OVERVIEW

Welcome to the new academic year. It's very gratifying to look back on a year filled with initiatives that continue to position UBC as one of the top ranked research universities in the world. It is due to your work and your commitment to our collective vision that UBC continues to garner ever-stronger attention locally and globally. Thank you.

I am pleased to report on progress towards our priorities as committed to in *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*. *Connected by Commitment: The UBC Annual Report* provides details on key initiatives and events of the past year. In this letter, I will focus on three of our commitment areas: student learning, research excellence, and international engagement; talk about our shared work environment by highlighting our budget, government realities, and some of our crucial supports; and highlight our strength as a community.

STUDENT LEARNING

Universities are finding themselves required to transform yet again, thanks to new learning technologies and new understandings about how people learn. As a sector we must adapt to stay relevant for today's students. Our approach at UBC focuses on our flexible learning initiative, bringing together proven and new learning concepts to provide an enhanced learning environment for all our students. This initiative includes experiential learning, flipped classrooms, new approaches to classroom teaching, in-classroom adoption of new technologies, and online learning.

We're lucky; this kind of transformation has long been part of UBC's DNA. The Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative propelled us forward and the changes continue across all faculties under the name "flexible learning." We know that our students have increased retention of course material with these methods, and students tell us they're keen to take courses that offer innovative ways to learn.

We recently put out a call internally for flexible learning proposals and received over 60 responses. Forty will be funded, affecting 100 courses and roughly 30,000 students. UBC also joined Coursera, providing four massive open on line courses (MOOCs) this year that collectively had over _,000,000 learners enrolled from almost every province and country in the world. These were well received, with requests that they be repeated.

UBC's Vancouver School of Economics opened this year, with over 2,100 applications for 80 student spaces in the new Bachelor of International Economics degree. The first cohort will arrive this month.

Health disciplines at UBC are seeking a new organizational framework, and a university-wide committee is currently reviewing proposals. The goals are: greater interdisciplinary collaboration and research; more interprofessional learning; improved effectiveness of the curriculum and practice education; and facilitation of

UBC's working relationships with the health system. We're seeking to reduce fragmentation and inconsistencies in the current structure, and improve efficiencies in the operational support networks (e.g. Finance, IT).

Supporting Aboriginal learners remains a UBC priority. We graduated the largest number of Aboriginal students in our history last year.. The University of Manitoba and UBC successfully bid to create a permanent Truth and Reconciliation Commission National Research Centre. An Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Group is working to establish a more integrated approach to UBC's Aboriginal health initiatives.

The university continues to innovate with respect to supporting students and student life. The Student Interactions Transformation Program is now fully underway. Its components include a learning management system upgrade, an online advising management system, an early alert protocol to identify students at risk, enhanced student evaluation of teaching, broad based admissions, and dedicated enrolment management specialists for all students.

In athletics, I have worked with the Canada West Working Group and university presidents across the country to develop principles to improve Canadian university sports, making our programs more attractive to scholar-athletes through enhanced support. We will take a proposal to pilot the principles with high-performance women's hockey to presidents and athletic directors in October. Here at home, we welcomed international sport program leader Ashley Howard as our new Managing Director, Athletics.

Sneak preview: Across the university, we are conceiving a new initiative that would make UBC the world's healthiest university. This initiative will encompass the health and well-being of students, staff, and faculty, so I hope you will participate in the university-wide consultation that will take place this year.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

I am proud to report that research performance continues to be a key UBC strength. I cannot stress enough, however, that in our competitive world where research funding is under great pressure, collaboration and partnership are crucial in building our research capacity from this point forward.

Last year, we formed partnerships internationally with Germany's Fraunhofer Institute in clean energy and with the Max Planck Society in quantum materials; nationally with U of T and U of A on Indian research through IC-IMPACTS; and provincially with SFU on the Canadian International Institute for Extractive Industries and Development, to name but a few. Over 7,500 ISI-indexed journal articles were published by UBC scholars, with 63 per cent published in the most influential scholarly journals in the world and 44 per cent with international collaborations. My congratulations.

