

Installation speech
President Santa Jeremy Ono
University of British Columbia
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Good Morning and welcome to the University of
British Columbia

I wish to acknowledge the location of UBC's two main campuses on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people and the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation Alliance. We acknowledge not only the history of these communities, but the importance of our present and future relationships, and will work to be sure they remain strong and vital.

Chancellor Lindsay Gordon, Chairman Stuart Belkin and members of the Board of Governors, It is a distinct honour that you have chosen me to serve as the 15th President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of British Columbia. Thank you for

granting me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

I'm especially honoured by the presence of government officials and official representatives from 22 universities. I am invigorated by the many UBC faculty, staff and students who are in our presence. I have agreed to serve UBC because of you and I look forward to our years together in this remarkable community of scholars.

And I am of course honoured by the presence of my family and friends who have in many cases traveled long distances to be with me today. In particular I would like to thank my wife Wendy and my daughters Juliana and Sarah for accompanying me to Vancouver, Wendy's mother Alice Chan-Yip for always being there for us, my amazing brothers Momoro Ono (Professor of Piano at Creighton University) and Ken Ono (Professor of Mathematics at Emory University) for inspiring me with their extraordinary talent and accomplishments and especially my parents: Professor Takashi Ono (a former member of the UBC faculty) and my mother

Sachiko Ono for bringing me into this world exactly 54 years ago tomorrow - right here in Vancouver - and for all they have done to support me over the years. Thanks mom and dad!

I am especially touched that this Installation Ceremony is taking place in this magnificent Chan Centre for the Performing Arts; an iconic Bing Thom-designed architectural and acoustic masterpiece shaped like my beloved cello and site of UBC's Convocation Ceremonies. How fitting and special it was to hear my friend Miguel Roig-Francoli's rendition of Oh Canada! played by 14 cellos. Each cello represents one of Canada's 10 provinces, 3 Territories and our First Nations.

And let me say from the outset that I am humbled to follow 13 previous presidents of this university who have faithfully and diligently built upon the work of their predecessor to make UBC the stunning institution that it is today. I also acknowledge the work of previous Chancellors and Chairpersons of the Board of Governors who have worked in

partnership with those presidents to move the University forward. Will the former presidents, Chancellors and Board Chairs in our midst today please stand? Let's thank all of these men and women with a round of applause.

Now, although I have been hard at work for three months, I think it's important for me - on this installation day - to articulate to you what I hope to accomplish during my tenure as your president. Fundamentally, I reiterate my promise to you, when I was first introduced to the community, that I shall do everything in my power to move the University of British Columbia - already one of the world's great universities - from excellence to eminence.

Some of you will remember that I promised then to first listen to the members of the UBC community to learn more about this great institution, its ethos and its hopes and dreams. And since that day, I have enjoyed speaking with scores of faculty, staff and students and I'm constantly amazed by their intellect, passion and love for the University. I have

also had the privilege of speaking to over a thousand alumni of the University. Via those conversations, I have learned a great deal about the evolution of this great institution and the accomplishments of over 317,000 living graduates of UBC.

The graduates of UBC excel in practically every field of human endeavor. Three graduates have served as Prime Minister of Canada - including the incumbent Justin Trudeau. Seven members of the UBC faculty have won the Nobel prize. Well over 200 current members of the faculty are members of academies such as the Royal Society, Royal Society of Canada, the US National Academies and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. 70 graduates have been awarded the Rhodes Scholarship and 65 graduates have won an Olympic medal.

The University now spans two magnificent campuses in Vancouver and the Okanagan sprawling over more than 1,500 acres. Part of the health sciences campus surrounds the Vancouver

General Hospital, and a downtown location sits at Robson Square. Not only are the campuses breathtaking in their settings; they house some of the most advanced facilities for modern research in the world. \$600 million in funding flows through the university on an annual basis, cementing UBC's position as a global research centre. UBC is home to TRIUMF, Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics and our Quantum Matter Institute. And UBC is also home to cutting edge laboratories in the basic, applied and biomedical sciences. Site directed mutagenesis (the ability to alter genes, and a pillar of biotechnology) was invented here and UBC is at the frontier of research on cancer genomics and personalized medicine. UBC clinician/scientists are leading the global effort to eradicate AIDS. Our applied scientists and computer scientists have helped usher in some of the latest technologies available to humankind. Our work in sustainability and land use is at the very forefront and our scholarship in the humanities and social sciences and the liberal and performing arts is stunning in its breadth and depth. Scores of our

departments are considered among the very best in the world. Clearly, UBC is already an excellent institution.

