Capital Projects

Expires: April 30, 2027

1. Definitions

Deferred Maintenance: The practice of delaying or backlogging maintenance to campus infrastructure in order to save costs or meet budget funding levels.[7]

2. Facts

a. The University of Alberta has numerous sources of revenue, including provincial and federal grants, as well as philanthropic donations to finance capital projects.[1] However, upkeep and operation of certain spaces especially those used for teaching and learning are funded through tuition revenue.
b. Capital projects benefit the University, improve the safety of learning conditions and serve a wide range of communities beyond undergraduate students.
c. Undergraduate student-oriented components of campus space include, but are not limited to:
    i. Lecture Theaters;
    ii. Classrooms;
    iii. Laboratories;
    iv. Maker-spaces;
    v. Studios;
    vi. Recreational spaces for student use;
    vii. Social spaces for student use;
    viii. Space for student resources;
    ix. Performance spaces; or
    x. Libraries or other study spaces.
d. As of 2020, the University of Alberta's current deferred maintenance cost is $385 million. This is projected to sharply increase to $1 billion dollars in five years if left unaddressed.[2]
e. According to the University budget, "the University of Alberta develops an annual capital plan and, further, identifies its capital requirements in a submission to the Government of Alberta through the Building and Land Inventory System (BLIMS)".[1] Current projects include:
    i. Dentistry/Pharmacy building renewal, which received $249 million in GoA investment.
    ii. District Energy System renewal, which receives $29.5 million from GoA investment.
    iii. Lister Residence complex, which is projected to be completed by 2022 and cost around $85.5 million
f. In its 2021-2024 Capital Plan, the University of Alberta identified top capital priorities, emerging priorities as well as provincial priority projects. None of which included the Maskwa House of Learning, which had been proposed by the University as early as the late 90s.[2,3]
g. While capital project funding is essential for addressing the deteriorating building and infrastructure problems at the University 4, the federal government has a key role to play in addressing building renewal and maintenance of our campuses. For example, the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund, a federal government grant of which the University of Alberta was a recipient, saw the funding of numerous projects across UAlberta campuses, including, but not limited to, lab renewals in Augustana, CSJ and North Campus.[5]
h. According to the National Institute of Building Sciences' Whole Building Design Guide, "historic buildings are inherently sustainable." Adaptive reuse of current structures on campus allows for the maximum use of material life spans but also reduces waste.[6] This also allows the opportunity to create high quality buildings that are energy efficient.

3. Resolutions

1. The Students' Union will advocate that the University use tuition revenue as a last resort of financing capital projects, after having exhausted all other sources of revenue such as Provincial and Federal

grants, philanthropic donations, sponsorships and reserve funding.
2. The Students' Union will advocate that a dedicated student fee for a capital project shall not be used to fund the construction of spaces which do not include undergraduate student-oriented components.
3. The Students' Union will advocate that, where possible, capital projects primarily utilize and build on already existing buildings such that it increases its sustainability and reduces the waste that would result from its demolition.
4. The Students' Union will advocate that the University of Alberta provide a clear and direct plan to build the Maskwa House of Learning8, beyond just a temporary move to the Education building.
5. The Students' Union will advocate to the federal government for specific funding which post-secondary institutions can access for the specific use of upgrading campus infrastructure to reach an institution's net zero targets.

4. References

1. https://www.ualberta.ca/university-services-finance/media-library/resource-planning/university-alberta-budget/ualberta-2020-21-budget.pdf
2. https://www.ualberta.ca/university-services-finance/media-library/resource-planning/university-alberta-budget/ualberta-2020-21-budget.pdf
3. https://thegatewayonline.ca/2019/04/maskwa-house-a-reconciliation-project-on-indefinite-hold/
4. https://www.alberta.ca/publicly-funded-institutions-government-support.aspx
5. https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/051.nsf/eng/h_00087.html
6. https://www.wbdg.org/design-objectives/historic-preservation/sustainable-historic-preservation
7. https://www.upkeep.com/learning/maintenance-types/deferred-maintenance
8. https://www.su.ualberta.ca/legislation/wiki/Political_Policy:Indigenous_Students

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