UBC Reports

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A Message from President pro tem Robert H.T. Smith

These are critical times for UBC. The challenges are great but I know we can meet them because I believe very strongly that we have an outstanding institution and an excellent faculty who care deeply about the future of this University.

When times are tough and morale is low, there is a temptation to fall into a downward spiral of negativism and criticism. Our concern for the University, and indeed for all universities in this province, requires us to renew our commitment to the preservation and the integrity of our institutions of higher education.

Many important decisions must be taken during the next few months. It is my intentiion to keep the university community well informed and to keep speculation to a minimum.

I am happy to announce the appointment of Dr. Daniel R. Birch, Dean of the Faculty of Education, as Acting Vice-President, Academic. In addition, Dr. A.J. McClean, Professor of Law and former Dean of the Faculty of Law, has been appointed Special Assistant to the President *pro tem*.

I ask for the support of all faculty and staff in my new responsibilities. In meeting the challenge that lies before us, it is my intention to rely on the advice of the deans as senior academic administrators and chairmen of their respective faculties, of the Acting Vice-President, Academic, and of the appropriate committees of Senate.

I am convinced that only if we pull together can we hope to preserve the excellence of our institution. I ask you to meet this challenge with me.

Robert Smith

Special edition

As members of the University community are aware, Dr. Robert H.T. Smith was appointed President *pro tem* on March 7 following the resignation of Dr. K. George Pedersen.

This special issue of *UBC Reports* attempts to provide both faculty and staff with a current status report on the administrative changes that have taken place, as well as a look at the events of the past few days.

Acting Vice-President, Academic appointed

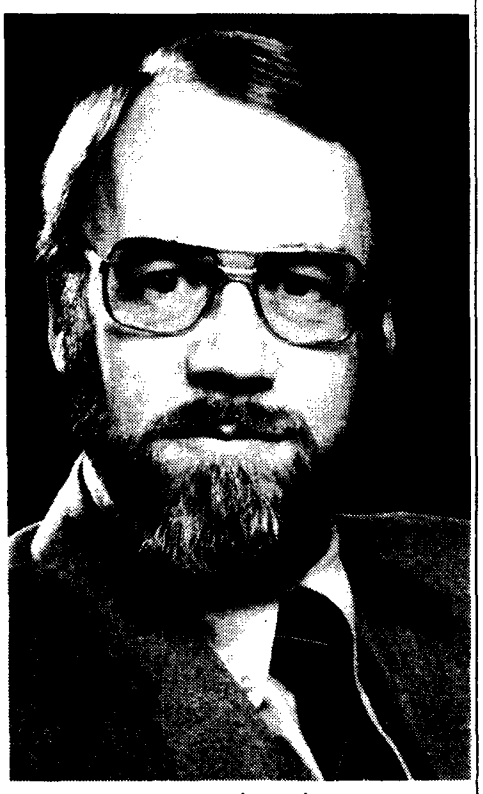
Dr. Daniel Birch, dean of UBC's Faculty of Education, has been appointed Acting Vice-President, Academic of the University.

Dean Birch joined UBC in 1981 after an academic, teaching and administrative career that began in the late 1950s in the Fraser Valley community of Maple Ridge, where he was a teacher, counsellor, social studies head and vice-principal of a secondary school.

In the late 1960s, he joined the faculty at Simon Fraser University as assistant professor of education. In 1971 he was named dean of the SFU education faculty and from 1975 was that university's associate vice-president, academic, and professor of education.

He holds the degrees of Bachelor of Arts in classics and Master of Arts in history from UBC. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of California at Berkeley in 1969 in the field of history and social science teaching.

His recent research interests have been primarily in the field of higher education, specifically on the impact of collective bargaining as it relates to teaching assistants.



Daniel Birch

Biographical Notes

The University of British Columbia's Board of Governors announced the appointment of Dr. Robert H.T. Smith as President *pro tem* of the University, following the resignation on March 7 of President George Pedersen.

Dr. Smith became Vice-President, Academic of UBC on July 1, 1983. He had been Associate Vice-President since 1979, was head of UBC's Department of Geography from 1975 to 1980, and continues to hold the rank of professor of geography.

