

A Map and a Mission

UBC Strategic Plan

A university is many things to many people. It can be a place to learn, a place to do research, a place to partner with communities, a place to work, and even a place to live. But can a university be everything to everybody? In our current environment of constant challenge and change, this is precisely the sort of question being asked during the development of UBC's next Strategic Plan.

UBC is fortunate to be starting this plan from an enviable position of strength. With an outstanding teaching and research faculty, award-winning students and alumni, academic and industrial partnerships around the world, and a strong international reputation UBC is in a formidable position. However, the university also exists in an extremely competitive academic environment, an uncertain economic climate, and a changing social and demographic landscape. UBC can't stand still, but neither can it charge ahead without knowing where it's going.

That's why a strategic plan is being prepared to guide our institution through the next decade of academic, demographic, economic and social change. It is an enormous undertaking that requires the resources of all constituents from students, faculty and staff to alumni and the surrounding communities of interest. The intent is to provide an operational road map that will speak in terms of both relevance and consequence. It is meant to be a plan that will see us maintain and increase UBC's influence nationally and around the world.

Past strategic plans have served us well as aspirational documents. UBC is fortunate to have had Trek 2000 and 2010 to build upon. In the past two decades UBC has redefined itself from a regional player to a globally influential institution consistently recognized as one of the world's top universities. UBC now has an obligation to build upon the success of that past, look to the future and determine a plan of action to get there.

Some of us will be extremely familiar with strategic planning; others may not know where to begin. As in all planning endeavors, interactive communication is key. To engage as many participants as possible, a *Question of the Week* will be posted on the UBC website (www.strategicplan.ubc.ca) for your response. This is your opportunity to provide feedback and comments that will help the strategic planning steering committee create opportunities for the widest possible consultation. As part of the strategic planning process, the vision and mission statements from the Trek plans will be reviewed; we'll continue to identify key directions and strategies; we'll recognize clear priorities and determine key areas where UBC is poised to make globally influential contributions.

But then what? The intention is for this strategic plan to be fully integrated with UBC's academic plan, in order to maximize its relevance. With a limited number of resources available, we will certainly have to make choices. Some will be easy and obvious, while others may be more difficult. As social commentator Eric Hoffer so aptly noted, "...in times of profound change, the learners will inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." As obsolescence is not what we're striving to attain, doing nothing is not an option.

So, in order to ask the tough questions, UBC had better be ready to listen to the answers. We need to hear from you. Please look for and respond to the *Question of the Week* on our website. This is an opportunity to make a difference. Now is your chance to contribute to the dialogue. I'm listening.