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Vancouver Senate 15 Dec 2010
Item 5 p.1

Office of the Vice President

Research & International

Draft International Strategy: Discussion paper

Discussion Document: International Strategy:
Office of the Vice President Research & International

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V1 December 6, 2010

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Draft International Strategy: Discussion Document

How was the draft developed?

In August 2009, Stephen J. Toope, President and Vice-Chancellor, presented his vision of international engagement, *International Engagement and Global Influence: How Ambitious is the University of British Columbia?* In it, he put forward the idea of having an advisory council to consider the way forward for UBC's international engagement. In November 2009, John Hepburn, Vice-President Research and International, convened the International Advisory Committee to assist in developing strategy for UBC's international engagement.

The Advisory Committee has met regularly since that time. In addition, having made a decision early in 2010 that the international strategic plan would designate areas of geographic focus, three working groups were formed. Each working group was made up of members of the Advisory Council as well as other faculty members working in the area. Each working group met three times to discuss the regional elements of the plan. Various other consultative meetings were held, for example with administrators responsible for the implementation of international programs for students, and faculty representatives.

Draft International Strategy

Highlights of the Strategy

- Aim to be Canada's leader in international engagement within five years
- Three areas of regional focus: China, India and Europe
- Three to five year time frame
- List of special actions reflecting burgeoning interest in Africa
- Goal of 30% of students to have an international experience as part of their UBC degree
- Aim to significantly increase international graduate student recruitment
- Aim to establish significant new strategic research partnerships in each of the regions of focus



I. Introduction

The UBC strategic plan, *Place and Promise*, was published in December 2009. *Place and Promise* makes a clear commitment to UBC's international engagement, and sets two goals:

1. Increase the capacity of UBC students, faculty, staff, and alumni to engage internationally.
2. Strengthen UBC's presence as a globally influential university.

This strategy focuses on international engagement and how the University should expand its global reach and strengthen its international partnerships.

Why a focus on international engagement?

In an increasingly inter-connected world, international engagement is a necessity as well as a consequence of UBC's research, teaching and community engagement commitments. There is hardly any aspect of UBC's activity that does not have an international dimension. The University has a responsibility to educate students with internationally grounded perspectives and critical capacities. This is the essence of global citizenship. In addition, as a world leading university, UBC has a responsibility to advance knowledge in areas of vital global concern such as sustainability. This includes, of course, advancing research and scholarship, but also extends to disseminating this knowledge globally and to educating students from around the world.

The University is already deeply engaged internationally in many different ways. There is a strong international presence at UBC: there are students from more than 140 countries pursuing degrees on the UBC Vancouver campus, and students from 65 countries pursuing degrees on the UBC Okanagan campus. This multicultural student population reflects UBC's diverse local community; British Columbia is home to significant populations with roots in China and Southeast Asia. For more than twenty years, UBC has been building strong academic ties with universities around the world, beginning with our first formal partnership with Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Since then, we have broadened our global reach, building on a foundation of strong research collaboration and active student mobility.

Despite all of this, we aspire to more. That is why international engagement is part of the Place and Promise plan.

Why have a plan?

UBC is at a turning point in terms of its international engagement. While the scale and scope of our engagement in some areas puts us in a leading position – for example we have the largest student exchange program in Canada – we have not effectively harnessed that to assert UBC as an international leader. A plan for international engagement will enable us to engage in ways that are not simply reactive and build positively on our achievements to date. A plan will help us to raise the bar in particular areas by setting goals and striving to meet them. We do not have infinite resources, so planning allows us to make strategic choices. This enhances our capacity to take on leadership roles within and beyond Canada. Securing our leadership



position will in turn enhance the capacity of our students, faculty and staff to engage internationally at all levels. Finally, planning allows us to consider the risks and opportunities on the international plane at present.

In addition, as with the *Place and Promise* Plan, the International Strategic Plan is a way for UBC to articulate its values. To this end, ***one of the goals of the first year of this plan is to develop a statement of ethics for international projects, and to audit our ethics procedural guidelines against this statement.***

While both UBC's Vancouver and Okanagan campuses are engaged internationally, each has distinct characteristics. The campuses are engaged in different ways and to differing extents in different regions of the world. For example, while Chinese students at UBC Vancouver make up a very significant portion of the international student body, they are not an especially large group at UBC Okanagan. Collaborative partnerships also follow a different pattern at UBC Vancouver as compared to UBC Okanagan. Although the starting point for international engagement is different in Vancouver as compared to Okanagan, the principles and overall directions for international engagement set out in this plan hold true for both campuses. The specific recommendations for action in the next three to five years relate primarily to UBC Vancouver. UBC Okanagan may choose to follow some of those recommendations in that time frame, but through its own planning process may adopt a different time frame or choose different priorities within the next three to five years.

