

# UBC

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# International Strategic Plan



a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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The international strategic plan was published in March 2011 by the Office of the Vice President Research & International, following broad consultation with the UBC community and external stakeholders. The strategic plan is available in electronic form and is updated as opportunities, needs and directions arise.

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Inquiries may be directed to:

Office of the Vice President Research & International  
Room 111  
Old Administration Building  
6328 Memorial Road, Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z2 Canada  
Phone: +1-604-822-3114  
Email: [UBCinternational@ubc.ca](mailto:UBCinternational@ubc.ca)

# INTRODUCTION

“UBC is known by name around the world.”

*Place and Promise: the UBC Plan* begins with a vision of UBC as a globally significant university, known throughout the world for its excellence in research, teaching and learning, and its high level of engagement with communities everywhere. To bring this vision to fruition, *Place and Promise* provides a strategy that reflects the important role of international engagement in advancing the University’s goals and commitments.

In looking at the current state of UBC’s engagement, it is clear that there is hardly any aspect of UBC that does not have an international dimension. It is built into the teaching agenda, as students have ever-increasing opportunities to experience the world through their studies. It supports research excellence, as UBC researchers collaborate with partners all around the world. It builds a diverse community, as international students from more than 150 countries come to UBC for their studies, bringing global perspective and culture to the UBC campus. Through these many activities, partnerships and links, UBC helps to create true global citizens, leaders who will address the challenges facing humanity now and in the future.

The vision of *Place and Promise* – to gain a central place for UBC on the world stage – can be achieved only through the efforts of all members of the UBC community. International activities, partnerships and

## Highlights of the International Strategic Plan

- Aim to lead 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 the number of international graduate students seeking degrees at UBC
- Aim to establish significant new strategic research partnerships

collaborations have been underway at UBC for many years, and every year UBC expands its reach. The international strategic plan has been created to focus these activities and to unite their purpose with the larger goals of the University.

The plan provides guidelines for UBC's international engagement for the next three to five years. It identifies geographic areas of key focus: China, India and Europe. It contains specific goals that can be achieved by many different groups across the campus. While the plan does not seek to limit activity, it does provide direction: clearly, it would not be strategic to engage simultaneously with every region on every level. UBC seeks to form partnerships that are strategic and substantial; to develop our existing links and gain the full benefits of ongoing relationships and expertise; and to seek out new partnerships in which the benefits flow both ways.

True global influence is achieved on a foundation of international engagement. In pursuing the strategy articulated in the international plan, we can help to move the University closer to its larger goals. The international plan will always be subject to the changing forces that shape our world; therefore, it is envisaged as a living document, open to modification and presented electronically.



John W. Hepburn, PhD, FRSC  
Vice President Research & International

# BUILDING INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AT UBC

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: how the University should expand its global reach and strengthen its international partnerships.

## Why a focus on international engagement?

To be a globally significant university, UBC must demonstrate that it is at the centre of research and teaching on the major issues facing humanity. True global influence must be built over time on a foundation of 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, educating students from around the world, and promoting intercultural understanding within our communities.

The University is already deeply engaged internationally in many different ways. UBC faculty members and researchers may be area specialists with advanced knowledge of clearly defined regions, or they may partner with colleagues at other universities to advance their work in a research domain that knows no geographical boundaries.

## Why a focus on international engagement? (con't)

There is a strong international presence at UBC: there are students from more than 150 countries pursuing degrees on the UBC Vancouver campus, and students from 65 countries pursuing degrees on UBC's Okanagan campus. This multicultural student population reflects UBC's diverse local community; British Columbia is home to significant populations with roots elsewhere in the world. For more than twenty years, UBC has been building strong academic ties with universities around the world. Since then, we have broadened our global reach, building on a foundation of strong research collaboration, active student mobility and internationally relevant student learning.

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

## Why have an international strategic 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.

While the plan offers strategic direction, it is not intended to impose limits on the international engagement that is ongoing at UBC. Researchers, students, faculty and staff across the University are already working with partners all over the world, and it is not a goal of the plan to limit support for this activity. Instead, the plan provides guiding principles to achieve specific goals during the three- to five-year time frame of the plan.

Fulfillment of the plan will improve the flow and availability of information about UBC's international engagement and help people to form effective links.

