportunities to use and develop their French language skills in the future. This gives K-12 students a greater pride and purpose in their French studies, helping to reduce attrition rates in French second-language programs. Third, as part of its mandate, SFU’s OFFA establishes and maintains links to organizations and potential employers in British Columbia and across Canada, to connect students with student employment and volunteering opportunities that offer a significant and meaningful social integration and cultural immersion into the French-speaking community.

[85] SFU is committed to doing its part in ensuring the existence of this continuum and recognizes that a response to the challenges in K-12 French education in British Columbia is not complete without regular, long-term professional development opportunities for in-service teachers. In-service teachers are on the front-line of the delivery of French second-language education programs to the province’s young people and must be highly competent: linguistically, pedagogically, and culturally. These skills are not only acquired during formal schooling, but must be maintained and kept up-to-date through professional development programming.

[86] The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages emphasized that the need to ensure a continuity of education was raised by student participants in its 2009 survey: “students now at or arriving at university want to maintain or improve second-language ability obtained at elementary and secondary levels. Not to do so, they feel, would mean losing their own investment of time and effort at the earlier levels and wasting the investment of significant public resources”.¹¹² In the context of this study, French immersion graduates also reported the desire to continue studying in their second language at the university level.¹¹³ Students’ experience at the elementary and secondary levels and the degree of second-language proficiency acquired is another deciding factor in whether they will pursue post-secondary education in French.

¹¹⁰ Canadian Parents for French, “The State of French Second Language Education in Canada” (2001), online: Canadian Parents for French <<http://cpf.ca/en/files/FSL-2001-EN.pdf>>.

¹¹¹ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, “Two Languages: A World of Opportunities, Second-language learning in Canada’s universities” (2009), online: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/clo-ocol/SF31-100-2009E.pdf> at 1 [Two Languages].

¹¹² *Ibid* at 11.

¹¹³ *Ibid*.

[87] More recently, in the 2015 report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, the need for a continuum of learning opportunities to enhance the French-speaking community's vitality was expressed: "The evidence heard shows that the various partners need to work together to provide a continuum of second-language learning opportunities to all Canadians."¹¹⁴ The report also found that:

[s]tudents who choose to continue studying in French at the post-secondary level increase their chances of working in French after graduation. For Francophones, pursuing post-secondary studies in their mother tongue is a way to enhance the vitality of francophone minority communities.¹¹⁵

[88] It further noted that not every region has post-secondary programs that offer these kinds of opportunities and that "[a]dditional support is needed to help universities develop French-language programs and admit more students into them."¹¹⁶ In sum, the education system must be seen as a continuum, and to offer a range of varied and meaningful learning opportunities at all levels is crucial for students to remain engaged and motivated at the elementary and secondary levels. This goal can only be reached with the engagement of post-secondary institutions like SFU and the commitment of financial support from the federal and provincial governments.

[89] By offering post-secondary opportunities in a diverse range of academic subjects, SFU provides this much-needed encouragement for French education students at the K-12 level and shows them that bilingualism is an asset that will serve them in their future endeavors. As proposed in its upcoming *2018-2023 Action Plan*, SFU's OFFA seeks to better connect its students with French employment and volunteering opportunities, such as practicum placements, across the whole territory of British Columbia, bringing qualified French-speakers to regions currently underserved by the education system.

¹¹⁴ Aiming Higher, *supra* note 62 at 26.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

4 FUNDING SFU: A NECESSARY INVESTMENT IN K-12 FRENCH EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

[90] SFU has identified a strong demand for additional programming in French at the post-secondary level and for additional professional development in French for in-service teachers. In order to achieve its *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan*, SFU will be requesting significant funding from the federal government to deliver initiatives related to French language programming at the post-secondary level.

[91] SFU understands that, pursuant to the *OLE Protocol*, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the British Columbia Ministry of Education are currently negotiating the next *Canada-British Columbia Agreement* for the 2018 to 2023 period. SFU needs additional funding to supplement its own investment in the long-term development of British Columbia's post-secondary programs. SFU argues that the place of post-secondary education should not only remain an important part of the 2018-2023 *Canada-British Columbia Agreement*, but be expanded to achieve SFU's *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan*.

4.1 FUNDING FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN FRENCH

4.1.1 *Federal obligations to support minority language communities, notably, at the post-secondary level*

[92] Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*, dealing with the advancement of English and French, creates an obligation on the federal government to support and assist minority language communities in Canada.¹¹⁷ Section 41(1)(a) of the *Act* states that the Government of Canada is committed to “enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development.”¹¹⁸ The *Act* touches on the specific mandate of the Minister of Canadian Heritage to support education in particular. Section 43(1) of the *Act* states that, as a part of this commitment, the Minister of Canadian Heritage may take measures to “encourage and support the learning of English and French in Canada” and to “encourage and assist provincial governments to provide opportunities for everyone in Canada to learn both English and French.”¹¹⁹ Funding SFU *2018-2023 OFFA's Action Plan* items would align with the Department of Canadian Heritage's commitments to enhancing the bilingual character of Canada under the *Act*.