The fact that UBC has two different campuses is an advantage for international engagement in that it broadens our offer and our scope of interest, enabling us to link to a wider range of international partners and communities.

II. Strategic Partnerships

Definition:

The *Place and Promise* plan sets the goal of strengthening UBC's presence as a globally influential university and refers to increasing the number of "substantial strategic" partnerships as a way of achieving this goal. Such partnerships are an important asset because they bring significant, on-going collaborations across several disciplines and include a number of research groups and academic departments. These partnerships support strong collaborative research endeavours and may include jointly developed courses and joint supervision of graduate students. They also feature well-developed mobility programs for both graduate and undergraduate students.

We have three aims in the area of partnerships:

- 1. Improve communication about existing partnerships;***
- 2. Experiment with developing short-term, issues-based partnerships, for example in the area of sustainability research; and***
- 3. Develop new substantial partnerships in each of our areas of geographic focus.***



Principles for partnership:

Despite the wide range of UBC's international partnerships, there are some core principles that hold for all of them.

Truly sustainable partnerships bring value for both parties. In building new partnerships and maintaining existing ones, we need constantly to assess the value brought to UBC and also to the partner by the relationship. This is foundation of all our links. When we partner with peer institutions with similar interests and areas of expertise the partnerships can bring similar advantages to each party. However, some of our partnerships involve working with different organizations (e.g. non-governmental organizations for service learning programs or industry for co-op placements) and also with universities in countries in which higher education and research is at a very different stage of development than in Canada. In those cases partnerships can be made which result in mutual benefits but those benefits may be different for each party. For example, we may partner with organizations with a capacity building objective in the development context. Our new partnership with Canada India Village Aid creates valuable connections for UBC researchers in India while responding to the need for greater economic sustainability in the region.

We have also engaged successfully with multiple partners around a single project. For example, we have an on-going "three-way" partnership with the National University of Singapore and the Lee Foundation that provides an extended range of opportunities for student mobility between UBC and NUS.

UBC has both well-established and emerging partnerships. For example, UBC has had a partnership with the University of Hong Kong since 1991. Over the years, we have built up activities at many levels: research collaboration, joint academic programs, student mobility and an international student residence and cultural centre on the UBC campus. A new partnership formed in 2010 with the Max Planck Society in Germany will establish the "Max Planck – UBC Centre for Quantum Materials" on the UBC campus, allowing us to strengthen and expand the existing research collaboration begun by our Department of Physics.

Building on existing partnerships:

UBC has dozens of active agreements with international partners and hundreds of historic and informal linkages. Many of the active agreements already feature all or most of the elements of a substantial strategic partnership and for those all that is needed is a re-commitment to engage and a stepping up of contact so as not to lose the momentum of the partnership. Other active linkages are strong in some areas e.g. student mobility but have not been fully exploited for research collaboration. We need to identify those agreements and consider whether they offer an opportunity for more in-depth collaboration or an expanded range of activities.



For the past ten years, UBC has been a member of two international university associations: Universitas 21 (U21) and the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU)¹. Both these memberships offer potential for extending and deepening our existing range of partnerships but should not be considered as limiting our strategic connections. Both associations offer opportunities for exchange of best practice and multi-lateral activities such as undergraduate summer schools, which bring together students from across the network. But there are costs associated with participation, and activities undertaken through the network should be evaluated on their own merits. There are also other international networks that might be kept in mind as useful for engagement.

There are also international partnerships that we form in collaboration with partners in British Columbia or elsewhere in Canada. It is important to maintain provincial or national networks to support our international endeavours.

In seeking to refocus our partnerships we need to map our current affiliations more systematically. This will serve the purpose both of showing us where we are and also in facilitating the strengthening of our existing connections or creation of new ones. Often external partners are more aware of our international connections and profile than internal stakeholders.

III. International Strategy and Research

International partnerships are an important feature of research excellence and research collaborations are an important feature of any international strategy. Much of UBC's existing research has an international component, as would be expected in a research intensive university with a significant international profile. Some research by its very nature necessitates an element of international collaboration; for other areas the international component is incidental – researchers are working internationally simply as a means of finding collaborators with complementary expertise or resources. International collaboration must always be driven by the research endeavour it is supporting, or the partnership will not be sustainable.

While international partnerships are valuable to research and within its three to five year timeframe this Plan prioritizes links in certain areas of the world, researchers are of course free to engage or not according to their intellectual priorities. Scholars at all leading universities pursue international connections throughout the whole world. Scholarly endeavour is the driver for such connections and it is not appropriate to constrain those for political, social or religious reasons. The only proper limitations relate to matters such as the safety of staff or

¹ Universitas 21 (U21) is a network of 24 Universities: University of Melbourne, University of Hong Kong, the University of Delhi, University College Dublin, Waseda University, Tecnológico de Monterrey, University of Amsterdam, University of Auckland, National University of Singapore, Korea University, Lund University, University of Birmingham, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Nottingham, University of Connecticut, University of Virginia. APRU is a network of 42 universities around the Pacific Rim.



students, ethical practice of partners where that conflicts with rules applying in Canada, conflict of interest and secrecy.

