

25 November 2010

Place and Promise: UBC Executive Group's Priorities

I am writing to tell you about the UBC Executive Group's priorities for this academic year. This is an exciting time for UBC, filled with opportunity. Together, we are advancing many initiatives committed to in *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*. Already a sustainable financial model has been tested and is now implemented. The balanced budget achieved last year should be repeated this year, at a time when many sister institutions around the world are in poor financial straits. We are building our endowments, research capacity and international partnerships. Across the university, people are working hard to renew student learning practices. UBC can move forward confidently, building on its many strengths.

The priorities of *Place and Promise* are posted at www.strategicplan.ubc.ca. As with faculties, departments and units that are developing their strategic plans to implement *Place and Promise*, the Executive has also reviewed the plan to determine where our focus will be for the next year or so. Acknowledging that there are literally hundreds of actions that are being taken to fulfill the commitments of *Place and Promise*, for this year the UBC Executive will pay special attention to three potentially transformative goals, supported by action on key foundational initiatives.

Foundational Initiatives

- UBC in its Region and Province
 - Completing the land use planning consultations, and achieving ministerial approval for an amended plan
 - Determining UBC's relationship to the provincial Government Reporting Entity (GRE)
- Diversifying Revenue and Campaign Launch
 - Increasing research funding (government, foundations and international)
 - Launching the UBC alumni engagement and fundraising campaign, the most ambitious in Canadian history
- Communications
 - Telling our story to our constituencies, internally and externally; profiling the human faces of UBC
 - Enhancing advocacy and inviting external validators to support the mission of the university

Transformative Opportunities

- Student Learning and Engagement

In the area of student learning, *Place and Promise* set a bold goal of ensuring that every one of our 44,500 undergraduate students would have access to at least two enriched learning experiences. This year the Executive commits to:



President's Letter to the UBC Community

- Creating, facilitating and funding enriched student experiences (research opportunities, Go Global, community service learning, co-ops, etc.)

In addition, the Executive commits to:

- Improving the learning environment of all students, with a focus on first year, direct entry students
- Expanding housing opportunities, better supporting international students, and increasing informal learning spaces

➤ International

We will launch our *Place and Promise* International Strategy in the early new year. In it we commit to:

- Clearly establishing UBC as the University for Asia, and especially for China and India
- Leading Canadian universities in key international initiatives, including community service learning, alumni networks and research collaboration

➤ UBC as a Living Laboratory

Our final area of focus is the Living Laboratory initiative. This initiative, launched last year, integrates research, teaching and operational management of the campus to develop ideas, technologies and partnerships for sustainability. In particular this year, the Executive commits to:

- Sharing all that UBC learns in researching, testing and implementing initiatives in social, economic and environmental sustainability
- Further improving the effectiveness of our sustainability efforts by promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and sharing resources

Most of the 'foundational initiatives' will be solidly launched, and some even completed, this academic year. The 'transformative opportunities' will be a focus of attention, but will require sustained commitment over the next few years. In highlighting these initiatives and opportunities, the object is not to suggest that other commitments of *Place and Promise* are less important. Some, like enhanced aboriginal engagement and alumni engagement, have already seen significant action and others, like intercultural understanding, are in the early planning stages. Others will be focused upon this year primarily at the faculty, departmental or unit levels.

In declaring work priorities, the UBC Executive Group wants to encourage clarity of purpose and greater transparency. I welcome your comments and your support in pursuing these objectives. Working together, we can build an even stronger and more influential UBC.

Stephen J. Toope
President and Vice-Chancellor
The University of British Columbia