[93] By funding post-secondary education in French and thereby ensuring that the continuum from K-12 to post-secondary continues to be strengthened, the federal government is assisting the province in meeting its K-12 constitutional obligations to the minority-language community of British Columbia under section 23 of the *Charter*.

¹¹⁷ *Official Languages Act*, RSC 1985, c 31, Preamble.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid* at s 41(1)(a).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid* at ss 43(1)(b) and (d).

[94] Section 16(1) of the *Charter* establishes that English and French both have equal status, rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada. Section 16(3) provides that “nothing in this Charter limits the authority of Parliament or a legislature to advance the equality of status or use of English and French,” a clause that lends support to the federal government’s decision to fund SFU’s French-language initiatives.

4.1.2 The importance of funding post-secondary education in French

[95] The increase in funding that will be requested in the upcoming *2018-2013 OFFA Action Plan* will support SFU’s current commitment as well as additional development. It is in line with several governmental and parliamentary studies and reports, conducted in the past decade, that recommend additional funding for post-secondary education in French. The *Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013-2018* expresses the federal government’s intention to support minority-language education, which includes minority-language post-secondary education.¹²⁰ As well, the *Roadmap* expresses the government’s intention to support second-language learning for young Canadians in stating “Canadian Heritage will continue its long-standing collaboration with provincial and territorial governments to provide support for second-language learning. To keep young people interested in second-language learning and to improve their chances of success, Canadian Heritage will continue to support start-up projects...”¹²¹

[96] Prior to the adoption of the Roadmap, the federal government’s 2003 action plan, *The Next Act: Momentum for Canada’s Linguistic Duality*, highlighted concerns regarding access to minority language post-secondary education and the federal government’s financial role in improving access to post-secondary education:

“The new investments will also seek to facilitate the transition to the Francophone post-secondary level. To improve access to education, the Government will expand the range of French-language programs in Francophone or bilingual colleges and universities. In some regions, for example, it might encourage linkages through agreements with Francophone institutions in other regions, but physically located in Anglophone colleges and universities. Canadian Heritage is examining serious proposals to this end.”¹²²

[97] The June 2015 Senate Committee report, *Aiming Higher: Increasing bilingualism of our Canadian youth*, further substantiates the need for federal funding of post-secondary institutions:

“A number of stakeholders maintain that post-secondary institutions have a major role to play in second-language learning and retention, in all sectors and occupations. The federal government should increase funding for these institutions-especially the smaller francophone institutions outside Quebec-to strengthen their capacities and infrastructure.”¹²³

[98] The Senate Committee has also highlighted the importance of additional financial support for Canadian universities to develop additional French-language programs in particular:

¹²⁰ Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages, *supra* note 109.

¹²¹ *Ibid* at 5.

¹²² The Next Act, *supra* note 65 at 26.

¹²³ Aiming Higher, *supra* note 62 at 27.

“In a system intended to promote languages and language learning, universities play a crucial role [...] Whether it is maintaining students’ skills, training teaching staff or conducting research, post-secondary institutions do vital work. Canada’s francophone universities are a valuable asset in serving students whose first language is French, and in attracting students graduating from French second-language or French immersion programs. The testimony showed that additional support is necessary to help Canadian universities develop more French-language programs and to improve the capacity and infrastructure of the smaller institutions in francophone minority context”¹²⁴ (emphasis added).

[99] These reports show that the federal government has clearly identified its role in funding post-secondary education in French for well over a decade, and that enhancing the vitality of French-language programs to Canada’s universities outside Quebec has been a long-standing goal. However, several important initiatives to enhance post-secondary education in French cannot currently be carried out due to budgetary constraints.

[100] The Senate Committee further noted that it is important to implement policies and actions that have a real impact on people’s linguistic experience, that is, on their linguistic and cultural socialization. An initiative that has no direct or indirect influence on the lives of minority groups’ members is likely to have little effect on the vitality of communities.¹²⁵ SFU’s OFFA works with and for the French-speaking community of British Columbia and has a strong understanding of the cultural sphere in which any education program in French must operate.

[101] To achieve enduring results at the post-secondary level, the federal government must not only continue to support SFU but provide additional funding to the institution. SFU’s demonstrated track record of success over the past twelve years has made it a leader in providing post-secondary French education in Canada. SFU’s *OFFA Action Plan* for the 2018-2023 funding period directly responds to current identified needs in the K-12 French education system. The objectives outlined in the reports and studies above must frame the negotiations for the *OLE Protocol* and its accompanying agreements so that these goals can finally be achieved in the 2018-2023 funding period.