International collaborations for research must be driven by the interests of researchers themselves. A strategy which is purely “top down” is not sustainable. We need to help stimulate connections at the level of individual researchers or research groups. However, aggregating our resources is one means of achieving critical mass.

ACTIONS

Much can be achieved by facilitating connections. We aim to:

- Make it easier for researchers to connect to their counterparts in other countries by virtual means by improving access to technology across both campuses;
- Enable connections to be built on existing linkages by providing better information about current partnerships;
- Lobby governments to provide more support funding for international collaboration and seek philanthropic or foundation support for international partnerships; and
- Increase the mobility of graduate students through increased funding support (1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 idea to be elaborated) so that they can further their research by gaining exposure to differing points of view and cultural contexts, and access to data and facilities not easily available in Canada.

Accessing information is vital to any research endeavour. UBC’s libraries provide a gateway to much of that information, and international collaboration between libraries is a critical component of successful research collaborations. We already have active linkages between our library and libraries around the world, such as the National Library of China. These linkages might be increased in line with strengthening our international research collaboration.

IV. International Strategy and Students

Students occupy a special place in UBC’s international engagement. UBC students bring with them diverse origins, languages and experiences, which naturally give an international dimension to the student body, and it is often students who are the most energetic drivers for UBC’s international engagement. They are also especially important as influencers in the future shape of international engagement. Students graduating from UBC go on to do internationally recognized research, establish international companies and are generally called on to operate at international level in their professional lives and communities. The internationally diverse nature of UBC’s student body is itself a factor in attracting more international students. UBC can provide a gateway to other cultures and languages simply by offering students an opportunity to meet, study and live with people from other places.



The international strategy relating to students has many elements. This plan offers some strategic direction on those elements most closely related to international partnership development and research excellence on a global scale, and these strategies have obvious implications for student mobility and research placements.

With regard to students we aim to:

- 1. Increase student participation in mobility programs so that 30% of all undergraduates at both campuses have an international experience by the time they graduate, and establish a mobility participation goal specific to graduate students;***
- 2. Ensure the availability of funding for international mobility programs from a variety of sources;***
- 3. Establish a system that enables Faculties and Go Global to communicate easily to students how an international experience can be incorporated in their degree;***
- 4. Increase the number of international undergraduate students on each campus to 15% of the student body; and***
- 5. Make a significant increase in the number of international graduate students (specific target is under discussion).***

UBC offers a wide range of options for students to gain international experience during their studies. Our dedicated student mobility office, Go Global, develops and supports a range of options for both undergraduate and graduate students, including study abroad, research abroad and international service learning. Go Global supports the international learning of students involved in those placements, administers and sources funding for student mobility and manages partnerships that enable student mobility. Through these programs, students at UBC have a high level of mobility: UBC has the largest student exchange program in Canada and one of the largest in the world. Undergraduate mobility is strong at both UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan. About 14% of undergraduates at UBC Vancouver and 22% of undergraduates at UBC Okanagan will have had an international experience by the time they graduate, compared to the national average of 3%.

International experiences offered at UBC are deliberately varied; the university aims to offer every student an international experience and recognizes that a one size fits all approach will not work for our large student body with its diverse interests and experiences. Current options include opportunities to go outside Canada or participate in a 'virtual' mobility program or other home-based international experience.

Virtual mobility options include the "U21 Global issues Programme", a multi-disciplinary program offered by the Universitas 21 network to the students of the Universities of British



Columbia and other partners in the network. The program includes 70 subjects, including 15 offered online.

Many of these options are open to both graduate and undergraduate students but graduate students often have a different motivation, and access to different resources for engaging internationally. International experiences sought by graduate students are generally linked to a research endeavour rather than a learning experience. They need to travel outside Canada to conduct field research or work in partnership with another research group.

Challenges and strategies:

With an enrollment target of 30,000 full-time domestic undergraduate students, we currently have 3600 international students. The goal is to raise this number so that 15% of UBC's undergraduate student body is international students. Currently, UBC Vancouver has a higher proportion of international students than UBC Okanagan, but the rate at UBC Okanagan is growing rapidly, and the 15% target applies to each campus.

UBC aims to increase its proportion of graduate students to 25% of the student body and this will require a significant increase in the number of international graduate students. This growth target is probably not achievable within the three to five year time frame of this plan, but we do envision taking significant steps in this direction. *The precise target is under consideration for the moment, and might be something like increasing the number of international research students by 800 students.*

The goal of greater international diversity in recruitment brings a series of challenges as well as potential benefits. We need not only to recruit more international students to UBC, but also to ensure they have a rich and fulfilling experience while they are here. We already have a good record in providing practical support for students new to Canada, but more can be done. Issues of capacity in classrooms and living accommodation will also need to be addressed.

