

**Hewitt, Nicole**

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**Subject:**

FW: Launch of VIU's Economic Impact Report

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**From:** "Irene champagne" <[ivchampagne@gmail.com](mailto:ivchampagne@gmail.com)>

**To:** "Daniel Pearce" <[dpearce@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:dpearce@rdn.bc.ca)>, "Erica Beauchamp" <[EBeauchamp@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:EBeauchamp@rdn.bc.ca)>, "mayor" <[mayor@qualicumbeach.com](mailto:mayor@qualicumbeach.com)>, "mayor" <[mayor@parksville.ca](mailto:mayor@parksville.ca)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 24, 2018 11:58:19 AM

**Subject:** Fwd: FW: Launch of VIU's Economic Impact Report

Hello RDN Tranist Staff and Oceanside Mayors:

I am forwarding you the "Economic Impact" report from Vancouver Island University, where I work as a Clinical Counsellor and Academic Advisor in International Student Services.

I am hoping to draw attention to the inadequacy of the public transit system in the context of the University's very important economic role in our communities. I have sent a total of 11 emails: several complaining about the lateness of busses from the Oceanside area, which causes me, a working senior, to have to wait in the cold and rain for a later bus, then jeopardize my livelihood by arriving late to work, when the 91 frequently fails to connect with the 15; and others where I have appealed for service to be scheduled in a manner that can support University Students and Staff using the bus.

The first bus from Qualicum in the morning by-passes Northwest Bay Road, where many university employees in the region live.

The second bus of the work week morning is approximately ten-fifteen minutes too late to be of any use to approximately half of the 6,000 students in the region, and nearly all of the employees of the university. Young University students are required to drive personal vehicles, creating a major pollution, traffic, and parking

problems -- not to mention the safety of the youth behind the wheels..

Also, the return busses often by-pass Northwest Bay Road, and do not run regularly, or late enough to work with the University schedule.

Civic Officials must take the economic benefits of improved transit to heart. The City of Nanaimo, as well as the surrounding areas -- including Oceanside communities, would be well advised to ensure that infra-structure, including housing and transit can support the University population.

I have served as a civic official, and I know how simple solutions often are missed by the leadership.

I offer the following:

Launch a new route, regular bus that is geared as a "University Special" from Qualicum via Nanoose, to VIU -- Departing to arrive on Campus by 0755. There is certainly enough ridership for such a thing -- I am often left standing due to no available seats on both route 91 and 15. In fact, #15 is so crowded, and the personal hygiene of fellow riders is inadequate, I have been left sick to my stomach. Mid-week there are often elderly retired seniors in every courtesay seat. Students and working elders must stand and hang on for dear life. The standing option on the bus, is hardly safe when travelling on the island high way. Ridership has fallen away as people note the problems and cannot risk not being safely seated during the trip and arriving late.

Also, the University is well established to encourage tranist use -- with "pro-pass" enrollment encouraged for employees, and student



As the report notes - the overall economic impact VIU had in fiscal year 2016-2017 was \$624.5 million. There are many more details in the full report which can be found on the Economic Impact website:

[www.viu.ca/impact](http://www.viu.ca/impact).

This result is only possible because of the continued leadership and dedication of all of VIU's employees, and the work they do every day to support students, each other and the communities in this region. We also must recognize that we require partners at all levels – local, national and international – for the delivery of relevant, responsive and innovative educational experiences for all the individuals and communities we serve.

Later today I will be making a presentation to the Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce members, sharing this information with community and business leaders to demonstrate the important role VIU is playing to ensure the continued prosperity and sustainability of our island communities, organizations, industry and businesses.

Key to the conversation in our region is the expected return students will see by investing in their future through education. Students will earn a cumulative \$2.20 in higher future earnings for every \$1 invested in their education.

I think it is also important to reflect on the stories that are behind some of these numbers. For example, in 2016/2017 VIU's Tuition Waiver program for former youth in care generated \$2 million in added social benefits due to a reduced demand on government-funded social services and higher wages earned. And that is just the monetary value. It does not measure the impact creating access has in the lives of the students whose worlds and opportunities expand because they were able to come to VIU.

I was also humbled by the significant influence our alumni are having in this region – either by going on to higher paid careers, starting their own businesses, or employing others including other alumni. The overall economic benefit created by our alumni is \$454.9 million annually.

The numbers are impressive, and as noted the stories that are behind those numbers are inspiring. Over the next several months we will be sharing more of those stories with you and our broader community. I encourage everyone to look for those stories, which will be posted to VIU's social media accounts, and share them with your networks.

We should all be proud of the results of this report - thank you once again to everyone for the work you continue to do. For more information please see the [www.viu.ca/impact](http://www.viu.ca/impact).