



REQUEST FOR SUPPORT APPLICATION FORM

Date of Request	12/17/2025
Organization/Group making the request	Alma Mater Society of UBC
Contact Person	Solomon Yi-Kieran, VP External Affairs
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Email Address:	VP External Affairs
Type of Support Requested (Select one)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Letter of Support in Principle <input type="radio"/> In-Kind Contribution <input type="radio"/> Partnership <i>Note: This policy is not applicable to requests for grant funding by the City, including Permissive Tax Exemption requests, or in-kind funding for facility rentals (see Grants Policy and Guidelines for further details)</i>

IF APPLICABLE:

Name of grant or program for which you are applying:

Amount of Funding Requested: _____ Grant Due Date: _____

Grant Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Please provide an executive summary or short narrative that addresses each of the points outlined in the "Council Support policy". Include any supporting documents or materials and a detailed list of other funding partners (if applicable).

Please submit this form, with accompanying materials, to the attention of the Corporate Officer, Legislative Services, City of Nanaimo, 455 Wallace St. Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J6, or by email to: legislative.servicesoffice@nanaimo.ca.

Respecting Your Privacy

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Background Information:

For students who attend university across the Salish Sea from their hometowns, travelling back to see family can add up. Students also often have to take ferries to access worklearn, co-op and research opportunities or attend unique programs. \$10 seniors and childrens' rates already exist, and we'd like to see post-secondary students, one of the most economically vulnerable groups, have access to discounted rates as well. Alongside the UVic Student Society, Simon Fraser Student Society, Student Union Okanagan, and Alliance of BC Students, the AMS is proposing is a 1 year trial for a \$10 student walk on rate, which we'd eventually like to see made into a permanent discount available for walk-on and drive-on student trips.

When we met with MLAs in Victoria, this proposal had positive reception from across BC's 3 parties. A student rate on BC Ferries would not only reduce costs for students who need to take the ferries, it would also ensure that students, who often travel during off-peak seasons, are encouraged to ride BC Ferries and fill emptier off-peak sailings. This directly invests back into BC Ferries, and encourages students to travel around BC, boosting the tourism industry of communities along the Salish Sea.

We are calling on the province to include the funding needed for the BC Ferries \$10 student rate in the 2026 budget, and hope the city of Nanaimo will join us.

Supporting material in the form of the brief presented to MLAs in October and the open letter put out by the AMS, UVSS, SFSS, and SUO are attached and have more in-depth background information regarding the proposed pilot project.

Funding Sources:

We propose that this pilot program would follow a similar funding model to the other discounted rates provided by BC Ferries, where the provincial government subsidizes the reduced cost of ferry tickets. We are calling on the province to include this funding in the 2026 budget.

Description of Services to be Offered:

We are proposing that the provincial government create a 1-year pilot program for a \$10 student rate on BC Ferries.

Who would benefit from the service:

While there aren't clear numbers on how many students use BC Ferries, we can say that this would benefit all post-secondary students in BC by making travel around the province more affordable and accessible. Most importantly, this would benefit students who are from, or who

go to post-secondary in, Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast who take the ferry to go back home and visit family.

This would also benefit communities along the Salish Sea. Making travel more convenient and affordable for over 400,000 post-secondary students in BC would help boost the tourism industries of British Columbian communities, especially those on the Island.

Timeframe or Dates:

Ideally, we would love to see the City of Nanaimo release a letter of support for the \$10 student rate on BC Ferries and call for the relevant funding in the 2026 Provincial Budget in January. We anticipate the budget will be released in late February, after which we would hope to see the 1 year pilot program begin.

Anticipated Outcomes:

The creation of a 1 year pilot program for a \$10 student rate on BC Ferries. After the 1 year pilot, we hope to see the program extended to be a permanent program.

Similar Programs:

BC Ferries offers existing discounts to children under 12 and seniors. The creation of a \$10 discount is following this existing precedent. Additionally, Hullo Ferries has periodically had youth discounts over the last few years.

