



## Where UBC Stands 2011

I was honoured to be entrusted with a second term as President and Vice-Chancellor beginning in July 2011. As this letter marks a new beginning for me, I hope that you will permit me a longer report to you than I typically deliver. *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan* reaffirms our fundamental commitment to excellence in teaching and research. On both fronts 2010-11 saw success and innovation.

### I) The Year Past

Innovations and successes in teaching and learning animate UBC's campuses, and some of these efforts were recognized with major external teaching awards:

- Dr. Ravi Sidhu, Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine: received the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada *2011 Young Educator Award*;
- Dr. Marina Milner-Bolotin, Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education: won the *2010 Canadian Association of Physicists Medal for Excellence in Undergraduate Physics Teaching*;
- Dr. Scott Hinch, Associate Professor, Department of Forest Science, Faculty of Forestry: was accorded the *2011 Excellence in Fisheries Education Award* given by the American Fisheries Society.

In consultation with the Faculty Association, the university has expanded the career track for faculty members whose roles at UBC are focused on teaching and educational leadership, with the creation of the new Professor of Teaching rank. The UBC Peer Review of Teaching Initiative was launched last year, and this year will see the phased-in implementation of more consistent and informative practices of peer review by all faculties to recognize the diversity of excellent teaching practices and to enhance teaching and learning across the university. In the Okanagan, progress is being made in creating a system of peer mentoring in teaching.

Our faculty also won numerous highly prestigious research awards in 2010/11. To mention but a few:

- Michael Hayden, Center for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics: winner of the Canada Gairdner Wightman award, the premier honour for leadership in medical sciences in Canada, as well as a Killam Prize.
- Don Mavinic, Civil Engineering: awarded an NSERC Synergy Award (honouring the most outstanding achievements of university-industry collaboration), and a Manning Award for Innovation.

- Clyde Hertzman, Human Early Learning Partnership: named CIHR Health Researcher of the Year, for his work on the effects of the environment on the development of young children.
- Sherrill Grace, English: received the Lorne Pierce Medal from the Royal Society of Canada, for an achievement of special significance and conspicuous merit in imaginative or critical literature.
- Dennis Danielson, English: recipient of the Konrad Adenauer Research Award, presented by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which promotes academic collaboration between Canada and Germany.

Topping off these tremendous achievements was the announcement just last month that Zoology Professor Sarah Otto was named one of the 22 winners of a 2011 MacArthur Fellowship, one of the world's most prestigious prizes recognizing extraordinary originality and dedication in creative pursuits across any field of endeavour.

Research achievements are supported by the funding successes of UBC faculty. This year saw the launch of SPARC – Support Programmes to Advance Research Capacity – which aims to increase levels of external research funding at UBC by offering expert grant advice, project management for complex team grant development, as well as brokering research links with foundations, industry and international partners. The funding success of UBC researchers this past year is impressive. Total Tri-Council awards increased by \$20 million from 2010 to a record high of \$200.3 million, with UBCO bringing in more grants than there are faculty members. Total research awards from all sources totaled \$549 million, stable from the year before.

Major commitments of *Place and Promise* are to strengthen UBC's aboriginal, community and international engagement. Tangible progress was made on all fronts in the last year:

- Aboriginal student admissions are at an all-time high, with at least 176 new aboriginal undergraduate students coming to both major UBC campuses, a significant increase over the previous year's total of 137. Nineteen Aboriginal students began first year Law this year, making for a total of 56 Aboriginal law students currently enrolled (undergrad and grad), a record for UBC and we believe for any Canadian University. There were more happy endings to such stories than ever before in 2010/11 as we had 167 Aboriginal students graduate, almost double the number from just three years ago and an all-time high.
- UBC students are engaged in community service learning experiences in partnership with numerous First Nations. Courses with First Nations content have expanded with at least 66 such courses being offered last year, including offerings such as Cree Language training and a First Nations filmmaking course.
- Community involvement has flourished at the local level, such as Land and Food Systems students working with the YWCA to create a safe food system to produce up to

1,000 kgs of fresh fruit and produce for Downtown Eastside residents, to name one among dozens of such initiatives.

- International engagements continued to proliferate at UBC this year. To mention but a few: a pilot project by MITACS Globalink brought 10 undergraduate students from top universities in China to connect to UBC faculty members and local industry partners for summer research internships; scholarships were announced this past year to attract top graduate and undergraduate students from India; and, UBC and the Copenhagen Business School recently signed a strategic cooperation statement, which supports a broad-based partnership across a range of academic programmes, faculty and student exchanges, research collaborations, and student mobility in Commerce.