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 integrate a statement of ethics into partnership protocols.*

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's Okanagan campus. Collaborative partnerships also follow a different pattern at UBC Vancouver as compared to UBC's Okanagan campus.

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's Okanagan campus, as a new campus and one with a distinct vision and mission within UBC as a whole, is starting from quite a different position in terms of an international strategic plan. Geographic focus, bilateral relationships and specific priorities all need to be designed to maximize opportunities for that campus. Thus UBC's Okanagan campus may well choose to follow some of the recommendations set out for UBC Vancouver, but will be developing its own planning process and priorities to implement over 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.

## 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.

## Strategic Partnerships (con't)

Diversity is a critical factor in achieving a balanced set of partnerships. UBC aims to create relationships with the world's leading research universities and research institutes; we also partner with organizations that are at an earlier stage of development. Ideally, our partners will reflect a wide range of research subjects, geographical locations, languages and cultures. UBC partners with institutions in countries that are part of the developing world, and countries that are led by governments substantially different than our own.

### **We have five aims in the area of partnerships:**

1. Improve communication about existing partnerships;
2. Develop a clear and accessible information source that shows the pattern of UBC's international linkages around the world;
3. Provide better information to faculty on how to initiate, formalize and manage international partnerships;
4. Experiment with developing short-term, issues-based partnerships, for example in the area of sustainability research; and
5. 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 the 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 international service learning programs or industry for co-op placements or internships) 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 that 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 engage with governments around the world in connection with scholarships for students coming to UBC and there are also examples of sharing best practices. UBC's research group on early childhood development – the Human Early Learning Partnership – is working with the Shanghai family health commission to develop better systems to track child development in Shanghai.

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.

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, student mobility and joint academic programs. The Simon K.Y. Lee HKU-UBC House, Global Lounge and Resource Centre, a student residence and international collegium, is now open on the UBC campus.

Another recent example is the partnership formed in 2010 with the Max Planck Society in Germany to 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 hundreds of international links. It has about 300 formal institutional agreements and memoranda of understanding, as well as many more informal links. Some of these are more active than others. 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.

## Strategic Partnerships (con't)

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)<sup>1</sup>. 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 research conferences and summer schools, which bring together students from across the network. There are costs associated with participation, both financial and staff resources, and so activities undertaken through the network should be evaluated on their own merits.

While these networks bring benefits to UBC's international engagement, we should not let either network drive our engagement into areas that do not match our strategic interests. There are also other international networks that might be kept in mind as useful for engagement.

There are international partnerships that we form in collaboration with partners in British Columbia or elsewhere in Canada. It is important to maintain provincial and 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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, Tecnologico 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.

## 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.

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 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. Better coordination of research interests and the international links of researchers can help to access funding for international research collaboration. UBC has potential to attract more funding for research from sources outside of Canada, such as the World Health Organization, and we might also do better from Canadian sources such as IDRC, which funds international collaboration.

## International Strategy and Research (con't)

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

1. Work with Canadian and foreign governments, national and international funding bodies, philanthropists and foundations to identify funding and other support for UBC's international collaborations for research and student learning;
2. Make it easier for researchers to connect to their counterparts in other countries through virtual means by improving access to technology across both campuses;
3. Enable connections to be built on existing linkages by providing better information about current partnerships; and
4. Increase opportunities for graduate students to forge professional partnerships outside of Canada through increased funding support.

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. There are already active linkages between UBC's 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.

## International Strategy and Students

Students occupy a special place in UBC's international engagement. UBC students, domestic and international, 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 help students to connect to other cultures and languages simply by offering a supportive environment in which to meet, study, live and learn with people from other places. This is the work of educators both in and out of the classroom who engage students in meaningful dialogue, and support the development of robust peer networks.

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. Ensure the availability of funding for international mobility programs from a variety of sources;
2. 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;
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;
5. Make a significant increase in the number of international graduate students; and
6. Build support systems to ensure that all international students have a rich learning and cultural experience during their time at UBC.

UBC offers a wide range of options for students to gain international experience during their studies. Our dedicated student mobility office, Go Global, works with academic departments to offer 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. Several faculties also offer co-op placements abroad. 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's Okanagan campus. About 14% of undergraduates at UBC

## International Strategy and Students (con't)

— Vancouver and 22% of undergraduates at UBC's Okanagan campus 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.