4.2 SFU’S OPERATIONAL FUNDING STRUCTURE

4.2.1 SFU’s funding: the framework

[102] SFU’s important initiatives for the French-speaking communities in British Columbia are made possible in part by the federal funding received by SFU under the bilateral *Canada-British Columbia Agreement* between the Department of Canadian Heritage and the British Columbia Ministry of Education. From these funds, the British Columbia Ministry of Education has created the complementary project, “French-Language Education at Simon Fraser University,” to provide financial support for SFU’s French-language programs.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ *Ibid* at 42.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*.

¹²⁶ *Canada-British Columbia Agreement*, *supra* note 89.

[103] As seen in Table 1 below, for the current funding period of 2013-2014 to 2017-2018, the total federal funding received by SFU is \$10,190,000.

[104] OFFA’s Action Plan is also supported by in-kind contributions from SFU. For the 2013-2018 funding period, SFU provided in-kind contributions valued at \$15,285,000.¹²⁷ SFU is able to make in-kind contributions for its French language programming by using a portion of the funds it receives from British Columbia’s Ministry of Advanced Education.

[105] In sum, the total funding received by OFFA during the 2013-2018 funding period was \$25,475,000, composed of 60% (\$15,285,000) in-kind contributions from SFU and 40% (\$10,190,000) funding from the federal government.

Table 1: Funding to SFU since creation of OFFA in 2003-2004

Funding Period	Total Federal Funding	In-kind Contribution by SFU	Total
2003-2008	\$5,730,000 (50%)	\$5,730,000 (50%)	\$11,460,000
2008-2009	\$1,515,000 (43%)	\$2,000,000 (57%)	\$3,515,000
2009-2013	\$6,800,000 (40%)	\$10,200,000 (60%)	\$17,000,000
2013-2018	\$10,190,000 (40%)	\$15,285,000 (60%)	\$25,475,000
TOTAL	\$24,235,000	\$33,215,000	\$57,450,000

[106] The funding received by SFU from the complementary project is granted by the federal government in recognition of SFU’s role in training minority language teachers who will teach French education in British Columbia. The *Canada-British Columbia Agreement* also states that the agreement will support British Columbia’s efforts to fill demand for qualified French-speaking educators and that it will allow the province to continue its support of SFU, thereby making post-secondary education in French accessible to a larger number of students in British Columbia.¹²⁸

[107] While SFU is making great strides in providing teacher education to British Columbia’s present and future teachers, the *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan* will reflect the urgency of increasing the funding to achieve the goals of filling demand for qualified teachers, due the large number of unfilled positions for teachers who can teach students in French language programs of British Columbia.

4.2.2 SFU’s funding over time

[108] As demonstrated in Table 1 above, since the creation of OFFA in 2004, SFU’s federal funding has largely been stable from the 2003-2008 funding period to the 2008-2013 funding period. Funding is normally allotted in periods of five years, with the current 2013-2018 funding period coming to an end shortly. In 2008, funding was only granted for one year due to a change in government and the following period of 2009-2013 was of four years. While the funding

¹²⁷ Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, “OFFA 2013-2018 Action Plan”.

¹²⁸ *Canada-British Columbia Agreement*, *supra* note 89 at Annex 3, p 2.

received by SFU has allowed it to launch several innovative programs since OFFA's creation, it remains insufficient for SFU to maintain them at a high level of quality and to develop new, ground-breaking programs for which there is demand and need in the province.

[109] In the first funding period of 2003-2008, when SFU's OFFA was established, funding was split evenly between Government of Canada and the in-kind from British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, in recognition of the large start-up costs inherent in starting a new initiative of OFFA's scale. In the following funding periods, the proportion from the Government of Canada was equal to 40%. The federal government, in its recognition of its obligations towards bilingualism stemming from the *Official Languages Act*, and in acknowledgement of the reality that education in French is more costly to provide, should, at a minimum, continue to provide financial support to institutions such as SFU, who promote access to French minority-language and French second-language education.

4.2.3 SFU's upcoming funding for 2018-2023

[110] As the bilateral agreement and its complementary project currently in place will soon be reviewed in order to prepare the next five-year agreement for the funding period of 2018-2023, both SFU and OFFA seek to access more federal funding, with adjustments for inflation and the strategic development of new programming, in order to provide greater and more varied opportunities for post-secondary education in French.

[111] In the following section, SFU presents the *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan* items it is currently developing as a list of proposals to be undertaken during the next funding period. The content of the *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan* is based on multiple, detailed factors. These include, for example, the potential pool of students that can access French language programs, students' academic interests, the availability of entrance scholarships, student mobility, co-op opportunities, and program-related activities supporting the programs. Final numbers with a detailed financial structure for the upcoming activities will be presented to the British Columbia Ministry of Education's French Programs department.

5 LOOKING FORWARD: SFU'S 2018-2023 OFFA ACTION PLAN

5.1 SFU'S 2018-2023 OFFA ACTION PLAN

[112] SFU's vision for the 2018-2023 funding period is one of long-term growth and development: in the depth and breadth of French-language program options available to students and in-service teachers, and in its community outreach efforts to partners across British Columbia and the world. Having reflected on its successes over the past decade and on the current threats facing French education programs in British Columbia, SFU will build on its experience by creating additional community-oriented programming that will directly target British Columbia's pressing need for a more qualified workforce in the K-12 French education sector.