Despite UBC's excellent record on student mobility there remain a number of barriers and these need to be addressed in order to meet the targets of increased mobility. Student surveys show that the cost of travel and recognition of their academic achievements abroad are significant disincentives to going abroad. Students who incorporate an international experience within their degree should not extend the length of time it takes to complete their degree because of it.

We also need to develop tailored approaches for the differing needs and interests at different academic career stages. Even if we significantly raise the number of students who actually go abroad, they will still be in the minority and so we also need to increase opportunities for international engagement "at home" e.g. through virtual channels which allow for linking up with counterparts outside Canada and opportunities to build understanding of international perspectives during their course of study.



Language skills are highly relevant to enabling UBC students to participate in international learning experiences. We need to consider how language learning can be more effectively promoted so that all our students graduate with an ability to communicate (even at the most basic level) in a language other than English.

V. Areas of Geographic Focus: China, India and Europe

Over the next three to five years, UBC will have three areas of geographic focus for strategic engagement: China, India and Europe.

Although the existing pattern of UBC's linkages is different in each region, and the regions themselves vary greatly from each other, in each case, stepped up engagement at this point in time would be critical to ensuring on-going linkages of real value to UBC in the long term.

UBC's engagement in each of these regions has a different starting point. While there are some similarities in our forward plan for engagement in each region, there are important differences in our approach. For example, there is a need to increase UBC's profile and make better use of existing expertise and connections at UBC for all three areas, but the vehicle for doing this is different in each case. There will be synergies across our approach in each region, but strategies are presented separately to emphasize the need to respond to different starting points and different local conditions in each region.

The landscape of higher education and research in both China and India is in a state of rapid change. Both governments are investing heavily in these areas and universities and research institutions are themselves in a state of flux. This means that in both those countries, UBC's existing and potential partners are also changing. We need to step up our efforts in order to keep up with the opportunities offered in both these highly dynamic environments. It is imperative to engage now.

UBC's history of engagement in China differs from its involvement in India. Our links in China have been built over many years of engagement, resulting in very strong base of partnership and academic exchange. Chinese students are one of the largest groups of international students at UBC. Many of UBC's China scholars are world authorities in their areas of interest.

In contrast, our engagement with India is much less developed. Compared with our links in China, we have few partnerships in India and international student enrollment is low. Although the starting points in China and India are different, both regions represent a huge source of potential engagement for UBC.

In Europe, the picture is different again. Europe is a particularly important region for research collaboration, second only to the US, and we are now beginning to take advantage of these strong links to form strategic partnerships, such as our new agreement with the Max Planck Society. We have much to learn from Europe's highly developed programs for student mobility and research collaboration. New opportunities are opening up in Europe as European partners recognize the need to work outside of Europe to maintain research excellence. For example



the Sauder School of Business is building a partnership with the Copenhagen Business School and the Peter Wall Institute has a mobility program for faculty with the College de France which could be expanded. We need to respond actively to this trend in order to strengthen our own research collaborations. Student mobility with European partners is already well developed but could be increased to strengthen research partnerships in particular.

In each of the three areas of focus, the aim of this strategic plan is to concentrate efforts in order to make 'game changing' moves with visible impact. We would anticipate that the subsequent plan would not have the same regional areas of focus, because significant shifts will already have been made.

VI. 1 China

Challenges and opportunities:

Connections with China were at the origin of UBC's international engagement (our first formal international linkage was with Shanghai Jiao Tong University). We have significant expertise in China and many important connections, but we lack coherence in our endeavors, influence or recognition.

UBC has a wealth of expertise on China. We have a considerable body of scholarship related to China and the Institute for Asian Research's recent census has shown that the numbers of faculty from wider disciplines with significant Chinese involvement is high.

Our libraries contain a large volume of works in Chinese and about China. The Asian Library at UBC is home to a world-class collection, including the 45,000-volume Puban collection, which helped establish the Asian Library in 1949. The Puban contains books dating back more than 1,000 years, and includes a volume from the Yuan Dynasty. Holdings such as these have established the Asian Library's collection as the most historically significant collection housed outside of Asia. Researchers from around the world come to UBC to study items in these collections.

Chinese students are a strong presence in our student body, there are currently more than 1200 Chinese students pursuing degrees on the UBC campus. In addition, many domestic students have Chinese heritage; China continues to be the number one source country of immigrants to BC. UBC is home to one of the largest Chinese language programs outside China, with nearly 2,500 registrations catering to both traditional and heritage learners and offering four years of instruction.