Coordination with Other Entities:

The AMS is also working to get similar letters of support from the cities of Saanich and Campbell River. The AMS is also working with the UVSS, SFSS, and SUO, as well as other student unions to lobby for the creation of the student rate.



The BC3 Coalition is located on the traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, sə́lilwətaʔt, kʷikwə́łəm, Ləkʷəŋən, W̱SÁNEĆ, and Syilx Okanagan peoples

Nicolas Jimenez, President and CEO of BC Ferries
Eva Hage, BC Ferries Commissioner
Honourable David Eby, Premier of BC
Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Transportation and Transit
Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Tourism
Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister
Honourable Greg Robertson, Minister of Housing and Infrastructure

BC Ferries provides a vital transportation link for millions of people, connecting Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands to the British Columbia mainland. It is more than a ferry service—it is part of the Trans-Canada Highway system, a lifeline for regional economies, and an essential means of mobility for residents, tourists, and workers alike. For many communities, it is the only route to critical services, education, and family support.

Despite its strategic importance, BC Ferries' current fare structure leaves a significant group behind: post-secondary students. While K–12 students benefit from discounted fares with proper documentation, and BC seniors travel free midweek thanks to provincial subsidies, college and university students—regardless of financial need, academic schedule, or travel purpose—are required to pay full adult fares. In 2025, this means paying \$20 for a one-way foot passenger trip between Horseshoe Bay Vancouver and Departure Bay Nanaimo, and over \$70 if traveling with a vehicle (1). These costs can be a serious financial barrier to a demographic already disproportionately affected by our precarious economic conditions.

Post-secondary students are critical contributors to British Columbia's present and future. Our universities and colleges drive innovation, provide thousands of jobs, and generate long-term economic and social value. Making transportation more affordable for students is a direct investment in that future—one that supports education access, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthens equity across the province.

We, the BC3 coalition—comprising the University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS), the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), the Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia (AMS), and the Students' Union for UBC Okanagan (SUO) —alongside several other student unions, are calling for the implementation of a \$10 walk-on rate ferry fare for post-secondary students. This proposal mirrors existing support for K–12 students and aims to improve accessibility, affordability, and ridership.

Evidence from other jurisdictions and modes of transportation supports our case:

- U-Pass programs at SFU and UBC increased student transit ridership by 48% and significantly reduced emissions (2).
- Ebus and VIA Rail offer student discounts that drive loyalty and help fill empty seats (3).
- Washington State Ferries made travel free for riders under 18, resulting in a dramatic surge in youth ridership—16.5 million trips in 2023 (4).
- Hullo Ferries has seen success offering 50% off to youth aged 13–18, leading to increased demand and repeat use (5).

These examples demonstrate that affordable fares can unlock suppressed demand, promote sustainable transportation habits, and generate long-term public value. Students typically travel during off-peak hours—filling unused capacity and presenting a low-cost opportunity to improve system utilization without adding strain.

We understand that fare adjustments must be strategic and financially sound. That’s why we propose a one-year pilot program for the \$10 student fare, focused on off-peak travel and structured similarly to the K–12 discount model. This would allow BC Ferries and the provincial government to collect data on usage, costs, and impacts—providing a clear basis for potential expansion or adjustment. It would also signal to students that their mobility and contributions to the province are recognized and supported.

This initiative aligns with the BC government’s broader commitments to affordability, access to education, equity, and climate responsibility. Rather than displacing full-fare passengers, a discounted student fare would attract new users who currently avoid ferry travel due to cost—creating additional, sustainable revenue streams while supporting public goals.

