



WHERE UBC STANDS 2012

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to express my thanks to you for your hard work and support over the past year.

I will review recent and upcoming developments at UBC and assess progress towards our priorities. Together, we are advancing the initiatives committed to in *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*. We are strengthening our students' experience, research capacity and international partnerships. UBC moves forward confidently, building on its many strengths.

OUR LANDSCAPE

Government

Federally, the Conservative majority government is driving to implement austerity measures to return to a balanced budget. Federal investment in university research has been focussed and sometimes targeted in ways that UBC has questioned, but continues to be a Canadian government priority. Pressure continues on the core operating grant budgets of the Federal Agencies, but new investments have been made in CFI, Canada Excellence Research chairs, brain research and Mitacs. Provincially, with an election in May 2013, the government has implemented measures to bring the provincial budget into balance. Post-secondary education did not receive any increase in funding for this fiscal year and the current plans show a 1% and 2% cut in the next two years. We are working to position "re-investment" options for the province as our politicians move into campaign mode. Both levels of government have indicated interest in promoting international education and I welcome this interest. It is a key building block for our country's future social health and prosperity.

Global Economy and University Budget

Looking ahead on the economy, I expect a continuing climate of uncertainty. UBC has developed a ten-year financial plan and will continue to prudently manage its finances, remaining focused on the long-term. Further administrative efficiencies were implemented this year with an 'integrated-distributed' model launched in our financial departments across most of the Vancouver campus. I hope that this model, increasingly in place in Development, IT and HR, will be extended to other functional areas in the coming year.

In the short term, I suspect that overall research funding will remain constrained. I recognize the need for researchers to access consistent funding sources and to be able to undertake succession planning for labs, programmes and institutes. Support for core research dollars (including institutional costs) will continue to be the top advocacy imperative at the federal level, and will be a new focus provincially, as BC faces an election.

Advocacy

UBC works closely with three key associations - The Research Universities Council of British Columbia (RUCBC), The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and the U-15 (major Canadian research universities). They have developed advocacy strategies that articulate universities' social, cultural and economic value, as well as the contribution that Canada's universities make to the building of our country's talent base at a time of significant demographic shifts. In BC, we focus as well on improving the government's student assistance schemes. I continue to serve as chair of AUCC, and am working with colleagues across Canada to build capacity in the U-15 as well.



Leadership Renewal

UBC has great strength in its governance structures. It is an honour to work with talented and committed leaders on the Board and Senate. At the Executive table, three vice presidents completed their terms and I was delighted that we were able to hire Louise Cowin (VP Students), Deborah Buszard (DVC and Principal, Okanagan campus) and Pascal Spothelfer (VP Communications and Community Partnership). Lisa Castle was made VP Human Resources. UBC continues to attract outstanding people at all levels of the organization.

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

- Veronica Strong-Boag, Professor of Educational Studies, received the 2012 Canada Prize in the Social Sciences, an award recognizing scholarly manuscripts that are vital to the growth of humanity's knowledge.
- William Rees, Professor Emeritus, School of Community and Regional Planning, received the Blue Planet Award for Sustainability, one of the world's premier environmental prizes.
- Lukas Bichler, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering, Okanagan Campus, received the Brimacombe Award, a national award given by the Metallurgy and Materials Society. Prof Bichler is only the fourth recipient of the award since its creation in 1998.

PLACE AND PROMISE: THE UBC PLAN

Update to the Plan

After a series of consultations last spring, the first full revision to Place and Promise was completed. Although we heard that no major changes were needed, the goals and actions were reviewed and revised, and a new category – Portfolio Actions, reflecting the many activities underway in support of the plan – was introduced. (<http://strategicplan.ubc.ca/the-plan/commitments/>). Colleagues across the university continue to make progress on *Place and Promise* through the articulation of more detailed mid-level plans, faculty academic plans, and business unit plans. The budget process ensures that the goals of Place and Promise are at the heart of our financial planning. I will continue to press for the further implementation of our collective intentions and will continue to drive a process to identify more precise qualitative and quantitative metrics to evaluate implementation. I assure you that I don't want to make a fetish out of measurement, but simply to discipline ourselves in assessing whether or not we are meeting our public commitments.

Student Learning

Broad based admissions was implemented throughout the university for this school year. In addition, each incoming undergraduate will develop a learning plan and is assigned an enrollment service specialist who will stay with them throughout their undergraduate experience. Combined with continuing efforts in improving teaching methodologies, the use of technology in learning, and an increasing emphasis on student life and wellbeing, the UBC student experience has seen change that supports students to reach their highest potential. I want to thank colleagues across the university for pioneering efforts that will make UBC an even more powerful learning community for our exceptional students.

International Strategy

UBC continues to focus its international efforts on India, China and Europe, breaking down silos in international engagement, both in research and student mobility. UBC opened offices



in Europe and Delhi, and will open an office in Bangalore this year, participated in missions to China and Brazil, cemented close research partnerships with Germany's Fraunhofer Institute and Max Planck Society, Chongqing's Medical University and the Copenhagen Business School, to name just a few of the major initiatives of the past year.

With a current target of roughly 15% international undergraduate students, UBC Vancouver colleagues are working hard to design an international bridge programme that will enable outstanding students from a wide variety of school systems, and with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, to have the opportunity, upon successful completion, to transition into the University. The Okanagan Senate has already approved a transition programme for qualified international students at UBC's Okanagan campus.