Recruitment of Chinese graduate students is strong. This is supported by our links with the China Scholarship Council (CSC)². UBC has signed special agreements with five leading Chinese

² The CSC is a government agency in China that provides scholarships to students for doctoral and postdoctoral studies abroad.



Universities as a “preferred destination” for their CSC winners. In 2009-10, there were 100 CSC-funded PhD students from Chinese universities at UBC.

UBC has agreements with 16 universities in China, 4 in Hong Kong and 5 in Taiwan. However, there are gaps and some linkages are out of date; either they have expired or not kept up with emerging universities.

UBC has a strong alumni base in Hong Kong and many of those alumni have extensive connections in China. We also have a growing number of alumni in mainland China.

In the past ten years, China has made a huge investment in its higher education system, but many Chinese institutions are still in transition, especially when it comes to building research excellence. This makes the present time a critical stage at which to refocus our efforts in China. There is a real sense at UBC that we have lost the initiative in China: we are still in the game but we are in a responsive posture. This gives an added sense of the immediacy to the need to look at links in China.

Defining China:

UBC is engaged in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau as well as mainland China and the strategies outlined in this plan will be relevant for all those areas. However, our linkages with mainland China are less developed and more critical to the overall success of our engagement in China as defined more widely.

Goal for engagement in China:

Re-establish UBC as the pre-eminent Canadian university in China by regaining a top-level public reputation for expertise on China, revitalizing research connections and expanding into wider range of disciplines and maintaining strong level of undergraduate and graduate student recruitment.

Strategies for engagement in China:

We need to consider how to **focus expertise on China**. One way of doing this might be by creating a “China Forum” at UBC that supports researchers, faculty, students and staff who are working with Chinese partners. The Forum could be the public face of UBC’s engagement with China. It could function as a central point of contact and information on UBC’s China connections and provide a channel into UBC for visitors from China. It would be a resource for anyone internally or externally with questions on China.

We need to take stock of existing partnerships with a view to **increasing the intensity of our connections with top Chinese universities**. We should explore opportunities for funding those connections through resources in China. This would enable us to increase our opportunities for research collaboration with Chinese universities. Although we have many active student mobility agreements in China we have not reached our potential and should aim to increase the mobility of our students in both directions. Increasing participation of UBC students in summer



programs and workshops may be a way to do this. Several partners are prepared to offer these programs which create alternate pathways for our students to go to China – especially as most summer programs do not require knowledge of Mandarin. Internships offer another means of creating pathways to China and of creating opportunities for Chinese students to come to UBC. We might consider replicating aspects of the Globalink program operated by MITACS³ in India with Chinese partners.

Although our alumni links in Hong Kong are strong, more could be done to **increase and strengthen alumni links** by building a more systematic engagement of alumni in mainland China. Alumni should include those who have been visiting scholars and faculty as well as students. UBC's Asia Pacific Regional Office in Hong Kong could play a leading role in this.

Visits to UBC by high level delegations from China are an important means of raising our profile and making valuable connections. These visitors place high importance on protocol and generally require a degree of formality to conclude agreements. Multi-delegate visits to UBC, often involving consular or government representatives, are part of this process. Such visits need to be welcomed appropriately with the right facilities and engagement from appropriately senior UBC representatives. While we have protocols in place for receiving visitors, these might be strengthened so as to ensure that Chinese visitors are received in a correct manner, which respects their expectations and provides the opportunity to showcase UBC's strengths as a partner.

Although student enrollment from China is healthy, we need to work to **maintain our recruitment strengths** especially as Chinese universities grow. We need to work with the China Scholarship Council to gain a top competitive position as a destination of choice for Chinese graduate students who wish to pursue a degree abroad; **we aim to increase the number of CSC students on the UBC campus**. We must also ensure UBC is gaining access to the full range of scholarships available for UBC students going to China. We could consider establishing an informal network of faculty members prepared to work for the wider UBC purpose of graduate recruitment in China. This would involve creating an inventory of people who could be ambassadors for UBC in China to raise awareness of UBC and to interview potential candidates for graduate programs.

V1.2 India

Challenges and opportunities:

Compared with many other areas of international engagement, UBC has few formal connections in India; at present there are five agreements linking us to Indian universities and institutions. Student mobility is strong where it exists; for example, UBC and IIT Delhi have just renewed a link that has been in place for ten years, but this arrangement is very limited in

³ MITACS is a federally and provincially funded research network that is hosted by UBC.



terms of the number of students currently involved. On that basis, it is an obvious place to work on building.

India represents huge potential, but also risk. The distance of India from Vancouver, the sheer scale of the country and the fact that UBC has fewer established connections than its peers from other countries such as the US and Australia mean that future engagement needs to be done in a strategic way with a view to using resources effectively.