In conclusion, we urge you to adopt this proposal. A \$10 walk-on rate ferry fare for post-secondary students is not merely about lowering costs; it is about expanding opportunity, reinforcing the value of education, and ensuring that no student is left behind due to transportation barriers. As our province continues to adapt to economic, environmental, and geopolitical challenges, strengthening our domestic infrastructure and investing in youth mobility are steps toward a more resilient and equitable future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

The BC3 Coalition:

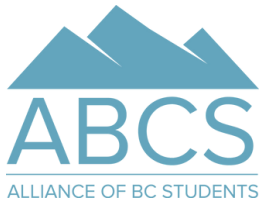
Solomon Yi-Kieran, Vice President External Affairs, AMS of UBC Vancouver

Jessica Lamb, Vice President External and Community Affairs, SFSS

Michael Caryk, Director of Campaigns & Community Relations, UVSS

Olivia Lai, Vice President External, SUO of UBC Okanagan

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STUDENT SOCIETY**
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**STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION**



Citations:

1. Fare Index #25-03: https://www.bcferries.com/web_image/hc5/h09/9037480460318.pdf
2. U-Pass BC Annual Report 2024
3. VIA Rail Rates: <https://www.viarail.ca/en/offers/students-and-youth>
4. Fare-free transit programs boost youth ridership on public transportation statewide:
<https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/news/2024/fare-free-transit-programs-boost-youth-ridership-public-transportation-statewide>
5. Hullo Ferries Pricing: <https://hullo.com/pricing/>

\$10 Student Rate on BC Ferries



BC Ferries can play a pivotal role in making regional transportation more accessible to students by instating a \$10 flat-rate ferry fare for post-secondary students travelling as foot passengers, taking shape as a one-year trial during off-peak periods.

BC Ferries is not just a service; it is a core part of the transportation infrastructure that glues British Columbia together. As part of the Trans-Canada highway system, BC Ferries often provides the only connection that coastal communities have to one another and to larger metropolitan regions, where people travel for employment, access to services, and education. As BC's flagship university, students from around the province choose to study at UBC, often for programs and research opportunities that are not available elsewhere. Students from Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, the Southern Gulf Islands, the Central and North Coasts, and Haida Gwaii often have no means of transportation between their hometowns and university without using BC Ferries. Students may wish to travel home for Winter and Summer Break, Thanksgiving, Reading Break, and other holidays, but may opt not to due to high fares. Despite there being discounted fares¹ for children, seniors, and K-12 school trips, post-secondary students must pay the full adult fare.

While students continue to face compounding financial pressures, BC Ferries raised fares by 3.2-3.25% in 2024.² With a trip to Nanaimo (Departure Bay) from Vancouver (Horseshoe Bay) costing \$20 on foot or \$70 by car,³ students from central Vancouver Island can expect to pay \$40-\$140 round-trip for a trip home to see family. Additionally, as Indigenous students and students from rural communities are more likely to rely on ferry services, the removal of the once-existing student rate has reinforced barriers to students being able to travel home with ease, increasing inequities in mobility. Allowing students to sail at a reduced cost during off-peak times of the year would fill unused capacity. Monthly traffic reports⁴ also suggest spikes in ferry usage during academic breaks, such as in March and October.

Evidence from similar implemented programs also suggests that a student discount would induce new demand and ridership for ferries. The introduction

of the Transit U-Pass program at UBC and SFU resulted in a 48% increase in ridership.⁵ The introduction of free travel for youth by Washington State Ferries similarly produced 16.5 million youth trips in 2023.⁶ Hullo Ferries, a key competitor to BC Ferries, drove ridership to 400,000 in their first year,⁷ in part due to a 50% youth discount. Ebus and VIA Rail already use student discounts to create brand loyalty and help fill empty seats during off-peak times. By running the program as a one-year pilot during off-peak hours, BC Ferries would also be able to collect data on ridership, revenue impacts, and social outcomes, which could inform future decision-making. Having the pilot project be off-peak will also help fill empty sailings, attracting new riders rather than displacing full-fare riders, and helping offset reduced per-ticket revenues in low-demand periods. With over \$1.11 billion in annual revenues, and a record 22.6M passengers in fiscal year 2024, BC Ferries is well positioned to test a limited, low-cost pilot program.

