BCIT Community Engagement – Student Council Workshop

Coriolis Consulting Corp. and PFS Studio

14 November 2016

1.0   Overview

BCIT's campus planning process includes extensive and diverse opportunities for the campus community to participate in the creation of the campus plan during the 2016/2017 school year.

During October and November 2016, the first phase of the engagement strategy included a variety of events and activities including open houses, pop-up kiosks, surveys, digital media, and online materials to communicate the process, engage the BCIT community in "blue sky" thinking about the future of the campus, and seek input on specific key themes.

The second phase of engagement will be in February and March 2017. This phase will use similar techniques, but will focus on receiving comments on proposed planning principles and directions.

The first phase of the engagement process included a workshop with BCIT's Student Association (BCITSA) Council on November 14, 2016. The results of this workshop with the Student Council are summarized in this report.

2.0   Workshop with BCITSA Council – November 14, 2016

The workshop was convened during a one hour time slot at the start of the BCITSA Council's regular meeting on November 14, 2016.

BCIT Staff and Consultant Facilitators

The workshop attendees included two senior staff from BCIT's department of Facilities and Campus Development and three planning team consultants who facilitated the workshop:

Mark Dale – Senior Director, BCIT Facilities and Campus Development
Craig Sidjak – Director Campus Development, BCIT Facilities and Campus Development
Jay Wollenberg (facilitator) – Planning team project manager and consultant, Coriolis Consulting
Chris Phillips (facilitator) – Planning team consultant, PFS Studios
Sandi Munro (facilitator) – Planning team consultant, Coriolis Consulting

BCIT Student Association Council

BCIT's Student Association (BCITSA) is a student-led non-profit student services and advocacy organization. Its Council includes broad representation of students from most programs in the School, including representatives from programs at satellite campuses. Representation from Trades programs tends to be lower – a fact attributed to the condensed nature and early start, early stop daily rhythm of these programs.

Workshop attendees included about 30 students and Caroline Gagnon, executive director of the BCITSA.

Workshop Format

The planning consultants provided a brief overview of the overall Campus Plan process and the schedule for seeking input from the BCIT community. The introduction included an explanation of the type of Campus Plan being developed and the three key topics to cover in the workshop – Innovation, Transportation and Parking, and Places and Amenities.

The group was divided into three groups of about ten students, each with a facilitator. In the interest of having each group cover all of the three topics within the allotted time, the groups were given 15 minutes to discuss each topic with a facilitator. Facilitators stayed with a topic and moved from group to group.

3.0 Workshop Content

Introduction

BCIT aims to provide a 21st century polytechnic educational experience, but it is operating on a 20th century campus. We are making a comprehensive plan for the Burnaby campus that will:

- Guide the evolution of the campus over the next 50+ years
- Guide the location of future facilities and infrastructure to accommodate future growth in enrolment and programs
- Support the ongoing integration of up-to-date technology into program delivery
- Create a more lively and interesting campus
- Foster innovation, collaboration, and experimentation
- Define the relationship with the Downtown campus and CARI
- Make the campus more sustainable

Workshop Topics

The workshop focussed on three topics that will have a significant influence on the way the Campus Plan evolves.

Innovation

1. What kinds of spaces and resources would make it easier to collaborate with others on projects?
2. What are the best ways to support collaboration across departments and programs?
3. Should the campus plan allocate land to accommodate industry partners?
4. Does the campus need better digital infrastructure? What?

Transportation and Parking

1. What would it take to get more of us using transit?
2. Should BCIT offer incentives to encourage ride sharing (car-pooling) and commercial car share?
3. Should parking prices be higher, as a way to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles?
4. Would you continue to drive if you had to park further from the campus core?

Places and Amenities

1. What would make you want to spend more time on campus?
2. Would a livelier campus produce better outcomes for research, education, collaboration…or just make the whole experience more social, more fun?
3. What are the most important ways in which the campus could become a better place?
4. What are the best places now?

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4.0 Innovation

Students generated 50 individual comments and ideas on the topic of – Innovation.

What kinds of spaces and resources would make it easier to collaborate with others on projects?