But where do we go from here? What might the future hold as we begin our second century of existence? Well first, let us acknowledge the miracle of this institution's first 100 years. Very few institutions can claim to have joined the ranks of the world's top 25 to 30 universities in just one century. Most of the other universities of this rank are two, three, four even eight centuries old. Just 50 years ago, UBC was a strong regional university. It's medical school was still very new and occupied a small single-story building on this campus. Five decades later, the university has been transformed into a global centre of research with many of our faculty members working at the penetrating cutting edge of knowledge creation.

If one looks at recent history, one can see a clear impact of President Martha Piper in elevating UBC's status as a major research university. During

Stephen Toope's tenure, one can see clearly that he enhanced the student experience, helped position UBC as a leader in the development of new ways of teaching and helped build our standing as a global university.

Beginning this chapter of the university's history, we have begun the strategic planning process that will serve as our road map for UBC's Second Century. Hundreds of submissions from faculty, staff, students and alumni have already been received from a call to engage earlier this summer. Two full day retreats involving the Executive Committee and the Deans have taken place and a website portal capturing the strategic plans for all 14 faculties and all future input will be launched shortly. This will be followed by a comprehensive strategic planning process to identify enterprise-wide priorities for the university. Specific action steps and a multi-year financial plan will be developed to guide the implementation of our new strategic plan. There will be multiple opportunities for input and feedback as we develop the plan. All of this will be captured in

our dedicated website.

Let me share with you some of the values and themes that have already come through at this early stage. First, it is clear that this university wishes to focus even more intently on education and research as its core priorities. Throughout the institution everyone is united in elevating the university's standing in these two areas so as to count ourselves among the very best in the world.

With respect to teaching, we want to expand our global leadership role in innovating new ways of teaching. At UBC we do not see education as a credential or commodity. It is the transformation that occurs within our students that allows them to think critically and creatively. And we are committed to teaching values, as we realize that (as Aristotle said) "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."

We will also work to ensure that the curricula we offer in all of our many programs is responsive to the

concerns of Indigenous people, offers depth and full consideration of issues of importance, and that an understanding of Indigenous history—and a full and accurate understanding of Canadian history—is part of the education of all students, whatever their field of study. The development of the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at UBC is a major commitment in moving towards this goal. In short, UBC is committed to being a leader in truth and reconciliation.

And with respect to research, we will strengthen our existing areas of research excellence and invest in new and emerging areas of research and scholarship. This will require that we invest in our current faculty and recruit some of the best scholars in the world in the near future to UBC. There is no investment that is more critical to the university than our investment in the faculty. Our standing as a research university and our attractiveness as a destination for the best and brightest students all rest with the quality of our faculty.

We also recognize that past practices of university-lead research have at some points worked to the detriment of First Nations and other Indigenous communities, and we are committed to advancing and promoting research that is collaboratively developed and speaks clearly to community priorities.

UBC should always place as a priority basic and fundamental research and scholarship. We cannot sacrifice basic research or scholarship in the liberal arts by focussing all of our attention on applied science and technology. Scholarship in the liberal arts form the foundation of an educated human being and citizen and is the reservoir for future innovation. Divesting from such core activities within the academy is tantamount to mortgaging one's future for current day opportunities.

There is also clear sentiment across the institution that we can differentiate ourselves from other great universities by committing ourselves as an institution

to solving some of the grand challenges that face humanity: clean water, sustainable and renewable energy, chronic diseases and global food availability. We are already investing toward this end. Our new Public Scholars Initiative of the Graduate School supports a select group of our best graduate students to focus their thesis research on solving grand challenges. And our Liu Institute for Global Issues is already a major interdisciplinary centre focused on solving issues such as sustainability, social justice, conflict resolution and global warming.

But UBC can and shall do more. Research universities have unparalleled R&D teams. The solutions to the world's most vexing grand challenges reside within the academy. And UBC can establish itself as one of the world's leading universities in taking on these grand challenges head on. You see, we don't just want to be a great university, we want be a great university that does good.

There is also a common thread that UBC wishes to

be one of the world's most innovative universities. Currently we enjoy the designation by Reuters as Canada's most innovative university, ranking among the top 50 most innovative universities globally. But we aspire to do even better.

To accomplish this, I have already asked the Executive to look at what we do internally to support Innovation at UBC. And I have spoken with both national and provincial leaders indicating that we must critically assess the Canadian innovation ecosystem so that we can develop both provincial and national plans to build our innovation economy. Our BCTech strategy is already a major step toward this end and Ministers Duncan and Bains are already actively working to strengthen the innovation pipeline from basic research all the way to commercialization. Each of us must ensure that these initial steps lead to an integrated plan for innovation in Canada. In short, we envision a future UBC that is a catalyst for many more new technologies and spin off companies, with an even greater economic impact on Vancouver and

Kelowna. In so doing we will elevate Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and the world.