[113] SFU is currently developing innovative solutions to support British Columbia's next bilingual generation. To that end, SFU presents the following seven-part *2018-2023 Action Plan for Accessible K-12 French Education in British Columbia (2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan)*, a list of plans currently under development. This upcoming *Action Plan* is composed of seven key pillars, each responding to a specific barrier to access to British Columbia's French education system:

Part 1: Raising the bar: Enriching the French language skills of in-service teachers

Part 2: Making teacher education count: Integrating province-wide practicums, Aboriginal perspectives and graduate studies

Part 3: Welcoming teachers to British Columbia: Attracting and retaining teachers from beyond its borders

Part 4: Understanding students' needs: Research for program development and marketing

Part 5: Keeping young, bright minds in British Columbia: More program options in French at SFU

Part 6: *Engaging the World:* Connecting students to British Columbia's vibrant French-speaking community

Part 7: Creating a flexible funding structure for contingencies

[114] Each one of SFU's seven pillars are interdependent and represent a unique contribution to give British Columbia's teachers the tools needed to be effective in the classroom and to ensure that the continuum between K-12 and post-secondary education in French is enhanced.

[115] To put these proposals into action, SFU will require significant financial support from the Government of Canada for the upcoming *OLE Protocol* funding period of 2018-2019 to 2023-2024. These funds will go directly to improving the quality of post-secondary education in French in British Columbia and raising the number of students who access French-language opportunities. Each of the seven pillars described below will be accompanied by an ongoing evaluation to provide data on results on a yearly basis. By providing a continuum between K-12 and post-secondary French education and increasing the quantity and quality of French education teachers, this investment will pay dividends at the K-12 level in British Columbia.

5.1.1 Part 1: Raising the bar: Enriching the French language skills of in-service teachers

[116] At present, an alarming number of British Columbia's teachers are ill-equipped linguistically, pedagogically, and culturally to respond to the needs of students in French second-language education programs. As a result, British Columbia's curriculum goals for students to become functionally bilingual and have the ability to study and work in French upon graduation from Grade 12 French immersion are simply unmet in the majority of cases. The problem also manifests itself at the Core French level, where many generalist teachers who do not speak French are nevertheless required to teach French classes, resulting in a very poor quality of education.

[117] This reality has been highlighted by the Government of Canada, the Government of British Columbia, and the French-speaking community of British Columbia in various reports and studies. It has also been expressed by parents and students alike. SFU observes the shortcomings in the current French education system first-hand every year in its incoming undergraduate classes, who need additional support before having the required French-language level to enrol in SFU's courses taught in French.

[118] SFU will overcome this barrier to effective K-12 French education by investing in pedagogy and French-language teacher education for in-service teachers that respond to the specific challenges and needs of teachers working in both French minority-language and French second-language programs. The improvement of British Columbia teachers' French language skills will impact the province's K-12 French education programs and produce students in graduating classes who can apply their French-language skills in their future endeavours.

[119] These programs at SFU will include pedagogical and linguistic training in the form of workshops or professional learning series and bootcamps such as "immersion weekends" offered throughout the academic year as well as longer-term "summer institutes". These initiatives will allow teachers to learn French in an immersed setting similar to the *Explore* program currently available to post-secondary students. SFU intends to include activities that will involve the British Columbia's French-speaking communities and will contribute to community engagement by the teachers.

[120] Having already acquired significant experience in offering similar field programs at a smaller scale to British Columbia's in-service teachers over the past twelve years, SFU is ready to expand this programming to reach a greater number of teachers in more areas of British Columbia. SFU currently mainly offers workshops or professional learning series in the Lower

Mainland region of British Columbia. French immersion programs are growing in popularity across British Columbia and Core French teachers require long-term support.

[121] While school districts may assist teachers by providing some financial support by way of their professional development funds, these amounts remain insufficient to cover the planned initiatives to support teachers.

5.1.2 Part 2: Making Teacher Education count: Integrating province-wide practicums, Aboriginal perspectives and graduate studies

[122] At SFU, two programs allow their graduates to be eligible to receive British Columbia teaching certificates, the Professional Development Program (PDP) and the Professional Linking Program (PLP), jointly referred to as Teacher Education programs.

[123] While field programs for in-service teachers are an indispensable asset for teachers to build their skills and keep them up-to-date throughout their careers, more must be done from the outset in Teacher Education programs to create competent teachers. A proactive approach to investment in Teacher Education programs will ensure that graduates are prepared to join British Columbia's schools as teachers in French education.

