

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Board of Governors

August 14, 2015

Mark Mac Lean, President
Faculty Association
112 - 1924 West Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2

Dear Mark,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Governors in response to some of the concerns that you and other faculty members have expressed about the announcement of Professor Gupta's resignation and the future of the university. Thank you for our call and for reaching out to other members of the Board. I thought it was helpful to share our perspectives and to reiterate our strong commitment to supporting this great university and the people who make it what it is.

The university's Board of Governors recognizes that, in the absence of concrete information, people are more likely to generate their own theories or speculations about the events leading up to Professor Gupta's resignation. We want to emphasize that the rumours or speculations that have been publicly raised have contained numerous inaccuracies. The Board views Professor Gupta's resignation as a regrettable development for the university. We understand that everyone would like a fuller explanation but must be respectful that the confidentiality arrangements were mutually entered into and both parties are bound by that arrangement. The University is a place of open dialogue and transparency however, as you know, in personnel matters we are bound by considerations of privacy and non-disclosure laws.

Your communication to the members of the Faculty Association states that Professor Gupta's resignation "represents a failure point in the governance of the University." As the body mandated with overseeing the welfare of the university, the Board acts in accordance with principles and protocols set out in the University Act and UBC policies. At no time in its discussions with Professor Gupta did the Board exceed its authority or act in any way prejudicial to the university's best interests. We want to assure you that Dr. Gupta's resignation does not represent a failure of governance. The Board acted responsibly and with every consideration for a fair outcome in having to deal with the significant and difficult issue of the resignation of Professor Gupta.

The Board of Governors comprises 21 individuals representing the breadth of the university community, including elected faculty, students, staff, and provincial government appointees who are appointed in consultation with the Governance Committee of the Board. Many of these members are UBC alumni. The Board also represents a diversity of gender and cultural identity. The diverse composition of the board engenders a wide range of views and opinions, thereby resulting in a healthy, strong and respectful governance model. The UBC Board of Governors strives to build a decision making process based on consensus and as such the full Board was engaged with the decision to accept Professor Gupta's resignation.

As discussed, we share the Faculty Association's view that the presidential search process must begin immediately and that considerable effort must be expended by those involved in the search and the Board of Governors to ensure that the chosen candidate will excel in this critical and challenging role for

the full term of office. The composition of the Presidential Search committee includes faculty members, students, staff and alumni – all of whom will be committed to appointing an outstanding person as president. As part of the search process we will ensure that each short-listed candidate has a deep commitment to the teaching and research mission of the university along with a full understanding of and ability to deal with UBC's complexities. We must ensure that the mandate of the President is clearly developed and that the broader university community be encouraged to contribute to this process. Moreover, this search will reflect the sound governance practices to which all Board members are committed.

To directly respond to your questions with respect to the Board's support of research and teaching, and collegial governance; speaking for all members of the Board, Professor Gupta's resignation has no bearing on the Board's continuing commitment to such issues and principles. It also deserves noting that the Board continues to be committed to enhancing resources in support of research and teaching, as well as ensuring we maintain excellent student services.

We want to reiterate, in the strongest possible terms, that the Board of Governors is committed to UBC's vision:

As one of the world's leading universities, The University of British Columbia creates an exceptional learning environment that fosters global citizenship, advances a civil and sustainable society, and supports outstanding research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada and the world

Like you, we strongly believe that the core mission of the university is excellence in research and teaching.

In view of the university vision, the Board felt it important to appoint an interim President clearly committed to this vision. In Dr. Martha Piper, the university will have an interim president under whose past tenure UBC realized a dramatic increase in research funding. Nationally, Dr. Piper was instrumental in establishing and strengthening the Canada Research Chairs program, the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

The letter raises questions about the future leadership of the university. In fact, searches are not in progress for a Provost and Vice-President Academic or a Vice-President Research and International. During the ten months of her appointment, Dr. Piper will not be hiring for these two positions, as we agree that these appointments, by their very nature, must be made by the new president. The search for a new Vice President Communications and External Relations will continue.

Finally, we are very pleased to know that you are committed to working with Professors Piper, Buszard and Redish and under the same model of trust and openness with which you were able to operate with Professor Gupta. We know that they welcome such a relationship going forward and anticipate building upon the collegial environment that you have so ably established through your forthrightness and leadership in representing the university faculty over the past year. For UBC to thrive, we believe this spirit of collegiality must be reflected in all our work, whether Board of Governors, Senates, Executive, Deans, faculty, students and staff.

People are at the heart of the institution - faculty and students are at the core of the institution who are supported by incredibly committed staff. UBC's upward trajectory will be driven by the contributions of our faculty excelling in their chosen fields and disciplines and our students' success. We value the relationship with our faculty and welcome working with you to continue to ensure UBC's pre-eminence.

The celebration of UBC's 100th anniversary allows us to look back at the incredible accomplishments the university community has made but, perhaps more importantly, encourages us to look forward – to look at what we can achieve in the coming 100 years. I believe that success can only be attained if we come together as a University community, and work collaboratively toward making the University of British Columbia an even better place for research and learning.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Governors,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JMT', is positioned above the name of the signatory.

John Montalbano, Chair

cc: UBC Vancouver Senate and UBC Okanagan Senate
UBC Alma Mater Society
UBC Graduate Student Society
UBC Students' Union Okanagan
UBC Alumni Association
Association of Administrative & Professional Staff
CUPE 116, 2278, 2950