In *Place and Promise*, UBC also made a commitment to increase the quality and impact of our research and scholarship, which includes improving infrastructure to support leading edge research. The opening of the newly renovated Biological Sciences Building, South and West Wings provides more than 2,200 undergraduates and 370 researchers, staff and graduate students with brand new research labs and classrooms featuring the latest sustainability features. The new Allard Hall Law building officially opened in September offering the Faculty a beautiful interactive setting for teaching and research. At UBC Okanagan, the Engineering, Management and Education building will accommodate the significant demand for these successful programmes.

Our facilities upgrades this year also included the completion of the Thunderbird Stadium artificial field and the opening of the new Tennis Center. Planning has begun for a new Aquatic Centre that will be a state of the art facility accommodating both high performance sport and community and recreational use.

Also on athletics, after years of thorough preparation and consultation, in April of this year I decided that UBC would not apply to join the NCAA for its athletics programmes, but that UBC would instead make a commitment to drive change in the CIS to improve competitive opportunities for our student athletes. To that end, we have successfully achieved the creation of a Presidential Oversight Board of CIS for the first time in its history, and I am co-chairing a new Canada West Task Force that has already met twice to explore possibilities for further change to enhance excellence in university sport, including strategies to retain more top Canadian student athletes, too many of whom have chosen in the past to attend US schools.

The university is using the one-time charges levied on University Town development projects to transform the public realm of the Vancouver campus into an inviting and inspiring setting that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly. What you see happening on Main Mall and nearby is also made necessary by a new district energy distribution system (converting from steam to hot water) that we are building as part of our world leading GHG emission reduction and energy savings initiatives. This project is part of our "Campus as a Living Lab" strategy that involves faculty and

students in helping to research, design, build and monitor operations, a significant initiative that is being recognized, celebrated and increasingly copied around the world.

Other developments of the last year embody UBC's goal of incorporating sustainability into all aspects of its community, including the opening of the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS), the most sustainable building in North America. CIRS signals a new era of regenerative buildings. The BioSciences Renew project already mentioned is one of many examples where UBC is integrating the latest research and best practices in sustainability into the learning and working environment for faculty, students and staff – and in turn contributing to the green economy of the province. The Core Sunlighting System featured in this renovation was invented by UBC Professor Lorne Whitehead and his team, and later licensed to a successful spin-off company.

As part of the university's *Place and Promise* commitment to provide an outstanding work environment, UBC is expanding child care spaces to 900 by 2016. Additions over the last year have UBC on pace to achieve that goal, with additional spaces coming on line just this month.

The year 2010/11 saw a successful continuation of UBC's rapid expansion of student housing and informal learning space with the opening of 566 spaces at Totem residence for the start of this school year, which has allowed for the first time a housing guarantee for all first year students, with no displacement of upper class students. This commitment will continue with 1,116 bed spaces to be added at Ponderosa Commons in 2 phases opening in 2013 and 2015, and 680 bed spaces in 2017 at Brock Commons, all of which will help to transform the campus into an even more vibrant community. Similarly, the opening of Phase V Housing at UBC's Okanagan campus provides yet more students with residence on campus. UBC now has 11,300 student beds, not only the largest offering in Canada, but also undoubtedly the best in terms of quality and choice, reflecting the diverse needs of the student community, from shared living to family suites.

UBC's Okanagan campus continues to grow rapidly. This September, some 7,850 students were enrolled, up from 7,100 last year. This includes more than 500 graduate students and a roster of international students from more than 80 countries. The Okanagan campus has also undergone a campus review this past year that is helping to guide the search that is underway for a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Principal to replace Doug Owram, who retires next summer.

Regarding the university budget, the good news is that the university's finances remain healthy, particularly in comparison to our North American peers. UBC's budgets are structurally balanced, both centrally and at the faculty level. The university's endowment, despite this year's market decline, outperformed its index and remains in excess of \$1 billion.

Fund raising was critical to the financial health of the university, and successes over the last year include \$21.5M raised in private support for the Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain

Health, which is currently under construction. Law alumnus Peter Allard donated \$11.86 million to UBC Law. A total of \$9.825 million of this gift was directed towards the completion of the new building, Allard Hall, bringing the fundraising total for the building to nearly \$35 million. And just over \$20 million was raised for student financial aid and awards. Yet again, UBC boasted the best fund raising results of any Canadian university.

## **II) The year to come**

Key initiatives include a Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy that is already being created, and a concerted effort to expand the summer use of campus that will benefit UBC and the wider community. Also in development is a Student Collegia Programme that will provide a comfortable and functional home-away-from-home to make commuter students feel more connected to the UBC community.