Offering province-wide practicums

[124] A central part of SFU's PDP and PLP programs are practicum placements that allow students to gain practical experience working directly in British Columbia's schools, under the supervision of a Faculty of Education member. For many students, the practicum is a transition into the workforce as they are commonly hired as full-time teachers in the schools where they completed their practicum after graduation. A current limitation of the practicum element of the teacher education programs is that a policy outlines that students can perform their practicums within a 75 km radius of SFU, thereby restricting students to the Lower Mainland area.

[125] Additional funding to SFU would enable its students to complete practicums in other regions of British Columbia. After the completion of the PDP or PLP, students will likely continue working in these regions and ensure that quality of French education in British Columbia is provided not only to Vancouver area students, but also to students across the entire province.

Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into Teacher Education

[126] At present, British Columbia's teachers often do not have the required training and knowledge to adequately teach students about the history and culture of Aboriginal peoples. The British Columbia Ministry of Education's new curriculum will lead to "increased, mandated curricular emphasis in K-12 on the traditions and history of various Aboriginal peoples" and the "creation and identification of pedagogical resources for teachers and authentic learning resources for students."¹²⁹ To accomplish these goals, British Columbia's school districts are

¹²⁹ Aboriginal Worldviews, *supra* note 52.

demanding knowledgeable and culturally aware teachers to teach the Aboriginal perspectives in the new curriculum to students.

[127] SFU is committed to integrating Aboriginal perspectives into its Teacher Education programs. Within the current PDP in English, the “Indigenous Perspectives Teacher Education Module” (IPTeM) offers a focus on Aboriginal issues in education. Many field projects and research collaborations are ongoing with the Aboriginal community of British Columbia and Aboriginal students can receive programs and services at SFU via the Office for Aboriginal Peoples and the Indigenous Student Centre.

[128] A serious challenge in educating teachers to adequately teach the Aboriginal elements of the curriculum in French is the lack of French-language resources on the subject and specialists qualified to teach this area in French to students in the PDP and PLP. To meet the goals outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission¹³⁰ and the British Columbia Ministry of Education, SFU will develop programs and workshops to ensure that graduates of the PDP and PLP in French are prepared to teach Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom upon graduation.

Offering graduate studies to teachers and school administrators

[129] Another way by which SFU’s Faculty of Education is preparing its students to work with the diversity present in British Columbia schools is through its online Master of Education in Contexts of Diversity and its Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership specialized in contexts of diversity, delivered in a hybrid mode. SFU wishes to expand these two graduate programs that are unique in Canada. Graduates of these programs respond to the need for teachers and school administrators in British Columbia and in Canada to be knowledgeable about the diversity of students in French education who come from a broad range of origins, including Francophone immigrant and Aboriginal families.

5.1.3 Part 3: Welcoming teachers to British Columbia: Attracting and retaining teachers from beyond its borders

[130] A large number of French teaching positions in British Columbia go unfilled due to a lack of qualified teaching candidates. British Columbia’s school districts face a tremendous challenge in recruiting French-speaking teachers for their French education programs. As more and more students enroll in French minority-language and French immersion programs across the province, the demand for teachers becomes more and more urgent.

[131] SFU will respond to this staffing crisis by recruiting students and teachers from outside British Columbia and outside Canada to its Teacher Education programs. After completing a Teacher Education program at SFU, ensuring a strong understanding of British Columbia’s curriculum and an appreciation of the diversity of its student population, these native French speakers will be highly qualified to teach in French programs of the province. By making British

¹³⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “Calls to Action” (2015), online: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf>.

Columbia their new home, these French-speaking newcomers will increase the vitality of the province's Francophone communities.

[132] More specifically, SFU will offer its current PDP and PLP Teacher Education programs to students from other provinces and French-speaking countries and will create an online pre-departure program including pre-requisite courses in French and sessions on pedagogical approaches of the British Columbia school system. These initiatives will help streamline the processes involved in becoming a teacher in French in British Columbia.

[133] More concretely, SFU has established strong relationships with institutions across Canada through its ACUFC membership and has worked closely with partner institutions in Québec. These universities will be a major source of recruitment of students for this initiative. OFFA has also been in contact with the Consulate General of France in Vancouver and the French Embassy in Ottawa to determine the feasibility of attracting students from France to British Columbia. France, for example, is facing a high level of unemployment among highly-educated youth. Through its *ministère de l'Éducation nationale*, France has confirmed the enthusiasm of French students to come to British Columbia to work as teachers.

[134] This initiative would not only improve access to K-12 education by attracting qualified individuals to work as teachers in the province, but these French-speaking newcomers to British Columbia would also positively impact its diverse culture and economic growth. The government of Canada's *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018* identifies "improving efforts to recruit French-speaking immigrants to minority communities" as a key factor to maintaining community vitality.¹³¹ This Action Plan item meets two important objectives for British Columbia: improving the quality and quantity of teachers in French education programs and attracting highly-skilled French-speaking immigrants.

[135] For this project, funding would be directed at developing, coordinating and implementing a program fit for Francophone newcomers to the province.