Opportunities to engage in home-based international experiences are increasing at UBC. For example, the International Peer Program offers social and academic support to international undergraduate students who are new to UBC and Canada. The student leaders who run the program at UBC also benefit, building valuable, internationally relevant new skills.

Internationalizing the UBC curriculum may be beyond the scope of the time frame of this plan. However, incentives for collaborative teaching or curriculum innovations could be introduced as an important step.

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. They need to travel outside Canada to conduct field research or work in partnership with another research group.

UBC has arrangements in place for joint supervision of Ph.D.s – sometimes known as “cotutelle”. This provides a significant opportunity for graduate students to work in an international partner university.



### **Challenges and strategies:**

With an enrollment target of 30,000 full-time domestic undergraduate students, we currently have 3,600 international students. The goal is to raise this number so that 15% of UBC's undergraduate student body is international. Currently, UBC Vancouver has a higher proportion of international students than at UBC's Okanagan campus, but the rate at UBC's Okanagan campus is growing rapidly, and the 15% target applies to each campus.

UBC aims to maintain high quality standards for graduate students and also 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.

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.

International graduate students seeking degrees at UBC have complex needs and specific challenges, including issues of cultural difference, language proficiency, new academic norms and expectations. Support and resources that are truly accessible to all international students – keeping in mind the intersection of ethnicity, gender, age, language proficiency and culture – must be established in a highly integrated and coordinated way throughout the campus. We must think and act strategically at the systems level. Faculty and staff may require support to interact with international students in a manner that contributes to the goals of *Place and Promise*.

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.

Increasing 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

## International Strategy and Students (con't)

— of international perspectives during their course of study, is also an important way of increasing student participation in international activities.

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, along with other strategies to support international activities by students.

Language issues are also relevant to UBC's capacity to cater to the needs of international students, who come from diverse backgrounds. Some of these students encounter challenges with the appropriate use of English in an academic environment. All students admitted to UBC from non-English speaking environments have to prove their proficiency, so this is not a simple matter of level of English. A better system for diagnosing and addressing the specific language challenges of students needs to be put in place.

## International Strategy and UBC Alumni

— UBC has thousands of alumni living outside of Canada and this is only going to increase as we step up recruitment of students from around the world and encourage all of our students to engage internationally. Alumni are an essential resource for our international engagement, opening doors to international opportunities, supporting students and giving to causes that promote our international engagement. We need to communicate more effectively with our alumni outside of Canada so that they are aware of UBC's international engagement and plans. Developing an international case for support as a companion document to this strategy would be an effective way of ensuring this.

## International Strategy and UBC Staff

— To ensure that UBC has professional staff capable of supporting its international engagement, UBC staff members at all levels need access to international opportunities. For example, by attending training and conferences outside Canada, staff members gain opportunities to network, exchange best practice with their international counterparts and maintain their professional skills.

There are existing opportunities for staff activity at the international level, for example the Leave for Change program; and individual units do support international travel for staff to support research or development activities. UBC's Intercultural Understanding initiative encourages cultural diversity, dialogue, and debate and promotes effective intercultural professional development through learning programs for faculty and staff.

It is important for staff to be aware of these opportunities and the value they bring to the work experience at UBC.

## AREAS OF GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



This plan deliberately sets limits in order to focus on achieving concrete outcomes. International engagement at UBC literally knows no bounds and we need to set a framework for our objectives. The three-to-five-year timeframe of the plan is one way of creating a focus. Geographical concentration is another way. While in no way excluding other areas of the world, UBC will have three areas of geographic focus for strategic engagement over the next three to five years: China, India and Europe.

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.

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 a 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 much lower. Although the starting points in China and India are different, both regions represent significant 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. 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 Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at UBC has a mobility program for faculty with the Collège de France that could be expanded. We need to respond actively to this trend in order to strengthen our own research collaborations. We could also explore opportunities for joint partnerships between UBC, an institution in an EU country, and a third partner in China or India. Student mobility with European partners is already well developed but could be increased to strengthen research partnerships in particular.

## China

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### **Challenges and opportunities:**

Connections with China were at the origin of UBC's international engagement (an early international linkage was with Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 1988). We have significant expertise in China and many important connections, but we lack coherence in our endeavours, 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 (a survey of faculty members across all disciplines with a professional or academic connection to six Asian regions, including China and India) 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 many significant books, including one priceless Yuan edition and nearly 200 rare Ming editions. Researchers from around the world come to UBC to study at the Asian Library.