UBC continues to perform strongly in national competitions, with the award of two Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) in Digital Media Research and Innovation, and Quantum Materials and Devices. Our increase in Tri-Council grants over the past three years has meant that two additional Canada Research Chairs were redistributed to UBC.

Our research strength lies not just in our ability to attract funding and win awards, however, but also in attracting and retaining leading faculty and students. While many of you are necessarily focused on obtaining grants and conducting research, my focus is on strengthening those supports that help you do your work.

To this end, improving the recruitment and retention of graduate students will be a priority this year. A review of the Faculty of Graduate Studies was completed in preparation for hiring a new Dean, a process currently underway. Four-year funding packages are in place for graduate students and we have committed to increase this pool by $350,000 in 2013/14, with a recurring two per cent annual increase thereafter. Most programs now have mechanisms to fund students for a fifth year. I continue to be concerned about the time to completion rates, especially in many doctoral programs. We are looking at the structural components of the PhD to find ways to compress or reduce program requirements without compromising the value of the degree.

The cost of childcare and housing continue to be of concern particularly as it relates to retention and recruitment. Additional childcare spaces have been added and more are planned. Earlier this year we announced the Housing Action Plan, now in its implementation phase. This plan will improve housing affordability and choice on the Vancouver campus for faculty, staff and students.

Through the Living Laboratory Initiative, UBC is partnering with private industry and government to tackle societal issues. We are collaborating with Cisco on smart energy technologies, implementing wireless electrical vehicle charging stations, and partnering with local companies in energy storage. Last year we opened the Bioenergy Research and Demonstration Facility, designed to eliminate nine per cent of campus greenhouse gas emissions.

Work is now underway on an Innovation Strategy for the university that will maximize economic and societal benefits by streamlining and diversifying the knowledge transfer process beyond UBC's core academic mission. The roll-out has begun with the redesigned e@UBC program and will be followed by other elements of the strategy over the next year. My final address to the Vancouver Board of Trade, on September 11, will address this exciting new direction for the university, and I will communicate more to the community as a whole in coming months.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

I am often asked why UBC pays so much attention to developing its international capabilities. Why do we include 'global citizens' in our vision statement? Are we using international students to balance the budget? The short answer is that

teaching methodologies aren't the only thing undergoing transformation because of new technologies; massive change is happening at societal level as well. We are now globally connected across countries and cultures, and we must provide our students with the ability to work with people who are different from themselves. The international is not 'out there,' it is who we are in BC and in Canada.

Last year, 44 per cent of our published journal articles were coauthored with international collaborators; we have 261 active student mobility partnerships in 41 countries and international learning opportunities in 71 countries; 23 per cent of our faculty are international; and seven per cent undergraduate, 16 per cent masters and 35 per cent doctoral students at the Okanagan campus, and 14 per cent undergraduate, 24 per cent masters and 39 per cent doctoral students at the Vancouver campus are international as well. Our surrounding communities, especially in the Lower Mainland, are strikingly diverse.

To support our research and student activities internationally, this past year, in addition to the research and student agreements, we have reviewed our international support structure and are implementing a new approach that I hope will enhance coordination of our international work and communication of international connections and initiatives across the university. We have begun the search for an Executive Director, International who will work closely with faculties, not to create international opportunities but to facilitate and communicate faculty and department-based initiatives.

The UBC Vancouver Senate and the Board of Governors approved UBC Vantage College and it will accept its first cohort in 2014. UBC Vantage College will offer programs that broaden the capacity of the university to attract outstanding international students. Orchard Commons, our second multi-purpose student housing complex, will provide space for the academic program for the College, as well as student beds, activity space, dining hall and childcare spaces.

We have paid close attention to developing initiatives in China and India, as committed to in *Place and Promise*. A China Council has been implemented to coordinate and facilitate initiatives with China; a strategic cooperation agreement is in place with Chongqing for joint development of academic initiatives and collaborative research. In addition to being part of IC-IMPACTS, which brings together Canadian and Indian education institutions, community, industry and government partners, UBC opened its Delhi Office. I also appointed Dr. Sujatha Ramdorai as my Senior Advisor on India. Dr. Weihong Song continues in his role as my Senior Advisor on China.