5.1.4 Part 4: Understanding students' needs: Research for program development and marketing

[136] Each one of SFU's *OFFA Action Plan* targets is carefully developed based on its experience delivering post-secondary programming in French. SFU listens to stakeholders and program participants to understand the current shortcomings in British Columbia's K-12 French education system from the people directly involved in it. SFU will continue to develop new programs and courses using this research-based approach that directly responds to current needs.

Exploratory research

[137] As part of its development of new programs for undergraduate students, teacher education students, and in-service teachers, SFU will conduct exploratory research to better understand the actual student clientele, its potential and its needs. The findings will determine the

¹³¹ Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages, *supra* note 109 at 10.

most effective way to meet student needs. OFFA will also conduct research to ensure a link is established between its educational programs and the job market in British Columbia and in Canada. Another area of research to be undertaken is to assess the impact of SFU's initiatives on the K-12 French education system, to identify opportunities to strengthen the continuum between the levels of education.

[138] SFU seeks to develop niche programs that are unique in Canada. In order to accomplish this goal, a detailed market study must be undertaken to understand students' academic interests. SFU also seeks to include in the COOL Option a variety of course subjects and to expand the COOL Option into possible new bilingual programs.¹³² Before doing so, SFU must make sure that future courses offered in French align with students' interests and goals.

Reaching students: Targeted marketing initiatives

[139] Once the new programs are established, SFU will require funding to promote them to its target market of students from British Columbia, Canada, and abroad. SFU also seeks to continue marketing efforts for its current programs to reach out to the same students. OFFA is aware that some secondary school students do not enrol in post-secondary programs in French simply because they are unaware of these opportunities. OFFA will develop a larger, more comprehensive promotion plan to reach out to a wide audience in order to maximize the number of students who can benefit from its current and new programs.

[140] In the 2015-16 academic year, a student recruiter dedicated to promoting the FCP and other programs offered in French at SFU visited 39 schools across British Columbia and in Yellowknife, and in the Northwest Territories, meeting 2,035 students. A Coordinator of communications, marketing, and student recruitment from SFU visited another 20 schools in the Greater Vancouver region, reaching 1,785 students.¹³³ Other marketing and recruitment initiatives included meetings with parents from Canadian Parents for French, participation in post-secondary studies fairs, participation in SFU open houses and information evenings for prospective students, and promotions in French-language community publications.¹³⁴

[141] SFU will provide campus visits in French to a larger number of students and will invite prospective students to attend classes in French as a part of their visits.¹³⁵ SFU will also provide personalized, individual meetings with prospective students and their parents. Direct contact by university ambassadors to prospective students and their parents makes a difference in attracting students to post-secondary options in French.¹³⁶

[142] To reach out to Grade 12 students, another recruitment strategy will involve the development of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in French. The AP program makes university

¹³² Bettina B. Cenerelli, "Le modèle FCP de l'Université Simon Fraser : une immersion multidisciplinaire, expérientielle et communautaire" (2013) 6 Institut des langues officielles et du bilinguisme 45 at 61 [Cenerelli].

¹³³ Recruitment Report, *supra* note 66 at 4.

¹³⁴ *Ibid* at 14-17.

¹³⁵ *Ibid* at 17.

¹³⁶ Two Languages, *supra* note 111 at 21.

courses available for students while they are still in secondary school and thus allows them to obtain university credits in French.

5.1.5 Part 5: Keeping young, bright minds in British Columbia: More program options in French at SFU

[143] In the 2000 study *Post-secondary Education in French in British Columbia: What do Students Think?* conducted by the *Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique*, 82% of the responses from Grade 12 French minority-language and French immersion students who had been accepted into their first or second-choice post-secondary program intended to stay in British Columbia.¹³⁷ At present, not every academic discipline is offered in French at the post-secondary level in British Columbia. As a result, many talented, young students choose to leave British Columbia to pursue bilingual and French degrees in other provinces. These students may also choose to pursue post-secondary education in the field of their choice in English in British Columbia when faced with this lack of French options.

[144] SFU is committed to offering more post-secondary programming in French in a broader range of academic subjects. This expansion will not only encourage British Columbia's young minds to stay in the province to complete their degrees in French, but also further bolster SFU's position as a Canadian leader in French post-secondary education that will attract out-of-province students.

[145] Currently, SFU offers the French Cohort Program in Public Administration and Community Services as well as the COOL Option to students seeking courses taught in French. SFU intends to diversify options for students by adding programs. More concretely, OFFA is currently working with the *Réseau national de formation en justice* and the SFU School of Criminology to develop French languages courses in order to offer a bilingual program. SFU's Faculties of Environment, Business, and Health Sciences also have unique programs that would attract Francophone or bilingual students not only from British Columbia but from across Canada if opportunities are offered.

[146] In establishing new bilingual programs, a wide range of courses in a variety of fields will be offered in French at SFU. These new courses will also become available as elective courses to all SFU students who meet the French placement test requirements. The new range of subjects will greatly widen the pool of students at SFU studying in French.