Most suggestions identified the need for more meeting spaces that are accessible 24/7, possibly with back-up overnight pods or one-night hostel beds available. Student clubs are already the breeding ground for collaboration and should be supported. Specific suggestions and comments from the session are as follows:

- More study rooms and meeting rooms
- Scheduling meeting rooms is challenging
- "Meeting hall" – people could sign up, state their program and subject of interest; others could search who is where and connect
- Provide overnight accommodations for students; one night hostel
- More club spaces where students collaborate with other programs; clubs are avenue for collaboration; funding for clubs
- More 24/7 access
- Dedicated spaces for programs; specific to program building
- Mix classrooms with other sets and programs
- It's harder for trades programs to collaborate
- More labs and maker spaces for student projects
- Class scheduling leaves little free time for electives or projects involving collaboration

What are the best ways to support collaboration across departments and programs?

Cross-program competitions and joint projects/course work were suggested as good ways to foster collaboration between departments and programs. Designing programs to allow students to select electives from other programs and having open, flexible spaces were also suggested. Specific comments and ideas are as follows:

- Have "merged or joint" project/coursework from different programs
- More supports for clubs that are cross-disciplinary
- Cross-program competitions
- On-campus competitions
- Have an additional short day
- Include industry/BCIT
- A movie theatre in the planetarium
- More cross-registration in courses (electives?)
- Labs for different programs connected in one building
- More open, flexible set-up
- Create BCIT projects that are permanent and multi-discipline builds (e.g. residence)
- Student projects contest (e.g. sleep pods or container homes)

Should the campus plan allocate land to accommodate industry partners?

Students appreciate the potential benefits of attracting and working with industry partners and suggest that BCIT approach potential partners in a strategic way. Specific comments and ideas from the session are as follows:

- Some transportation industry partners now
- Especially important to attract tech firms
- Must engage with students
- Direct investment: co-ops, internships, jobs
- Real experience; work experience programs with companies
- Partners must be able to keep up with technology

Does the campus need better digital infrastructure? What?

Many of the comments on this topic were about making more course material available on-line and improving the consistency of on-line course structures, and delivery platforms. Students also suggested that BCIT could be more proactive in building awareness of digital resources and ensuring that websites are mobile friendly. Specific suggestions from the session are as follows:

- Wi-Fi is unreliable
- Wi-Fi is ok, bandwidth is great
- More video lectures available on-line; ways to access missed material
- More on-line lectures but keep required lab time
- More on-line courses
- Use a common structure for on-line courses
- Currently too many platforms on-line; make instructors use same online resources; use one portal, fewer steps to access material
- Collaboration with IT Services
- Improve my.bcit website
- Make websites more mobile friendly
- Need more awareness of digital resources
- Expand BCIT library journal access

5.0   Transportation and Parking

Students generated 57 individual comments and ideas about the topic – Transportation and Parking.

What would it take to get more of us using transit?

Transit is generally considered to be too slow, with particularly poor service for nearby locations and no service from some suburban locations. Among the following suggestions is an easy one to implement – BCIT should be more proactive about educating new students about transit options – have more visual reminders of transit routing:

- More buses – Metrotown, Patterson, Brentwood (130, 125, 25)
- Express buses (from/to Nanaimo, Brentwood, Metrotown)
- Bigger buses (e.g. B-Line to UBC)
- Shuttle to BCIT from Metrotown and Brentwood
- Consider shuttle service to BCIT from nearby locations; Buses are always full by the time they reach Burnaby and some New West stops; it's hard to use transit if the buses are full)
- UPass for part-time students
- Improve "on-time" performance
- More night buses, better lighting by bus stops
- UPass – allow students to sign up for term – monthly renewal is inconvenient
- More bus shelters near campus
- BCIT should be proactive about educating new students about transit options – use big screens, interactive screens, or printed maps

Should BCIT offer incentives to encourage ride sharing (car-pooling) and commercial car share?

Car-pooling is viewed as having the most potential for reducing single occupant trips. Most students seemed very interested in seeing a BCIT app-type way to form car-pools and thought cheaper/closer parking incentives for car-pool vehicles would help.

Commercial car-share is not seen as having great potential because it is not available in many suburban locations. Also, because most students arrive and stay most of the day, car-share inventories on campus build up and stay high until the end of the day.

Following are specific responses to the question:

- Yes!
- Develop app for carpooling (e.g. Uber-like; demonstration project; create network space, subject chat by destination)
- Issue car pool tags and cheaper/closer parking for car-pool vehicles
- Car-pooling has the most potential for reducing single occupant trips
- Improve incentives for all campuses, not just Burnaby
- Offer inter-campus shuttles to/from satellite campuses
- Commercial car share is not option for students from suburbs
- Provide electric car charging stations

Should parking prices be higher, to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles?