Chinese students are a strong presence in our student body, there are currently 1,439 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 more than 2,000 registrations. The program caters to both traditional and heritage learners and offers multiple levels of instruction.

Recruitment of Chinese graduate students is strong. This is supported by our links with the China Scholarship Council (CSC)<sup>2</sup>. UBC has signed special agreements with six leading Chinese 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 numerous formal and informal linkages with universities in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Many of these linkages are strong and active but some 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 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.

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

### **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 a wider range of disciplines, and maintaining strong levels 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 and student mobility partnerships with Chinese universities. Although we have an active student mobility program in China, we have not reached our potential and should aim to increase the mobility of our students in both directions. Several partners are prepared to offer these programs which create alternate pathways for our students to go to China - for example, undergraduate research placements and discipline focused group study programs that 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 MITACS<sup>3</sup> 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.

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<sup>3</sup> MITACS is a federally and provincially funded research network that is hosted by UBC.

**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. At the undergraduate level, we need to continue to position UBC as a university of choice for outstanding students from strong middle schools and the growing number of international and International Baccalaureate schools.

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.

## India

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### **Challenges and opportunities:**

Compared with many other areas of international engagement, UBC has few formal connections in India.

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, UBC has a great number of informal relationships and natural points of convergence: English is the main language of instruction in India, and Vancouver has a

## India (con't)

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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 286 graduate and undergraduate students from India pursuing degrees at UBC, compared to 1,439 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 relatively early 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 Canada and internationally, especially in India, 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 spokesperson for Canadian universities engagement in India in our position as a national leader.

India is a vast and complex country, with cultural, religious and business nuances that affect UBC's engagement there. India is also full of opportunities, not all of them apparent at first glance. To realize these opportunities, UBC should **seek advice from local experts** by creating an India Advisory Committee composed of leaders from academia, local community, private sector and government. 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.

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. A physical presence for UBC in India would help further our objectives for engagement. Options for this include an office in India or a joint research institute based in India in partnership with other Canadian entities, for example MITACS. Investment in India is costly and establishing physical presence would represent a significant allocation of resources. Such a presence will 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 aforementioned census conducted by the Institute of

Asian Research 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 Indian 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 Indian 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, for example, through 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 more than double the number of Indian students at UBC**. Not only do Indian students represent a huge pool of talent, we need to build links through establishing an alumni base in India. There are about 200,000 Indian students going abroad to study in university. The vast majority attend Australian or US institutions. 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 English language proficiency 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 ways to build mutually beneficial relationships with Indian senior secondary schools to provide opportunities for professional development and for their faculty and administrators, which brings direct benefits to Indian 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 the Vancouver campus. This program could be broadened to include the social sciences and humanities and work in partnership with Go Global and academic departments at UBC to provide opportunities to 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, research institutes, 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 or exchange students, visiting researchers or research students, visiting scholars, or visiting faculty. We might also leverage Globalink alumni to increase awareness of UBC in India.

## Europe

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### **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. 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, UBC is a founding member of PIMS (the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences), which is a Unité Mixte Internationale of the French Centre National de la Recherche

## Europe (con't)

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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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

Some of our collaborations are necessarily limited to the countries of the European Union (because some funding programs are open only to those countries) 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. This might be achieved by gaining access to substantial funding from European programs to support research and mobility of researchers. Further resources of funding may also be available from national governments in Europe.
- Establish one substantial new partnership to support research on the scale of the Max Planck - UBC 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.

