

2011 Spring Convocation Address

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Madam Chancellor, Distinguished Colleagues, Honoured Guests, Members of the UBC Graduating Class of 2011.

You graduates are finishing your degree studies at an auspicious time. You are part of the largest graduating class in our history, and over the next few weeks, we will finish all the building projects that you have been living through for years! So I want to say congratulations to each and every one of you, and congratulations to UBCO.

I want to take a few moments to explore three things that I expect you graduates share with your university: ambition, balance and community.

The ambition is obvious. You would not have made it to this day were it not for your decision, made a few years ago, but reaffirmed on an almost daily basis since then, to try your hardest, to work to increase your store of knowledge, your skills and your opportunities for the future. To finish a serious programme of studies and to reach this happy day is a real achievement, but it is also a signal of your continuing ambition to make something of yourself and to make a difference in the world.

UBC's Okanagan campus shares that ambition. When this great adventure was conceived only six or so years ago, it was because a group of forward thinking leaders in this community worked with UBC leaders and the province to create a university to serve young people and life-long learners in the valley, while also creating a research environment to attract talent and help to transform the future of the economy in the Okanagan. The ambition has already taken root and grown in the rich earth with which we are blessed.

You have also worked hard to achieve a balance in your lives as students. Of course there has been hard work, some late nights, and serious academic commitments fulfilled. But you have also thrived in clubs, in athletics, and in community service. You have been the builders of this lively community. Thank you.

UBC in the Okanagan has also worked hard to create a balance between our fundamental goal of providing a rich undergraduate education and our great success in attracting outstanding graduate students. Our graduate programme is already much bigger and more diversified than we imagined possible only five years ago. We are also balancing service to the local community and our already remarkable ability to serve as a magnet for dynamic young people and experienced professionals from across Canada and around the world. We are strengthening the existing talent pool and expanding it enormously at one and the same time. UBC is also balancing the independent identity of this campus against the strengths that participation in a bigger system can produce. This is both the Okanagan version of UBC and UBC itself, with incredible resources and a global reputation for excellence.

Finally, you graduates know that you could not have succeeded entirely on your own. You rely on the support and encouragement of your parents, family and friends. You have also relied on your professors, instructors and advisors who cared about your success and wellbeing.

It is exactly the same for your university. UBC in the Okanagan could not have grown, could not have met breathtakingly ambitious enrollment targets, could not have established an impressive research profile, without

wonderful support from our community here in the Okanagan. I want to thank the Okanagan Nation Alliance for welcoming us, the city of Kelowna and cities up and down the valley for providing concrete support in a myriad of ways, and community organizations and businesses for partnering with us. Finally, I want to thank you graduates for choosing UBC and your families for entrusting you to us.

So as you cross the stage today, I hope that you will remember and continue to fulfill the ambition that helped to create your success, remember the balancing that allowed you to experience the full riches of your student life, and remember the community of support that helped you to reach this happy day.

In return, I promise that your university will continue to realize its great ambitions to provide an outstanding experience for new generations of students, it will continue to balance its commitments to the Okanagan and to the wider world, and it will continue to recognize with gratitude the incredible support that we receive from throughout the valley.

Good luck, and thank you.