[147] Other program development options are possible. SFU has the opportunity to establish a partnership with the *Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick* (CCNB), in order to offer a four-year program where two years would be spent in Bathurst, New-Brunswick, and two years would be either spent at SFU, or CCNB students would take online criminology courses in French offered by SFU.

[148] For this project, funding would be directed at developing courses with a strong investment in hybrid and online delivery in order to maximize accessibility.

¹³⁷ FFCB Report, *supra* note 80 at 3.

5.1.6 Part 6: Engaging the world: Connecting students to British Columbia’s vibrant French-speaking community

French-speaking community in British Columbia

[149] French speakers in British Columbia have diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and varying levels of French-language ability. To better understand the linguistic portrait of French speakers in Canada, Statistics Canada collects data about English and French using the following four metrics: “mother tongue”¹³⁸, “first official language spoken”, “ability to conduct a conversation,” and “language spoken at home.” In the 2011 Census, the data for British Columbia showed that:

- a. At least 70,760 individuals, representing 1.6% of the population, reported having French as a mother tongue.¹³⁹
- b. At least 62,195 individuals, representing 1.4% of the population, reported French as their first official language spoken.¹⁴⁰
- c. At least 298,695 individuals, representing 6.9% of the population, reported having the ability to conduct a conversation in French.¹⁴¹
- d. At least 69,535 individuals, or 1.6% of the population, reported that they speak French at home, a figure which includes 24,445 individuals who speak French at home “most often” (0.6% of the population) and 45,090 individuals who speak it “on a regular basis” (1.0% of the population).¹⁴²

[150] As noted in ACUFC’s Submissions to the Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations dated January 2016, “[b]y training the work force of tomorrow, Canada’s Francophone colleges and universities support the dynamism and resilience of Canadian communities, as well as our country’s future prosperity”.¹⁴³ More specifically, the ACUFC has found that “education contributes directly to the development of these communities.”¹⁴⁴ The promotion of a French-speaking workforce ensures that services such as education, whether in the private or public sector, can be offered in French in British Columbia. To that end, SFU’s role in improving access to post-secondary education in the French-language is directly associated with promoting the French-speaking community’s vitality and visibility, as described in the government of Canada’s *Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013-2018*:

¹³⁸ Mother tongue is defined by Statistics Canada as: “the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person.”

¹³⁹ Statistics Canada, *French and the francophonie in Canada* (2011 Census), online: Statistics Canada <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011003_1-eng.cfm>.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, “Brief presented to the Government of Canada in the context of its 2016 pre-budget consultations” (2016), online: Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/421/FINA/Brief/BR8126198/br-external/AssociationDesCollegesEtUniversit%C3%A9sDeLaFrancophonieCanadienne-e%209303014.pdf>>.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Education also plays a key role in strengthening official language minority communities. Educating children in official language minority communities in their first official language ensures the ongoing vitality of their community. Moreover, schools in official language minority communities also serve as community centers that provide services and activities for community members of all ages.¹⁴⁵

[151] In recognizing the importance of minority language education as safeguarding minority language communities' vitality and visibility, it is worthwhile noting that institutions such as SFU "provide education and serve as the focus of community life, imparting language skills as well as a sense of identity and culture."¹⁴⁶

Fostering community links

[152] SFU's OFFA promotes the French-speaking community's vibrancy by working closely with and for community members. These include, among others, cultural and artistic centres, consulates, radio and television broadcasters, and organizations focused on economy, health, women's issues, and education. By fostering these community relationships, OFFA fulfills one of SFU's strategic goals, notably, SFU's commitment to community outreach.

[153] British Columbia's French speaking community is diverse, vibrant, and growing. More and more K-12 students are attending school in French minority-language and French immersion programs, a promising trend for the French-speaking communities of British Columbia. The community members are supported by several community groups that promote the development of French language and Francophone cultures.

[154] SFU works closely with many such community groups and has direct links with many future employers within the French-speaking communities. For example, OFFA works closely with the *Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique* who develops a number of projects that recruit students or graduates for employment opportunities. SFU students have also participated in several experiential learning activities with community partners, for example, creating French-language materials for the Museum of Vancouver and participating in the *Parlement de jeunesse francophone de la Colombie-Britannique*.¹⁴⁷ In the 2015-16 academic year, SFU's OFFA organized and hosted "*Le Printemps de la francophonie*," a multi-week cultural event with 18 Francophone guest speakers from around Canada.¹⁴⁸ SFU seeks funding to offer a greater number of community engagement opportunities and cultural activities to its students to complement academic programs.

[155] Students in SFU programs will develop their French-language abilities and their connection to the French-speaking communities of British Columbia by volunteering with community partners. For example, organizations such as the *Festival du Bois de Maillardville*, the Canadian Parents for French *Concours d'art oratoire*, the French for the Future Local Forum, welcome Francophone and Francophile students in their activities each year.