Inter-university Sport and Student Health

I co-chaired a Canada West Task Force struck to consider changes to the competitive structure of university sport in Canada West and Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). After much consultation, a final Report was unanimously approved by the Canada West membership at its meeting in May, and was presented at the CIS AGM in June for information and discussion (<http://president.ubc.ca/files/2012/09/cwfinal2012apr17.pdf>). This report contains proposals to better attract and serve Canadian university students who are talented athletes as well as scholars. Proposals include providing appropriate academic and athletic supports for elite level athletes; exploring the development of high performance competitive structures on a sport-by-sport basis; and allowing the autonomy to choose to provide, within a cap, cost of living support for exceptional scholar-athletes. Throughout the coming year, we will engage universities across the country on this new vision.

Meanwhile, VP Cowin is leading a thorough review of our current approach to Athletics and student health, which will result, I am convinced, in UBC assuming national leadership in the provision of health and wellness opportunities for all students, regardless of their level of sporting ability.

Intercultural Understanding, Diversity and Equity

After significant consultation, a draft of the Intercultural Understanding strategic plan is almost complete.

All Faculties are now incorporating a number of proactive measures in their hiring processes, in order to attract diverse candidate pools and therefore tap into the broadest possible range of talent. Complementary to recruitment efforts, best practices supporting advancement and retention are being implemented in the areas of mentoring, working environment, and professional and leadership development. These efforts will enhance not only the careers of women faculty, but also the diversity of faculty across all equity groups. In addition, UBC's considerable expertise in equity, organizational behavior, social change, and employment structures, will contribute to the solid base of scholarship necessary for success in its diversity goals.

Second Annual Workplace Experiences Survey

The second workplace experiences survey was completed and while overall results are good — 76% are proud to be working at UBC and 70% would recommend UBC as a place to work — detailed results indicate areas where improvement is needed. These areas will be addressed



directly as we renew the university's *Focus on People* plan, and establish targets for improvement, over the next year.

The University Campaign

UBC's fundraising and alumni engagement campaign, *start an evolution*, has reached 64% of its fundraising goal (\$962m of \$1.5b) and over 70% of its alumni engagement goal. We are ahead of targets on both counts. I want to thank the Development and Alumni Engagement team, the Deans and people across the university for the hard work that has brought remarkable success to date. The campaign welcomes our alumni, donors and friends into the life of the university, providing invaluable support to the university through generous gifts and volunteer activities across the campuses.

DIFFERENTIATION OF UBC

The Executive continues to seek out areas where UBC's particular excellence can be strongly differentiated from its sister institutions. "UBC as a Living Laboratory" continues to build strong partnerships in the sustainability arena with projects such as the Bioenergy Research and Demonstration Project, officially opening on September 13th. The Department of Economics, recently ranked as the top Canadian economics department, will be opening the UBC Vancouver School of Economics this year, in collaboration with colleagues in the Sauder School of Business. Consultation on the creation of a next-generation policy school was completed and the Provost and I will be putting forth detailed proposals shortly. The partnership in Quantum Materials between UBC scientists and the Max Planck Society continues to strengthen. We look forward to the marvellous opportunities presented to our outstanding brain researchers with the opening next year of the Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health.

The Okanagan campus provides the intimate, small campus experience of UBC. Purpose-built for the 21st century, it continues to expand its research program. Areas of emphasis include water, wine and sustainability research; however, more than 300 research initiatives are underway across all eight faculties and schools. These include major new studies of sports-related concussions, and chronic cardio-pulmonary diseases — both areas of great concern in the health care of Canadians. As well, Okanagan researchers have recently established several new research centres, including the 2small2see lab — a nanotechnology research and development facility — and the Centre for the Application of Psychology and the Law, led by three of Canada's leading forensic psychology researchers.

New student programs at the Okanagan campus include the UBC Faculty of Medicine's Southern Medical Program, welcoming its second cohort of 32 medical students this year in the beautiful Reichwald Health Sciences Centre; and the Aboriginal Access Studies program which surpassed its original enrollment goals, with more than 100 Aboriginal students entering university through this program.

COMMUNICATIONS

UBC has not told its myriad stories in a coherent, connected and compelling manner. Many of you will recall consultations last year on how we can be better at both internal and external communications. As a result of those consultations, I refocused the External, Legal and Community Affairs portfolio — now Communications and Community Partnership. The new Vice-President, Pascal Spothelfer, is charged with leading a root and branch review of our communications capacity. A new Managing Director, Communications and Marketing, Ms. Kari



Grist, was hired. She has extensive experience in communications leadership in the not-for-profit sector.

OPEN LEARNING

The Provost has named a high-level taskforce to canvass opportunities for UBC to join in the dramatic movement to open up the riches of university curriculum to on-line learners who are not full-time students. The Taskforce is supported by our Strategic Decision Support Unit. UBC is joining one of the existing on-line networks on an exploratory basis, but will also conduct a detailed analysis of a range of options, including full open sourcing, non-accredited versus accredited on-line studies, focussing on our own alumni, and others.

THE YEAR TO COME

I have noted, and you can sense in the world around you, a climate of uncertainty that surrounds the economy. Sputtering global recovery efforts, sluggish economic growth and seemingly unpredictable government finances tell me that we must remain vigilant in monitoring our budget, finding further efficiencies, and refining how we deliver our complex academic mission. In this, we are not alone. Indeed, despite the financial uncertainties, UBC is still in much better budgetary shape than many of our leading sister universities across Canada and internationally. We are emphatically not in "retrenchment mode," but we are blending fiscal prudence with the imperative to transform and innovate.

UBC will continue to position itself strategically to meet our shared goals, building on the focused commitments of *Place and Promise*. We will continue to advocate for students and scholars at all levels of government. We will continue to seek support from partners, donors, alumni and our wider communities.

Your support in pursuing these objectives is critical. Working together, we can build a stronger and even more influential UBC.

Stephen J. Toope