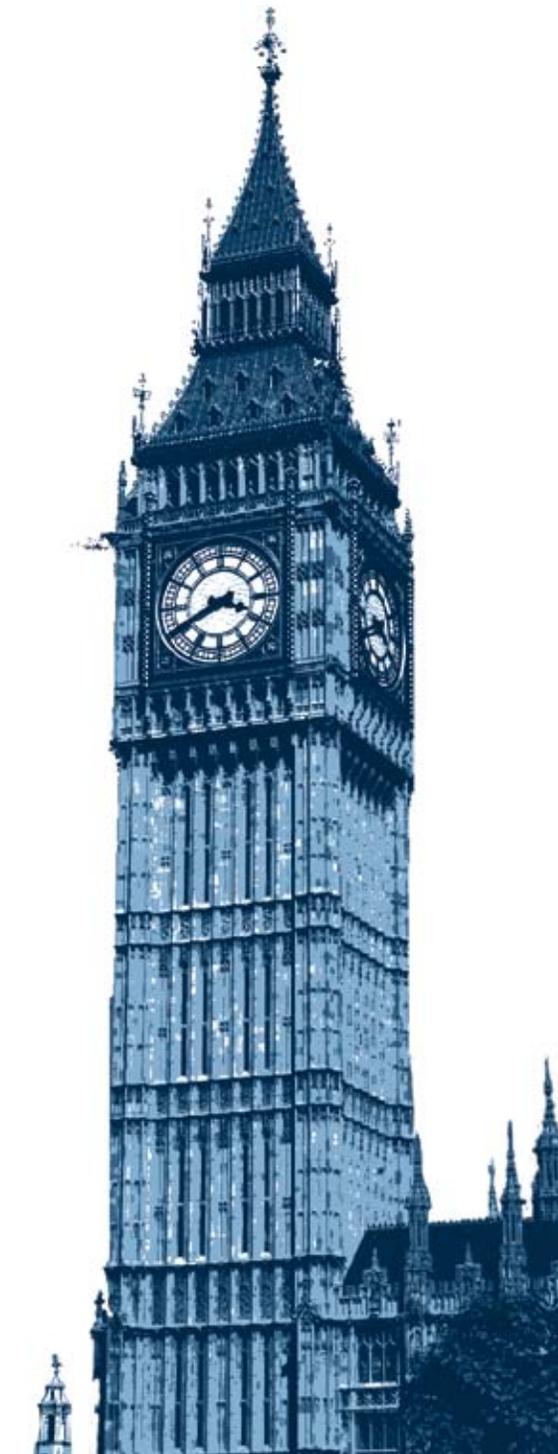
We need to **review the current pattern of linkages in Europe** (including a survey of faculty engagement) and identify gaps and underrepresented regions or disciplines.

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 award was started two years ago to promote this. It has had some success and could be built on in the future. This focus on research student mobility has opened up new partnerships for UBC, for example with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. 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** (e.g. 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.



## What About the Rest of the World?

This is the question that 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:**

1. To set up an Africa focus committee and commission a survey to identify where current strengths and linkages lie at UBC;
2. To increase the number of entrance awards for international students from Africa;
3. To double the number of students engaged in international service learning in Africa;
4. To double the number of research graduate students from Africa;
5. To investigate the feasibility of a Masters' program in international development; and
6. 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.

## 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 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.

The international strategic plan has strong connections to the research strategic plan, the aboriginal strategic plan, the intercultural understanding plan, the sustainability plan, and student learning commitments.

## APPENDIX A: ACTION MATRIX

<b>Year One</b>	• Set up advisory committees on India and China
	• Set objectives and secure funding for a “China Forum” at UBC
	• Set objectives and secure funding for a UBC office in India
	• Create accessible communication service for UBC international activities
	• Launch task force on “International Graduate Student Experience”
	• With MITACS and China Scholarship Council, launch Globalink program to bring Chinese undergraduate students to UBC for research internships
	• Increase the number of UBC researchers registered as peer reviewers for European Union research programs by 20%
	• Complete survey of UBC activities in Africa and publish report
	• Produce a statement of ethics for international engagement
<b>Year Two</b>	• Launch China Forum
	• Open India office
	• Set up an advisory committee on Europe
	• Begin review of European linkages
	• Implement recommendations of task force on “International Graduate Student Experience”
	• Set target for international graduate student recruitment
	• Work with MITACS and Go Global to expand pilot program for undergraduate research internships with Chinese and other international partners
	• Launch task force on “Undergraduate Student Mobility and Curriculum”
	• Write an “International Case for Support” to attract funding for international projects
<b>Year Three</b>	• Launch “Campus Technology Audit”
	• Review issues pertaining to Foreign Language Learning and English Language Learning at UBC and make recommendations
	• Complete study of potential partner universities in Africa
	• Begin consultation on UBC representation in Europe
	• Announce new strategic partnerships
	• Implement recommendations of task force on “Undergraduate Student Mobility and Curriculum”
	• Start next cycle of international strategic planning



**a place of mind**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA