THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

6328 Memorial Road
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2

Telephone (604) 822-2121
Fax (604) 822-5055

Martha C. Piper, Ph.D., O.C., O.B.C.
President and Vice-Chancellor

April 4, 2006

Mr. Brian J. Silzer
Secretary to the Council of Senates
Brock Hall – West Wing
1874 East Mall
CAMPUS MAIL Zone 1

Subject: Referral to the Council of Senates

Dear Mr. Silzer:

As you are aware, at its meeting of February 17, 2006, the Okanagan Senate approved, in principle, the conferral of UBC degrees on a group of alumni of the former Okanagan University College (OUC).

Following that approval in principle, members of the Vancouver Senate requested that the Vancouver Senate consider a motion to refer the matter of conferral of these degrees to the Council of Senates for final decision.

Upon reflection, I have decided that the best course of action is to exercise the power accorded the president under the *University Act,* R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 468, s. 38.2(1) and personally refer the matter of the granting of UBC degrees to alumni of Okanagan University College to the Council of Senates for disposition.

Under the *University Act*, each of the Vancouver and Okanagan Senates has the power to "...provide for and grant degrees[.]" Under normal circumstances, I expect that each of the Senates will approve the conferral of its campus's respective degrees. However, I believe the matter of granting degrees to OUC alumni constitutes an exception to this norm.

To determine whether to make this referral, I considered the unique historical relationship between UBC Vancouver and OUC. During the 1990s OUC offered degree

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programs that were largely based on UBC curricula and taught by faculty approved by UBC. Students graduating from these programs were awarded degrees granted under UBC authority until 1998, when OUC began offering its own degrees. As a result, 1) UBC Vancouver was directly involved with the degree granting status of OUC through 1998, and 2) the contemplated decision about the conferral of UBC degrees only affects approximately 2,381 OUC alumni who graduated between 1998 and 2005.

I also considered the unique post-transition relationship that exists between OUC and UBC Okanagan. Many of our UBC Okanagan students, faculty, and staff began at OUC and have been instrumental in the establishment and growth of UBC Okanagan.

Given these historical and current circumstances, OUC alumni clearly enjoy a connection with UBC. Accordingly, I believe the Council of Senates is best positioned to determine whether UBC degrees should be granted to this unique group of OUC alumni who both succeed OUC alumni who already possess degrees granted under UBC Vancouver authority and precede alumni who will possess degrees granted under UBC Okanagan authority.

As such, I am referring the matter of granting of UBC degrees to OUC alumni graduating from 1998 through 2005 to the Council of Senates for disposition. The Council's disposition of this matter will be reported to both the Okanagan and Vancouver Senates when it is resolved.

Sincerely,

Martha Piper

Martha C. Piper

cc. Vancouver Senate Agenda Committee
Okanagan Senate Policies and Procedures Committee