India represents an immense pool of talented students and research interest. Despite the lack of formal links (we have only a handful of formal linkages with India out of a total of approximately 300 international agreements and memoranda of understanding), UBC has a great deal of informal relationships and natural points of convergence: English is the main language of instruction in India, Vancouver has a substantial population with close ties to India and an established body of South Asian expertise and content in its research and academic programs. Student numbers are low; there are 255 graduate and undergraduate students from India pursuing degrees at UBC, compared to 1,284 students from China. However, UBC has a good number of faculty members with close ties to India.

It is important to step up engagement in India now because India itself is in a rapid state of change. The Indian government is investing in education and there is a clear recognition that the post-secondary sector in India is simply not able to meet the needs of the emerging economy. An important element of India's strategy in building up its own system is to look internationally for partnerships to help it do this. Canada has a comparatively weak brand in India; if we don't do something different in the immediate future, we risk losing what footholds we may have at present. This risk is increased by the fact that we are competing with other international partners who have a wider and deeper range of existing links and better funded government support for extending those. Interest in India at UBC is high amongst students and faculty and we are well positioned to be a leader among Canadian institutions.

UBC students and researchers will benefit directly from greater collaboration with Indian institutions and partners. In establishing partnerships and building connections with Indian educational institutions, government agencies, NGOs and industry, we aim to create a balanced exchange of students and opportunities for research collaboration between both countries.

While engagement in India has many potential benefits to UBC, it is particularly important to build our connections with a view to mutual benefits, rather than self-interest. India is at a stage of development in its higher education and research. Our objectives need to take into account Indian partners' capacity-building objectives as well as our own desire to partner. This approach is not only fair, it is the only way to create a sustainable foothold for UBC in India.

Goal for engagement in India:

- Raise UBC's profile in India so that we become known as a destination of choice for study, research and international partnership.



Strategies for engagement in India:

UBC should **assert a position of leadership** among Canadian universities seeking to engage in India. We should work with AUCC to connect with colleagues and share best practice and act as a coordinator for activities aimed at increasing the profile of Canadian universities in India and building links between Canadian universities and their Indian counterparts. We should speak on behalf of Canadian universities when engaging with government either in India or in Canada.

We can **raise UBC's profile as a key player in India through the media**. We should seek to engage media in India, internationally and in Canada for this purpose and exploit all opportunities to highlight UBC's activities in India and linkages with Indian institutions. We can also act as a spokes person for Canadian universities engagement in India in our position as a national leader.

We should **seek advice from local experts** by creating an India Advisory Committee composed of leaders from academia, local community, private sector and government to provide ongoing advice and direction to present and future engagement activities of UBC in India. UBC needs assistance and access to intelligence to better position itself in India. India is a vast and complex country, with cultural, religious and business nuances that are sure to impact UBC's engagement there. India is also full of opportunities, not all of them apparent at first glance. An Advisory Committee would provide input and advice on how better to reach our goals there. Vancouver, and the lower BC mainland, has one of the largest South-Asian Diasporas in North America. UBC could potentially leverage its knowledge of India, as well as its relationships, to gain a competitive advantage in that market.

Many institutions around the world have chosen to set up **a presence in India** to facilitate the day-to-day contact needed to make headway in such a complex country. The BC government has, for example, a business development office in Bangalore, and it plans to expand into Mumbai. Many of our peer universities around the world also have offices located in large Indian cities. We should explore whether a physical presence for UBC in India would help further our objectives for engagement, considering possibilities such as an office in India or a joint research institute based in India in partnership with other Canadian entities, for example MITACS. As mentioned above, investment in India is costly and establishing physical presence would represent a significant allocation of resources. Such a presence would therefore need to have a defined focus and be accountable for specific outcomes.

Although UBC has few existing **partnerships in India** when compared to other regions of the world in which we are engaged, we do have some valuable links - either formal or informal - and these should be taken stock of and built on where possible. For example we have had a student mobility partnership with IIT Delhi for more than ten years, giving us an excellent basis for building links with this prestigious institution. The Institute of Asian Research has recently conducted a census of faculty members across all disciplines with a professional or academic connection to six Asian regions, including India. This has highlighted a large number of linkages at the level of individual faculty members, opening up a wider range of partners than is evident



from UBC's formal agreements and memoranda of understanding. Inventories of existing partnerships will allow us to identify key institutions in India with which to interact and as places to which UBC students and researchers can go. Building links with Indian institutions will raise the profile of UBC in India and will go a long way to build capacity in India's higher education system.

UBC's global linkages open up the possibility for us to **learn from other international partners**. For example, German universities have successfully built up a presence in India and Japanese universities have a successful program of student mobility in India. We could use our links with German and Japanese universities to obtain best practice for building our own presence in India.