Prof. Smith is an economic geographer who was born in Australia on May 22, 1935. He holds degrees from the University of New England in New South Wales, Northwestern University in Illinois, and was awarded a Ph.D. from the Australian National University, Canberra, in 1961. Among his academic appointments he was chairman of the geography department at Monash University in Australia, head of the Department of Geography at Queen's University in Kingston and chairman of the African Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin.

Prof. Smith is an expert in the areas of economic and human geography. He has done extensive work on problems of internal trade and marketing in West Africa and Papua New Guinea. He is the author of several books on internal trade and commodity movements in Nigeria and Australia and has written numerous papers on economic geography for journals and other publications.

Statement by Ex-President K. George Pedersen, M

The following is an excerpt from a statement made by Ex-President K. George Pedersen at a press conference on March 7, 1985.

Obviously it is necessary now that I say something about my reasons for leaving The University of British Columbia, an institution of which I am very fond and which I will very genuinely regret leaving.

Perhaps the best way to begin is to say that my time here at UBC has been both very rewarding and genuinely frustrating. My decision to leave, difficult as it was to make, is really a strong personal statement of concern about what is happening to the universities of this province. At this point, if my resignation does nothing more than dramatize to the general public the plight of our university system, it will be an action worthy of the taking. It is my view that the current situation as it relates to our three universities is such that it is quite impossible for any university president to provide the leadership that is so badly needed at the present time. I don't think any of us in the university community seriously debates the need for restraint, provincial and national. That has not been a major issue for me in making the decision to leave. Obviously, however, the processes for achieving restraint are what I find impossible, and those are goals that are very difficult for me to accept in terms of the manner in which it is hoped to achieve them.

What is impossible, to be more specific, is the uncertainty and the complete lack of planning that is going on in this province as it relates to our university system. At the present time all three universities are faced with a situation where there is less than one month to go before we begin our next fiscal year and we do not as yet know what our budget will be.

UBC is very likely faced with some program cuts and yet we have at this time no basis on which to act responsibly. We can't begin to make those academic judgements until the dollars available to us are known. For as long as I can recall in this province we have repeatedly asked for financial information in a much more timely fashion, and in particular for financial information on a multiple year basis.

At this University, in order to balance the current year's budget, that is, the 1984-85 budget, we had to make provision for close to 50 people to take early retirement. I use this just as one example of the kinds of extremes we have had to go to and in order to do that, we had to commit the University to 2.6 million dollars in the way of termination payments. We were told at the time there would not be a problem in receiving those funds, given that we would have no other source by which to fund such a provision. However, we still do not have any word as to where those termination payments are with respect to the current year. I guess what I am getting around to saying is that we in the university community, it seems to me, are in a position where we can plan very little. All we do is spend all our time reacting, and reacting in a time frame that is in my view virtually impossible.

Looking around the room, it might be useful if I gave you a bit of ancient history, given that most of you are very young. I began my career in education in this province in 1952 and so of those 33 years some 26 of them have been spent in British Columbia. The first thirteen years of my professional career were spent in our public elementary and secondary schools, and I can look back on them and say they were extremely rewarding. The most recent thirteen years of my career have been spent as a senior administrator in our three provincial universities. Again, most of that experience has been satisfying, and I sincerely hope that I have made some contribution to this province.

Having said that, however, I must then go on to comment that the past two years as President of UBC have been somewhat less satisfying. Indeed, I can say to you that the job of being a university president is not nearly as much fun as it used to be. The bottom line of all of this is to say that I guess I just have too much pride as an administrator to stay in a situation when I feel the constraints are such that I am unable to provide strong leadership. An opportunity has arisen, as I have already noted, for me to join another of Canada's outstanding universities, and I look forward to the challenge there.

K. George Pedersen

I suppose I would not be a university president if I didn't end up with some suggestions, and I say them not as shots at government at all but as serious initiatives that I think should be considered.

I think first of all the public of this province has to begin to pay much greater attention to what is happening to its universities. As I see it, the future of this province rests very greatly with our young people and those young people have to be well educated young people. There is, as you know, a great deal of concern in this province at the present time as far as elementary and secondary education is going, and I would like to suggest that it is necessary, and I hope it will be possible, to generate some of the same level of concern and public awareness about our university system.

Secondly, I would like to suggest that the government of this province acknowledge in positive ways the importance of its educational system, including its universities. Many of the negative comments and confrontations that have characterized the past two years will, in my view, not stand any of us in good stead. I think it is extremely detrimental to the university community, a community which tends to have to operate in the national and international contexts.

A third suggestion would be that some very serious thought be given to the question of public policy as it relates to our university system. In my view we cannot continue to operate a university system in the sort of vacuum that we have at the present time. If we are going to do more than simply give lip service to the notion of being highly competitive in a much more competitive world, it is going to require a good deal more in the way of serious thought about the role that our universities are going to play.

A fourth suggestion, and one I alluded to, is the need for some very thoughtful planning on a multi-year basis. I would regard that as absolutely essential. The current haphazard system is in my view quite detrimental.

Finally, I would suggest that the government should exercise extreme caution about the extent to which it chooses to intervene in the direct operation of our universities. Many of us expressed extreme concern at the time that Bill 3 was introduced. The whole issue of tenure, of course, came to the fore. The net effect of that was no change, other than the fact that a great deal of harm was done to the university system in British Columbia relative to the international community. I would also observe that, while I don't know the details of what is being proposed now with respect to this year's budget allocation, I don't like what appears to be the implication that there is going to be a certain amount of government intervention on the program side if we are to be funded adequately.

Further comment, I suppose, could be made with respect to the Universities Council of British Columbia, the body that serves as a buffer between the universities and the government. I suggest that it needs to be reviewed, and

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if indeed it is perceived to be a viable and worthwhile operation, then some serious initiatives have to be taken to make it so. At the present time it does not have a regularly appointed chairman, and six out of ten of the appointments on the Council have terms that have ended.

The further point that I would make has to do with the question of funding, and I have tried to stay away from that as much as possible because I said that that was not *the* issue on which I have chosen to do what I am doing. But I would hope that the provincial government would give some priority to university education, and that it would do so at the level that is currently recognized by the federal government. You are all probably aware that we receive a goodly portion of our funding for the university system from the federal government. That grant this year is going up about 7 1/2% and it is our expectation at the present time on the basis of the information we have that we will see very little of it sent along to the universities in British Columbia.

In conclusion I want to express my thanks and those of my wife and my family to the faculty, to staff and students, as well as to the members of the Board of Governors of this University. We have received and enjoyed marvellous support and a welcome reception in the relatively short period of time that we have been here. I suspect that there will be a number of people who will be disappointed in my decision today. I suspect, as well, there will be a number who are indeed angry about the decision I have made to leave at this particular time. All I can say to you is that I understand those kinds of reactions as being very human ones, and can offer only my regrets. However, I want to be sure that you understand that I do not apologise in any way for my past performance, or for my decision to leave. I believe that I have given it the very best shot that I can, often seven days a week, frequently sixteen to eighteen hours a day for the last two years, and I have come to the conclusion that it simply is a good time to leave.

A Message from the Chairman of the Board

The following statement was delivered by David McLean, Chairman of the Board of Governors, on March 7, 1985

As Chairman of the Board of Governors of The University of British Columbia, I announce today that we have accepted the request of the President of the University, Dr. K. George Pedersen, to be released from his contract with the University. Dr. Pedersen became the eighth president of UBC in July of 1983. We are very disappointed to be losing such a fine academic leader. Both he and his wife Joan have worked very hard, not only for UBC, but for each of the universities in this province. George has earned our thanks and appreciation for the contribution he has made, particularly in bringing the university community closer together, and we wish him well in his future endeavours.

Dr. Pedersen requested to be released from his contract so that he might accept the position of President of the University of Western Ontario. The UBC Board of Governors today has appointed Dr. Robert H.T. Smith, Academic Vice-President of the University, as President *pro tem* of the University during the period of time it takes the Board to select a permanent president. I wish to advise you that the Board of Governors has authorized the formation of a committee charged with the responsibility of recommending suitable candidates to succeed Dr. Pedersen. The committee will be chaired by the Chancellor of the University, Mr. Robert Wyman, and will include representatives from the Senate, the Board of Governors, Deans of Faculties, faculty members, students and alumni. A similar committee was struck for the selection of the last three presidents of The University of British Columbia. Our hope is that we will be able to proceed quickly. These are very challenging times for the University, and it is important for the future that a permanent president be selected as soon as possible.

Alumni president's statement

"We are concerned and disappointed," said Kyle Mitchell, president of the UBC Alumni Association in response to the March 7 resignation UBC President George Pedersen.

"Dr. Pedersen's resignation came as a surprise. Alumni believe the direction of his leadership was showing significant benefits to the University. We endorse his initiatives in shifting the perspectives of the University towards the community in which it exists. We applaud the measures taken by Dr. Pedersen, his senior administrators and deans towards establishing a clear vision and priorities for the UBC of tomorrow.

"Dr. Pedersen's resignation points out the severe difficulties that all senior university administrators in the province find themselves in at this time.

"As a businessperson I find it untenable that any major organization is put in the position of not knowing the amount of its funding with only three weeks to the beginning of its fiscal year. Universities, like the rest of society, must continue to go through a process of re-examination and adjustment to today's new economic realities. However, this cannot be done on a reactive short-term basis as it presently appears to be.

"UBC Alumni have had high expectations of the president and George Pedersen has, from the beginning of his term, shown the capacity to more than meet these expectations. Dr. Pedersen brought a perspective that combined the pursuit of excellence with the realities of restraint. Obviously his successor will need the same qualities.

"On behalf of all 100,000 UBC graduates, I express our appreciation and thanks to both George and Joan Pedersen for the significant contribution they have made to the continuing excellence of the University of British Columbia."

Chairman's letter to Association president

Mr. David McLean, Chairman of UBC's Board of Governors, has asked that the following letter, sent to Faculty Association President Elmer Ogryzlo on March 11, be printed in this issue of UBC Reports *to clear up any misunderstanding that may have occurred because of remarks attributed to him in the March 9 issue of* The Sun.

I wanted to follow up our telephone conversation of Sunday evening wherein I assured you that I had been totally misquoted in Saturday's Sun in regard to the comment which appeared about the faculty. I did not make those comments in the way they were reported. As you know, I have the highest regard for the faculty at UBC and I know they are diligent and responsible. It is unfortunate the reporter editorialized on a simple comment I made that I felt confident there would not be a mass exodus from UBC in light of George Pedersen's resignation.

I know there is a lot of tension on campus and I want you to know and to express to all your members how much we are counting on your support of the acting President and his administration during this difficult transition period. appreciate the positive attitude you have displayed during the past few days and we all look forward to very positive developments as the months unfold.

I can assure you we will maintain a close dialogue with you at all times.

Search committee formed

UBC is moving quickly to form a 24-member Advisory Committee for the Selection of Presidential Candidates.

The membership and terms of reference of the committee were approved Thursday (March 7) by UBC's Board of Governors following the announcement of Dr. K. George Pedersen's resignation as the University's chief executive officer. Members of the committee are to be identified by March 22.

The makeup of the committee and its terms of reference are the same as those that were approved in December, 1981 for the committee established to recommend candidates to succeed Dr. Douglas T. Kenny.

The membership of the committee is as follows:

* The Chancellor, W. Robert Wyman, as chairman;
* Four members of the Board of Governors;
* Three members of the Senate, to be elected by Senate;
* Four members of faculty, to be elected by the Joint Faculties;
* Three deans, to be chosen by the Committee of Deans;
* Four students (a member of the executive of the Alma Mater Society; two undergraduates to be chosen by Students' Council; and one graduate student to be chosen by the Graduate Students' Association);
* Three members of the Alumni Association to be appointed by the Board of Management of the Alumni Association;
* President of the Faculty Association; and
* One member of the non-academic Administration, appointed by the chairman of the Board of Governors, Mr. David McLean.

At this point, the names of two other members of the committee are known, in addition to that of Mr. Wyman, the chancellor.

Representing the Faculty Association on the committee will be Prof. Elmer Ogryzlo, the incumbent association president.

Mr. McLean has asked Bruce Gellatly, UBC's vice-president for administration and finance, to serve on the committee representing the non-academic administration.

The committee's terms of reference are:

(a) To adopt criteria to guide it in the selection of presidential candidates; and

(b) To recommend a short list of presidential candidates to the Academic Committee of the Board.

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