¹⁴⁵ Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages, *supra* note 109 at 5.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid* at 6.

¹⁴⁷ Cenerelli, *supra* note 132 at 61.

¹⁴⁸ Simon Fraser University, "2013-2013 Postsecondary Education and Teachers Professional Development in French at Simon Fraser University: 2015-2016 OFFA Final Report" (2016) at 2.

[156] SFU's OFFA will develop these links to French-speaking employers in the community with the view of encouraging these employers to hire students from SFU programs for Co-op positions, summer positions, and full-time positions after graduation. These will allow SFU students to employ their French-language skills as students and upon graduation. In the summer months, when students often do not take coursework in French, working or volunteering in a French environment will allow students to live and learn in French year-round.

Promoting student mobility

[157] SFU will put an important focus on promoting student mobility at three levels: within British Columbia, within Canada, and internationally. At present, while French minority-language and French immersion programs are offered throughout British Columbia, the majority of students in SFU's French programs come from the Greater Vancouver area. With financial support for student mobility, SFU will be able to attract students living across the province and encourage them to pursue post-secondary studies in Vancouver. As well, via SFU's membership with the ACUFC and partnerships with universities in Québec, students will have increased opportunities to spend one or two semesters in another Canadian institution offering studies in a French environment. SFU requires additional funding for scholarships to increase students' participation in local, national, and international exchanges. In a 2014 survey of British Columbia high school students conducted by OFFA, opportunities for participation in a student exchange program at a Francophone university, entrance scholarships and financial support were the top reasons students cited as motivators to study in a post-secondary program offered in French.¹⁴⁹

5.1.7 Part 7: Creating a flexible funding structure for contingencies

[158] In order to have an efficient, fast response to needs as they may arise, SFU will create a contingency fund. The current federal funding formula, granted over a five-year period, limits SFU's ability to address educational needs that arise, such as the development and implementation by teachers of new curricula.

[159] A contingency fund would be useful in the case of curriculum changes imposed by the province. For example, Aboriginal perspectives were added into the Teacher Education programs, but very little material was offered in French. As well, the implementation of the new language curriculum in the province demanded that, on short notice, SFU put together and offer a great number of workshops to support Core French teachers with the new curriculum. These are examples of needs that can arise throughout a five-year funding period that require, when possible, the reallocation of resources.

[160] To accommodate these educational needs that arise in the field throughout the funding period, SFU will establish a contingency fund, allowing it to work in a more flexible manner. OFFA is a dynamic office that will be proactive in assessing the needs and responding to them in real time. Not all future needs can be predicted at the outset of five-year periods. SFU's vision

¹⁴⁹ Lucia Salazar & Jessica Tilley, "OFFA Survey of B.C. High School Students" (2014) at 48.

for the next funding period is to offer base programs that are coordinated and developed in advance, as well as being open to offering flexible, needs-based programs.

6 CONCLUSION

[161] British Columbia's French-speaking communities are dynamic, vibrant, and growing. K-12 students in French education programs represent the future of the minority-language community in the province. These young students are diverse, motivated, and deeply connected to the local and global communities. They must receive meaningful support to reach their potential to become a truly bilingual generation.

[162] SFU has gained considerable insight about the barriers facing students who wish to access to K-12 French education in British Columbia and their impact on the French-speaking community's growth and development. These include a lack of qualified French-speaking teachers and the retention of K-12 students in French education programs in British Columbia. These challenges must be overcome quickly to ensure the long-term survival, growth and vibrancy of the French-speaking communities in British Columbia.

[163] Several long-standing barriers are limiting the potential of the province's youth to access educational and cultural opportunities in French. K-12 French education students in British Columbia deserve teachers with a high level of linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural competence. The French education continuum from early childhood to post-secondary must be strengthened to inspire students to embrace French education as a lifelong journey. To achieve this, the federal government must make the necessary investment in high-quality post-secondary French education and programming at SFU.

[164] Given the pressing need to overcome these barriers, SFU and OFFA respectfully ask the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages to examine the recommendations advanced in the *2018-2023 OFFA Action Plan*, outlined in Part 5 of this report and reproduced below, and to consider incorporating them into the final report following its *Study on the challenges associated with access to French-language schools and French immersion programs in British Columbia*.

- Recommendation #1** Raising the bar: Enriching the French language skills of in-service teachers
- Recommendation #2** Making teacher education count: Integrating province-wide practicums, Aboriginal perspectives and graduate studies
- Recommendation #3** Welcoming teachers to British Columbia: Attracting and retaining teachers from beyond its borders
- Recommendation #4** Understanding students' needs: Research for program development and marketing
- Recommendation #5** Keeping young, bright minds in British Columbia: More program options in French at SFU
- Recommendation #6** *Engaging the World*: Connecting students to British Columbia's vibrant French-speaking community
- Recommendation #7** Creating a flexible funding structure for contingencies