As mentioned above, **partnerships with India** institutions are an important building block for UBC in developing a presence in India. All successful partnerships **give benefits to both sides** and, given that Indian universities have a very different structure to UBC and are at a different stage of development, we will need to pay particular attention to how mutual benefit is derived from our partnerships in India. Our partnerships with Indian universities will need to be constructed creatively with a view to the long term. Our partnership with IIT Delhi is one such arrangement as it allows for a stipend to be paid to in-coming students from the IIT and balance for UBC is achieved by opening up opportunities for study or research which would not otherwise be available. We also need to engage beyond universities as universities lack infrastructure to support some forms of partnership – research is largely conducted in other government funded entities. Other innovative ways to engage with India include working more closely with India's private sector companies and NGOs. Private companies in India are keen to do more research and to build their research capacity. UBC could be a leader in these interactions through, for example, offering UBC students and researchers the chance to work in one of these large Indian companies.

Recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students from India is an important element in our strategy for engagement; we aim to double the number of Indian students at UBC. There are about 200,000 Indian students going abroad to study in university. The vast majority attend Australian or US institutions. Not only do Indian students represent a huge pool of talent, we need to build links through establishing an alumni base in India. To increase our recruitment we need to look at our existing systems to make sure they are as transparent and accessible as possible for Indian students (e.g. review TOEFL requirements for Indian students who have been schooled in English). We need to build recruitment strategies with a view to long term engagement. We should consider working collaboratively with Indian high schools to build lasting partnerships which bring direct benefits to schools as well as raising UBC's profile.

Student mobility programs are a fundamental element to UBC's engagement in India for many reasons. Not only do they open up opportunities for enriched learning and research to our students, they can be a very effective means of raising UBC profile - students themselves can be our best ambassadors for international engagement - and can also lead directly to recruitment



especially of graduate students. Globalink is a program which supports Indian undergraduates at IITs to come to Canada for research internships at partner universities and in industry. UBC was one of the founding partners of this program, which is run by MITACS from its Vancouver Campus. This program could be broadened to include the social sciences and outgoing UBC students.

Maintaining strong bonds with UBC alumni in India will be especially valuable to our engagements. When they return to India, alumni create bridges between UBC and Indian-based universities, private sector companies, government and NGOs. We should consider that our alumni base includes not only former full time students but those who have been visiting students, visiting scholars, or visiting faculty. We might also leverage Globalink alumni to increase awareness of UBC in India.

VI. 3 Europe

Challenges and opportunities:

Europe has a large number of world leading institutions and offers research excellence and a great capacity for expanding student mobility. UBC's current levels of engagement in Europe are good. UBC has 55 current agreements and memoranda of understanding with European institutions for the purposes of collaborative research and student mobility. Europe is our strongest regional centre for student exchange and levels of student mobility are healthy and balanced. International student enrollment is also at a good level.

We have some notable research collaborations with European partners that bring in substantial additional funding and prestige. For example,

Centre

National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), an honour shared by only three other international research centres. This partnership brings direct funding benefits and creates valuable opportunities for exchange between French researchers and UBC scholars.

We have also had some successful engagement with European Union programs to support research such as the 7th Framework Program, which places strong emphasis on the value of including partners from outside Europe in consortia. We have received several fully-funded post- doctoral fellows from the Marie Curie program and UBC faculty members act as peer reviewers for the selection of collaborative research projects funded under the program.

However, we are still not reaching our potential for engagement in Europe. The university landscape in many European countries is changing with changes in policy about how central government funding is allocated and we risk being left behind. Some of our partnerships have not kept in step with university reforms in Europe and they are also unevenly distributed across the region (our highest concentration of partnerships is in France, Germany and the UK) and across disciplines. As a result of these inconsistencies, UBC is at risk of being excluded from the very significant research cooperation mechanisms that exist in Europe.



Defining Europe:

Some of our collaborations are necessarily limited to the countries of the European Union but the full range of our connections go beyond those countries and when considering our strategy for engagement in Europe it is appropriate to look as widely as possible for potential partners.

Goals for engagement in Europe:

Raise UBC's status in Europe as a partner of choice for research collaboration, ensure that we have a full enough and strong enough network of partners to support that and maintain a strong program of student mobility and recruitment in Europe.

Increase funding available to support collaborative research with European partners by gaining access to substantial funding from European programs support research and mobility of researchers and explore further sources of funding available from national governments in Europe with a view to establishing one substantial new partnership to support research on the scale of the existing Max Plank Centre

Strategies for engagement in Europe:

UBC has a strong level of expertise on Europe. Many of our faculty have links with European counterparts and have also received funding from European sources. We will establish an **Advisory Committee** to mobilize UBC's expertise on Europe.

We need to **review the current pattern of linkages in Europe** (including a survey of faculty engagement) and identify gaps and underrepresented regions or disciplines.