BUDGET

UBC's operating budget remains fiscally and structurally balanced for the fourth year in a row, including at the faculty and unit level. This despite global economic uncertainty and governments' tight control on spending. Provincial funding has declined to 45 per cent of the total operating budget, so diversification strategies are in place, including advancing recovery of the indirect costs of research, carefully

building our cohort of outstanding international students, and creating new professional programs.

Overall research funding remains constrained and support for core research dollars, including indirect costs, continues to be a top advocacy imperative for me at both the federal and provincial levels.

GOVERNMENT

Federally, the budget continues to be carefully managed, with the Conservative majority government driving to implement austerity measures to return to a balanced budget. I have been leading the advocacy for the Advantage Canada Research Excellence Fund (ACRE) proposed by UBC, McGill and the University of Toronto to U15 to increase the global competitiveness of Canadian universities. This initiative was acknowledged in the last federal budget, and we were charged with completing a proposal. The U15 is working closely with AUCC to bring forward a widely supported approach.

Provincially, with the return of the government, the research portfolio was transferred back to the Ministry of Advanced Education, which is a better fit. The provincial government will move forward on the budget introduced in the spring which will see funding for the post-secondary system constrained for the next two fiscal years. Working with partner institutions and the Research Universities' Council of BC, UBC will build on pre-election work and advocate for the value of post-secondary education to the Province and to foster a competitive provincial research framework.

UBC continues to work with the City of Vancouver and City of Kelowna to advance our academic and social objectives. In Vancouver, we have made significant progress in positioning rail rapid transit to UBC as a regional and provincial priority. That work must continue. In Kelowna, a potential dispute in the land use classification of the new West Campus (formerly the Tutt Lands) of the Okanagan campus has been resolved.

SUPPORTING UBC'S STRATEGIC GOALS

start an evolution, UBC's development and alumni engagement campaign, has now passed the $1.2 billion mark. The campaign helps diversify our funding and provides support for academic priorities across campus. The campaign set a goal of doubling engagement of alumni with the university to 50,000 annually, and we have already surpassed 45,095. A new governance structure for the Alumni Association Board of Directors was instituted which will enable more robust activity and clarity in the UBC-Alumni Association relationship.

UBC Finance has adopted the distributed-integrated model of organization, already in place in Development and IT. The goal is to ensure a high level of technical competence at the Faculty and unit levels with joint reporting to a central unit to ensure coherence and collaboration. This model is now being implemented in Communications.

In December 2012, the university and the Faculty Association signed a pay equity agreement that ensures starting Faculty salaries are gender equitable; and that practices in recruitment, retention, promotion and merit are also equitable. We reviewed our Equity and Diversity structure, and we're implementing a new approach to better support the needs of our community and to make the promotion of inclusion more dynamic across UBC.

UBC took a bold leadership position in Canada in choosing to opt out of costly and duplicative Access Copyright licensing. We continue to work with partners across Canada to ensure full legal compliance with copyright law while reducing costs for our students.

OUR STRENGTH AS A COMMUNITY

This past year brought us much change, but also highlighted our great strengths. Integration of our campuses, faculties and units, as well as differentiation within the system are both important. It is this tension that keeps UBC on a rapidly ascending, forward trajectory. We are ambitious and we have proven ourselves up for change.

Despite continued instability in the economic climate, UBC is in a much stronger budgetary position than many of our leading sister universities across Canada and around the world. In the coming year, we will be able to deploy resources toward transformation and innovation that support *Place and Promise* goals, even while being fiscally prudent. In other words, we can enhance UBC's already strong standing as a leading global university.

But there is simply no room for complacency. As a community, we must work together internally, and with communities and partners externally, to articulate our social, cultural and economic value. Your continued support in this effort is essential, and greatly appreciated. Together we will build a stronger and even more influential UBC.

Stephen J. Toope
President and Vice-Chancellor