

# The Constrictive Lack of Degrees at Capilano University

I am looking at the feelings that students have towards the opportunity of bachelor degrees that Capilano University offers and how these options have changed over time. Throughout the piece I will begin by looking at how Capilano's options for bachelor degrees has changed over the years: from Capilano partnering with another University, to the College becoming their own University and more recently cutting funding to certain programs which ended certain programs and opportunities for students who were not even looking at the possibilities of full bachelor degrees. I went around the school asking a few fellow students their opinions on the opportunities of bachelor degrees and different courses offered at the university. The overwhelming theme of these findings is that the development of more degrees is much needed for the satisfaction of students at Capilano University. Throughout this piece, I will be diving into the details of these reasons.

Capilano has grown from a small College to a thriving university and has seen over the years growth of their bachelor degree options, yet with the size of student population, the opportunities to finish four-year degrees seem very limited. Even with the population growth of the students as the College became a University in 2008, there was still not been a large growth in bachelor degrees. This plays a huge roll in how many third and fourth year students there are at the University as they are unable to study in the fields they wish. These students will take their

first couple of years at Capilano but are forced to move on to other universities as they cannot finish with a degree that they want to study in. This pushes the notion that Capilano is merely a transfer school for people who were not able to get into or cannot afford universities such as Simon Fraser University or the University of British Columbia. In reality, plenty of students would like to finish their degrees at Capilano but are just unable to.

In an article written for the Prince Rupert Daily News from 1990 that details the fact that Capilano College is partnering with the British Columbia Open University to create four degrees. In conjunction with the university, they provided studies in music studies which focused and music therapy. This was the beginning of full bachelor degrees being offered at Capilano. They expanded their bachelor degree option in 2003 again with British Columbia Open University. They brought in the ability for students to major in studies such as business administration, tourism management, jazz studies, and music therapy. The music therapy degrees was an updated version of the previously offered program. The college was able to offer the new degrees due to changes within the legislature for universities within British Columbia.

Through a letter in 2007, The University of British Columbia announced it would begin officially recognizing grades in the education program at the college as transferable to the university. This was a big step for the college as they were being recognized by an incredibly well-known university in the province as providing courses that were comparable to their own courses. The college became a university just a year later in 2008. Even though there was no immediate change in the courses currently offered at the time, the students slowly recognized

change over the next couple years in the programs at the school. The decision of becoming a university increased Capilano students opportunities which were incredibly beneficial. In 2013, the Capilano University Board of Governors decided that the university would require funding cuts to certain programs as they were facing a deficit of 1.2 million. The board cut funding to programs such as studio art, textile art, computer science, and interactive design. This lead to the faculty decision to attempt to sue the board as they believed that they were breaking the provincial University Act's requirements for deliberation and consultation by not informing faculty in advance of the decision and not letting them vote on which programs they should be cutting. The faculty and the students of the university all recognized that the steps being taken by the board to cut funding to certain diplomas were due to the deficit. Yet the steps that the board decided to take were going to negatively affect the ability of the university to come back from this deficit. Getting rid of the diplomas cut funding yet it also cut out the opportunity for Capilano to benefit from students looking into these areas of study, especially computer science which is an incredibly popular option when looking at a university. This continued to the recurring theme of Capilano limiting the options of students, even within the choice of 2-year programs and diplomas.

After looking through the current Capilano University website I found that the school currently offers only seventeen bachelor degrees. They are distributed between five different subjections, almost half of which are in the Arts and Sciences departments respectively. This is quite lacking for a University which is upwards of thousand students and has lead to frustrations by students currently attending the university as they are unable to study in the fields they enjoy

at a school they like. This leads to them studying in things such as general arts programs and inevitably transferring once they are able to or are comfortable in the university setting. These students feel as though their needs are not being met by the university and are made to be not as important as students that are in, for example, film studies or the tourism program as the students' whose needs aren't being met are likely to transfer. Capilano is not providing for these students like they are for others as they are viewed as unimportant due to the unlikelihood of them remaining at the university.

Having talked to a few students at Capilano it can be seen that they feel as though they are unable to take the courses and programs they would have liked. They are restricted by the lack of opportunity and wish to see more done to improve the options at Capilano because they enjoy the school and campus otherwise. These students believe that the university should be offering degrees that can be seen as staple degrees at other universities. They were unable to take many of the courses that were apart of the field they wished to study in as they seemed to conflict which is poor planning on the universities part. These students' are put on the backburner by the university as they are not going to be finishing a degree or diploma at Capilano and will not graduate or be alumni from the school. It is more beneficial in the short-term for the university to focus on students that are in programs that are going to lead to finished diplomas and degrees than to help develop more options in different programs for other students as they will not see benefits from this for years. These are all issue which I have encountered as well and something I hope that Capilano will change very soon. I personally would love to finish a four-year degree at Capilano as I love the classes and have liked the

majority of professors I have encountered. This is again a feeling that many other students that I spoke to in the past or interviewed about this subject have felt.

Due to my findings, it can be seen that Capilano University has made the effort to provide more Bachelor Degrees to their students as they have grown as a college into university and grown more since then, but they are currently coming up short to provide quite what the students are looking for, especially due to the number of students currently attending the university. Although the University has done a lot to improve their opportunities for students, since not even thirty years ago there were no full bachelor degrees offered by the school, they need to keep up with the demand of many students on campus who wish to finish their degrees at Capilano, but are unable to do so in their chosen area of study as they are not being offered as a degree or even a diploma in some cases. It is mainly the students, but even the faculty at the university are unsatisfied with the limitations placed on programs and degrees at the university. All of these factors show the fact that Capilano was been to slow in opening up opportunities for students who wish to continue their education at the university and are forcing students out that do not fit into their limited areas of study.

## References

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