Higher student mobility would also have other social, ecological, and economic benefits. Students gain increased access to co-op and internship opportunities, conferences, and networking events, thereby supporting workforce development. Student mobility also strengthens local economies and boosts tourism. The flat walk-on fare would also encourage more trips by foot as opposed to by car, reducing emissions, improving road safety, easing traffic congestion, and helping young people build long-term sustainable habits.

A \$10 flat-rate student ferry fare is both economically feasible and socially beneficial. Students are a key part of BC's future, and an investment in students is an investment in the best interests of our province. Building on the provincial government's commitment to youth empowerment, accessibility, sustainability, and education, we hope that our proposal will be implemented so that all students can learn, explore, and thrive in communities across our great province.

¹Ferry fares and fees. BC Ferries (<https://www.bcferries.com/routes-fares/ferry-fares>)

²BC Ferries fares are going up April 1. Here's what's changing. CTV News. (<https://www.ctvnews.ca/vancouver/article/bc-ferries-fares-are-going-up-april-1-heres-whats-changing/>)

³p.5, Fare Index. BC Ferries. (https://www.bcferries.com/web_image/hc5/h09/9037480460318.pdf)

⁴Traffic Statistics – Policies, Reports, & Plans. BC Ferries. (<https://www.bcferries.com/in-the-community/resources>)

⁵p. 15, U-Pass at the University of British Columbia: Lessons for Effective Demand Management in the Campus Context. Graham Senft, SFU Urban Studies. (<http://conf.tac-atc.ca/english/resourcecentre/readingroom/conference/conf2005/docs/s9/Senft.pdf>)

⁶Fare-free transit programs boost youth ridership on public transportation statewide. Washington State Department of Transportation. (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/news/2024/fare-free-transit-programs-boost-youth-ridership-public-transportation-statewide>)

⁷Hullo Ferries Celebrates One Year of Sailings. Hullo Ferries. (<https://hullo.com/media/hullo-ferries-celebrates-one-year-of-sailings/>)

Honourable David Eby, Premier of BC

Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Transportation and Transit

Honourable Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance

George Anderson, Parliamentary Secretary for Transportation and Transit, MLA for Nanaimo-Lantzville

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson, MLA for Nanaimo-Gabriola

The City of Nanaimo is writing in support of the call for a \$10 student walk-on rate for BC Ferries that is being championed by student leaders at UBC, SFU, and UVic.

BC Ferries provides a vital transportation link for millions of people, connecting Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands to the British Columbia mainland. It is more than a ferry service—it is part of the Trans-Canada Highway system, a lifeline for regional economies, and an essential means of mobility for residents, tourists, and workers alike. For many communities, it is the only route to critical services, education, and family support.

For many post-secondary students from Vancouver Island, BC Ferries is a vital route that connects their homes and their campuses. Thousands of students from Vancouver Island attend post-secondary institutions on the Mainland, and thousands of students from the Mainland attend schools on Vancouver Island like the University of Victoria and Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo.

Despite many students being reliant on the BC Ferries, and the extreme effects of the cost-of-living crisis on students, BC Ferries does not yet have a discounted rate for post-secondary students. \$10 rates on BC Ferries already exist for seniors, children under 12, and high-school students going on school trips. Creating a \$10 post-secondary student rate would match existing precedent and ensure that students are able to afford trips to and from school.

Post-secondary students are critical contributors to British Columbia's present and future. Their universities and colleges drive innovation, provide thousands of jobs, and generate long-term economic and social value. Making transportation more affordable for students is a direct investment in that future—one that supports education access, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthens equity across the province.

The City of Nanaimo supports this call for an affordable \$10 post-secondary student rate on BC Ferries, and joins student calls for the necessary funding for this program to be included in the 2026 Provincial Budget.