A third common theme involves our wish to enhance significantly the student experience for all of our students. We will continue to think about how to enhance the student experience both in and outside the classroom. The Science Education Initiative lead by Nobel Laureate Carl Wieman - our multi-year project aimed at dramatically improving undergraduate science education has lead the world in new ways of teaching science to undergraduates and has been emulated by other great universities such as Stanford and indeed by nations. We will continue to innovate how we teach in the classroom and by increasing the number of students involved in experiential learning. Depending on the student this might take the form of work integrated learning or Co-ops, research experiences or study abroad. Our data clearly show a correlation between student satisfaction and experiential learning. For that reason, moving forward, we must work to make such opportunities available to all of our students.

Finally, a fourth common theme that has emerged is a desire to enhance our connection within British Columbia and our standing as Canada's most international university. Within Vancouver and British Columbia we will develop plans for deeper engagement. We will build upon existing initiatives such as: 1) faculty, staff and students from various faculties serving in our Vancouver City Studios; working to make Vancouver a better place to live, work and play 2) our UBC School of Community and Regional Planning working directly with the Musqueam community in their strategic planning. And we will identify new opportunities to connect with and strengthen our communities. Here at UBC we understand that universities have a responsibility to forge strong connections with their communities. The modern day university cannot be an Ivory Tower. In the years ahead, you will see an even more engaged UBC with broader and deeper connections with our local community.

To strengthen our global standing, we will

re-structure our international programs and initiatives into a single office, identify a world class leader to oversee our global connections and develop a multi-year international engagement strategy. It has long been recognized that our geographical location on the Pacific Rim affords us a strategic advantage in developing substantive scholarly relationships with the growing number of major research universities in this region. Enhancing these relationships has already begun with institutions on the west coast of the United States - such as University of Washington, and will involve other PAC-12 universities as well as the major universities in Asia and Australia with which we already enjoy significant bilateral agreements.

In summary our next strategic plan: Excellence to Eminence will detail the steps UBC will take to become an even stronger university. We will set forth quantifiable stretch goals for each initiative and measure our progress on a regular basis. We will garner the necessary resources to fuel our plan and implement the plan over multiple years.

I want to end by articulating some common principles that aren't in most strategic plans, but that are fundamentally important. You see, the ultimate success or failure of institutions requires special ingredients beyond a strategy and resources. I have no doubt that we will have both of those essential ingredients.

Firstly, we must be true to the mission of research universities. Although universities such as UBC have become among the largest employers in the nation with multi-billion dollar budgets and even larger economic impact, universities are not businesses. Universities have a much more profound responsibility to society as we know it today. But perhaps more importantly, universities have a responsibility to future generations. Universities are the archives of the universe of knowledge upon which current day society has been built. Universities are the source of new ideas and values upon which future society will be built. Universities are the guardians of truth and culture. Universities

are incubators for future leaders. Universities are (and should forever be) venues for critical inquiry and debate where the values of future society will emerge. No institution will influence what the future world will look like more than the research university. And for these reasons we must ensure that universities like UBC retain the ability to fulfill each of these noble functions.

Second, let us all appreciate that what will ultimately determine whether UBC can move from excellence to eminence - into that stratosphere of the world's leading universities - is a common purpose involving all of us.

One of my predecessors as president of the University of Cincinnati, the celebrated expert on leadership theory and advisor to four US presidents - the late Warren Bennis - once said something to this effect "there is a myth that a university president has power and control over where the institution is headed. In actuality I sometimes feel like the groundskeepers have more control over what's

happening than I do.” And there is some truth to his statement.

In a large, decentralized organization such as a modern research university, no one person holds the keys to the organization. No powerful Dean, No Board Chair, no renowned professor, no enthusiastic AMS president, and certainly no President holds the keys on their own. The truth is that we all hold the keys - in trust - to preserve, strengthen and ultimately to leave the institution to the next generation a better place than it was left to us. The secret ingredient is our collective effort, an alignment within the organization; everyone rowing in the same direction.

And the good news is, I know that we can do it. The good news is that the secret ingredient already exists. It is most fundamentally embodied by our collective love for UBC. By coming together and embracing the diversity within the organization, by working to make our community a truly inclusive organization, by respecting the voices of our faculty,

staff and students we will become an even more remarkable institution.

UBC. You have honoured me greatly by calling upon me to serve as your President. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for bringing this Vancouver born boy back home. Working together let's really move this university, our collective home, from Excellence to Eminence. Let's set the stage to make UBC's second century even more magical than its first. UBC has done it in its first century. We can, We will, do it again. Ladies and Gentlemen. Tuum Est! It's up to us.

