



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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June 30, 2025

The Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Government of British Columbia
PO Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Kang,

On behalf of the Board of Governors at Emily Carr University of Art + Design (ECU), thank you for your 2025 Mandate Letter and for your continued leadership in shaping British Columbia's post-secondary landscape.

As Canada's top-ranked art and design university, and the province's sole institution dedicated exclusively to art, media, and design, ECU plays a distinct role in BC's education and innovation ecosystem. We equip students with the creativity, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary problem-solving skills essential in an uncertain and fast-changing world. Our alumni fuel BC's digital, cultural, and creative economies, contributing to sectors such as game design, animation, user experience, and public art. Our last economic analysis found that ECU contributes more than \$206 million annually to the Metro Vancouver economy, supporting over 2,100 jobs across tech, culture, and the creative industries. That impact has only grown as demand for innovation and creative talent continues to accelerate.

We share the government's priorities around fiscal responsibility, equity, and long-term sustainability. At the same time, we must be candid about the structural realities our institution faces. ECU delivers a studio-intensive, practice-based education that is materially different from other models. It requires specialized facilities, equipment, and materials, and relies on deep, sustained faculty-student engagement. These elements are central to our educational identity, but they also make our programs more costly to deliver, harder to scale, and more complex to adapt quickly — particularly in an era of rising costs. To put it simply: ECU is faced with inherent cost pressures that are both fundamentally different, and more costly, than the general undergraduate programs offered by other institutions. We had hoped this structural disparity would have been addressed in the Funding Formula Review announced by the province in 2022, but that project appears to be dormant.

Ideally, the funding pressures we experience here at ECU would be best addressed through base grant improvements that appropriately reflect the reality of resource-intensive programming and through reasonable adjustments to tuition policy. On this last point, I note that ECU continues to have the lowest domestic tuition in the sector. While we remain committed to affordability and access, this longstanding position places real pressure on our ability to invest in the student experience and deliver on new government priorities. We recognize and support the expanded expectations outlined in your Mandate Letter, including commitments around safety, cybersecurity, and climate action. However, without additional resources, smaller, highly specialized institutions like ECU face increasing barriers to full implementation and long-term responsiveness.

Permit me to also note that reconciliation and the provision of excellent programs to support all Indigenous students remains a core priority for ECU. We are working towards strengthening our relationship with our Host First Nations and with other communities throughout the province. We are – and always will be – dedicated to improving the educational experience of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

As we prepare to mark our 100th anniversary this fall, we are reflecting on both our legacy and our future. This milestone is not only a celebration of Emily Carr University, but also a testament to the province's investment in public post-secondary education and in the power of creativity as a driver of innovation, social progress, and economic strength. We welcome the opportunity for discussion and continued partnership to ensure ECU is well-positioned to thrive in the century ahead – serving British Columbians across the province while advancing BC's leadership in Canada's creative and innovative economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Don Avison', with a stylized, flowing script.

Don Avison, K.C.
Chair, Board of Governors
Emily Carr University of Art + Design