We need to **provide better information** to researchers wishing to engage in Europe about partnership and sources of funding that can support their endeavours.

Student mobility with European partners is strong but we have not fully exploited **the potential of mobility to support research collaboration**. The graduate student mobility program started two years ago to promote this has had some success and this could be built on in future. UBC's new policy to allow joint PhD supervision should be actively promoted to prospective candidates and partner institutions in Europe. We might also consider offering more incentives for students to pursue jointly supervised PhDs or undertake research placements at a European university or research institute.

Increase our connections with national governments with a view to sourcing funding for research collaboration and mobility of researchers – our two most successful examples of research collaboration with European partners are, after all, products of national, rather than European Union engagement.

Step up UBC's connections and influence with EU and other multi-level institutions (eg the Council of Europe). This could be done by making more use of the Canadian mission to the EU or working with Brussels-based partners such as the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). We might also consider whether a decided UBC presence on the ground – in Brussels or elsewhere



in Europe - would bring value. Increasing contacts between UBC's senior executive with senior European officials and engaging more of our faculty in peer reviews for EU programs are two direct ways of building a stronger profile for UBC in Europe. We should consider lobbying both EU and Canadian authorities to establish funding mechanisms for joint European-Canadian activities, e.g., by Canada obtaining status as an Associated Country for the purposes of EU programs.

VII. What About the Rest of the World?

This is the question the jumps to everyone's mind at this point. A focus on three areas does not begin to cover the range of current engagement, nor the range of aspirations, by current faculty and students at UBC. The two most important examples in this regard are the United States and Africa.

Let's take the United States first. It is our largest research partner, the source of substantial research funding, the location of many significant interactions, and the home of a great number of international students. We want all of that activity to continue to flourish. But these relationships are currently in good health. Over the next three to five years, we do not see a pressing need to make game-changing moves with regard to the United States. Indeed, this is a good example of how the time frame and the areas of regional focus might interact: we aspire to be in a position five years from now where our relationship with China might be re-invigorated so that it could assume a similar position.

As for Africa, it is a vital area of interest for many students and a growing number of faculty members. We recognize energy on both of our campuses for engagement with Africa at the present. But our current engagement with the many regions of Africa is not yet "at the starting block" so to speak. Over the next three to five years, we aim to build our understanding of Africa so that we can consider whether we ought to make it a focus of the subsequent plan. To that end our goals with regard to Africa are:

- To set up an Africa focus committee to identify where current strengths and linkages lie at UBC
- To increase the number of entrance awards for international students from Africa
- To double the number of students engaged in international service learning in Africa
- To double the number of research graduate students from Africa
- To investigate the feasibility of Masters' program in international development
- To complete a study of potential partner universities in Africa

UBC does have a wealth of scholars in health disciplines, engineering, sciences, law, economics, international relations and elsewhere who are working on projects related to Africa. These are the areas poised for growth in the medium term.



VIII. The Purpose of this Plan

This plan will guide international engagement activities at UBC. It aims to identify things that can be achieved within the next three to five years and sets out measurable goals and specific strategies. International engagement spans both our campuses and includes every Faculty, College and Institute. This plan indicates a broad strategic framework that will advance UBC's international engagement, but it does not seek to specify partners or activities or research projects on which to engage. It promotes information sharing, networking and transparency within UBC. It pays particular attention to those areas in which central resources can make a difference, while recognizing that the most vital international connections are made and sustained at the level of individuals and small groups: researchers, faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

International engagement is essential to any university in the twenty-first century. For a major, research-intensive university such as UBC, international engagement is both a measure of, and means to, success. But international engagement must go further than that. It must demonstrate an ethics and a politics that reflect the core values of the university. This means, for example, that our commitment to academic freedom must, in the international realm, guide our engagement with partners in countries with regimes or governments that may not share Canadian democratic commitments. This means that individual scholars make their own decisions about which states to engage with or to critique. A university is uniquely placed to build connections that states may find politically unpalatable.

Our commitment to valuing and sharing knowledge means that UBC is inherently committed to capacity building and public interest around the globe. This means that the university has a role in international development, including a role in analyzing and understanding that development is complex and carries with it the imprint of inequality. It means that UBC's work in less prosperous states is about learning as much as it is about sharing knowledge. It means that our international engagement cannot always be about 'us'. Underpinned by mutual respect, and our commitment to be a global citizen and to educate global citizens, international engagement means striving to make a contribution in the world without falling into the traps of hubris and self importance. This plan also has strong connections and overlaps with the research strategic plan, the aboriginal strategic plan, the intercultural understanding plan, the sustainability plan, and the transformative learning agenda.

This plan has connections to the research strategic plan, the aboriginal strategic plan, the intercultural understanding plan, the sustainability plan, and student learning commitments. These strategic overlaps need to be identified and explored as part of a collaborative exercise by the units concerned.