Students at the workshop universally expressed the view that parking prices are already a stretch and they are not in favour of higher prices. The main source of concern is that for many, driving to campus is the only option. Many already feel impacted by having to pay for parking AND a UPass when transit is not an option from their location and feel they should be able to opt out. Students suggested BCIT provide more on-campus housing to reduce parking demand. Following are specific comments and suggestions:

- No! Prices are already high!
- Offer cheaper parking for car pool vehicles
- Don't penalize if driving is the only option (i.e. if no transit service, not enough other students to car-pool)
- Offer cheaper parking for those who have no option but to drive
- Ticketing and enforcement practices are unfair
- Offer different rates for different duration
- Mix staff and student parking – first come, first served
- Don't increase parking rates at satellite campuses – have to drive there
- Provide more on-campus housing – less need for cars

Would you continue to drive if you had to park further from the campus core?

Students were generally not enthusiastic about possibly having to park a long way from the campus core but offered some suggestions such as providing covered walkways to mitigate the drawbacks:

- Find way(s) to make it easier to use outer lots (e.g. on-campus bike share so students can ride from outer parking to class; parking lot shuttle; covered walkways)
- Allow car pool vehicles to park in closer lots than single occupant cars
- No, can't make it to class in time, too stressful to park far away
- Some do already
- Only if parking is free in outer lots
- Remove the 2-hour limit for free parking in the park

6.0   Places and Amenities

Students generated 74 individual comments and ideas about the topic – Places and Amenities.

What would make you want to spend more time on campus?

Students would like to see more options for food services, study spaces, relaxing spaces (indoors and out) for more hours per day – with some wanting 24/7 access. Students suggested more scheduled activities and events would lead to a livelier campus and improved orientation would help people enjoy what is here already.

Food Services

- Better food and more options
- Food available later in the day and on weekends
- More cafes to gather in

Study Spaces

- More study spaces
- Quiet study spaces
- 24-hour study spaces
- Study spaces with power outlets

Social Spaces

- More social spaces to meet and hang out
- "Comfy" spaces
- Quiet spaces

Green Spaces

- More outdoor green spaces
- More outdoor "covered spaces to gather and linger

Amenities

- Swimming Pool

Events

- More events on campus
- More parties / celebrations from entertainment to sports

Orientation

- Better orientation to campus events and spaces

Would a livelier campus produce better outcomes for research, education, collaboration…or just make the whole experience more social, more fun?

There is clearly a desire on the part of students for more social and collaborative events and opportunities. One of the challenges is the very tight program schedules with little time for interaction.

Time

- Little spare time to enjoy campus life

Social Events

- Could allow people from different disciplines to mix together
- Support collaboration and a better social life i.e. school dance, events to mingle

Networking

- Create more opportunities
- Networking spaces / events

Maker Spaces

- A lack of maker spaces
- Would encourage collaboration and social interactions

Yes

- To both

Funded Research

- More funded research by industry

What are the most important ways in which the campus could become a better place?

Students had many suggestions for specific ways BCIT could improve its campus experience.

Accessibility

- Improve disabled access on campus
- More elevators
- Automatic doors
- Washrooms

More Learning / Study Spaces

- With power outlets
- Maker Spaces

Washrooms

- More doors that close
- Better ventilation
- Provide in SW5

Mixed Academic Uses

- Collaborate different academic programs
- Shared common spaces (indoor / outdoor)
- Maker spaces

Campus Environment

- More colour
- Less concrete, less prison like
- More greenspace
- Expand Creek

- More interior seating / places hang out and socialize
- better lighting

School Teams / Competitions

- Sports
- Good for school spirit
- Competitive events are fun and chance to interact with others disciplines
- More Competitions

Use of Empty Classrooms

- Class room "app"
- Place to meet as student groups – separate from class time

Building Numbers and Names

- Express Building use and discipline
- Numbers work well to locate buildings
- Difficult to identify groupings geography – what determines boundaries?

Sound Proof Classrooms

- Very noisy in some classrooms
- Poor acoustics

Physical Support Systems

- More microwaves
- Better lighting
- More outlets
- More compost / recycling
- More housing on campus
- More water fountains

More Interaction with Students at Satellites

More Outdoor Spaces

- To gather
- The recreation i.e. Frisbee
- To smoke
- To "hang"
- To play

What are the best places now?

- SW1 – Recreation Centre
- Recreation Centre Courts and Field
- SE2 – The Great Hall
- The Pub
- White Plaza (between SW5 and SW9)

- The Small Green
- Residences and Housing Lounges
- Library Spaces
- SE12