A major project is underway to comprehensively review the enriched educational experiences (E3s) at UBC, such as co-op opportunities, student leadership, international learning, and community service learning. The initiative will provide a vision for a university-wide strategy of E3 development and provide recommendations to enhance E3 activities at UBC. We are building on strength. For example, in 2010/11, 3,188 UBC students benefitted from a co-op placement. Last year 2,317 students in Vancouver and 300 at the Okanagan campus were involved in community service learning. These initiatives often feed into the university's commitment to community and aboriginal engagement at the same time – for instance, the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) is working this year to develop a special track in its MA programme that looks at the specific planning needs of First Nations and other Aboriginal communities.

UBC's International Engagement strategy will establish UBC as the Canadian leader in international engagement, especially in China, India and Europe. A new partnership with Chongqing Medical University will establish a Joint Centre for Translational Medical Research, which will support a network of Chinese and Canadian medical researchers and clinical scientists. In November, I will travel to India with BC Premier Christy Clark to build on the connections UBC made during the 2010 AUCC mission to India, and to explore how the university is best represented on the ground in India.

In athletics, we are exploring exciting sport partnerships with BC Rugby, Field Hockey Canada and the Vancouver Whitecaps.

Plans are also being developed to create a next-generation policy school which addresses the pressing challenge of better connecting science to the practice of public policy, and which emphasizes the university's Asia Pacific location and partnerships.

This year a Board of Governors-mandated Faculty and Staff Housing Taskforce will report back on its efforts to identify means to help UBC create more affordable housing options in one of

the most expensive markets in North America. The Taskforce has already done a lot of work learning from the programmes of sister institutions, mostly in the United States.

In the Okanagan, this year the university welcomed its first students to the Southern Medical Programme (SMP). After spending a term in Vancouver with other UBC medical students, the 32 SMP students will start their studies in January in the newly opened Health Science building at UBC's Okanagan campus. Work is underway to strengthen the Okanagan campus' commitment to research and teaching on water resources. Planning is underway to create a Wine Institute focused on wine tourism and the business of wine production.

### **III) Darker Skies?**

The University of British Columbia is changing to a new copyright system after rejecting a massive fee increase by Canada's major licensing organization. UBC continues to work with other universities to advocate for the adoption of improved copyright laws that are responsive to the needs of the academic community, while respecting the reasonable expectations of creators.

Looking ahead on the economy and university budget, I expect a continuing climate of uncertainty. In BC, the HST repeal means increased budgetary pressure in the province even as the government has articulated a commitment to protect education. Across the world, the fragility of the recovery and seemingly unchecked market volatility mean that UBC must continue to manage its finances prudently and stay focused on the long-term. As a result, the university must constantly question and reinvent the way in which it delivers its complex mission. How do we drive further administrative efficiencies, both centrally and at the faculty level? How do we continue to refine our curriculum and leverage technology in the way we teach and learn? How do we better use our campuses during the summer months? These questions are hard, and I know that people across the university are already working with great commitment, but we need to push ourselves a little more.

These initiatives are critical if we are to continue to protect Faculties from budgetary cuts in the context of capped tuition and a flat government grant that does not reflect the rising cost of goods and services. Despite persistent economic contraction, provincial and federal funding of public post-secondary institutions and public research remains stable, at least for the time being, and UBC advocacy has been forceful and consistent. For example:

- Both provincial and federal governments increasingly trumpet the central role that innovation and higher education play in economic recovery and long term growth. As an example, amidst a slower-than-expected recovery, the last federal budget committed to small but steady increases to the granting councils.
- Also in the most recent budget, the federal government announced funding to promote Canadian higher education abroad – a breakthrough in terms of the federal government recognizing the importance of higher education as part of Canada's international

“brand,” and in terms of facilitating greater cooperation across the federation. This policy shift is matched by the recent provincial commitment to help promote BC as a destination for strong international students.

The university continues to advocate for students and scholars with both provincial and federal governments. Communicating the value and impact of what we do here at UBC is vital to continued government support, particularly during economically challenging times. The university community has a key role to play in that effort. Whether you participate in a tour by a visiting Minister, join a roundtable with government officials, liaise on a research project or have the opportunity to speak with your local MLA or MP, your voice in acknowledging and advocating for government support is important. Similarly, we should all take every opportunity to advocate for improvement to the provincial support scheme for students.

To aid in all these efforts, as a UBC community we need to embrace our recently launched fundraising and alumni engagement Campaign, *start an evolution*. This campaign – the most ambitious in Canadian history – is a tangible way for us to welcome our alumni, donors and friends into the life of the university. By combining our energies we can be much more effective, and make a positive difference to the world around us.

Let me conclude by thanking you for your hard work. You are the heart of the university. It is your work that I pledge to do everything in my power to support and advance. Have a wonderful year.

Stephen J. Toope  
President and Vice-Chancellor