

Thank you Michael (Lee).

Good afternoon.

I am delighted to be here to mark the Lunar New Year with all of you.

Although I am – still! - a newcomer to my current role at UBC, I have long been aware that our alumni and friends from the Asian community are quite likely the most engaged, informed and committed members of our university family.

The evidence on the Vancouver campus is overwhelming, as any newcomer can see. It's in the names of buildings,

research institutes, residences, graduate schools,
performing arts venues and scholarship endowments – the
examples are endless and amazing.

But I also feel that one of the most compelling
endorsements that UBC has received from our Asian alumni
and friends is the extent to which they – including some of
you here today – have entrusted the education of their
children and grandchildren to us.

As a father of three university-aged children, I cannot think
of a more meaningful symbol of trust and friendship.

And so I am quite sincere when I say that it is a joy and an honour to be here to meet with you, and to join you in celebrating the Lunar New Year.

And as Michael just mentioned, the year ahead is one of celebration, so allow me to share some wonderful news.

(Take it upbeat a notch)

As you may know, UBC is on track to succeed in one of the most transformative campaigns in Canadian university history.

With less than a year to go in the *Start an Evolution* campaign, as of January 1st 2015, \$1.462 billion has been

raised toward our \$1.5 billion goal. And, 47,716 UBC alumni are now actively engaged in the life of the university – well on track to exceed our elevated goal of 55,000 in this final year alone.

Not surprisingly, a significant part of the campaign success over the last year is the result of the vision and generosity of people that most of you know.

Last October saw the renaming of the Robert H. N. Ho *Family Foundation Chair and Program in Buddhism and Contemporary Society* as part of a global network of Buddhist learning that Mr. Ho's family has been building since 2005.

I am also pleased to inform you that Dr. Chan Gunn has made a very generous gift of five million dollars to support the construction of a building that will be home to the UBC Sport and Exercise Medicine Centre.

As a third example, Carol, Derek, Leslie and Graham Lee have made a \$1 million contribution to the new alumni centre that bears their father's name. In addition, Graham has made a \$750,000 contribution, which will be recognized through the naming of the Graham Lee Innovation Centre, the new home to entrepreneurship@UBC.

On that note, I am pleased to report that the Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre is progressing very quickly and will be ready

well in time for the official launch of our 100th anniversary celebrations in September.

Lastly on the subject of celebrations, I can tell you a lot of people at UBC are talking about the upcoming centennial and various plans around it. Naturally we'll be holding some special events at that time and I do hope that you will join us and take part.

But at the same time that we are celebrating how very far we have come, my hope is that we also use this celebration for a second purpose - as a platform to envision how far we can yet go.

In order to continue the journey, I have identified five strategic goals, the first of which is to strengthen UBC's commitment as a Place of Research Excellence.

And that means investing in our human capital, the people who discover, develop and deploy knowledge.

We will also enhance the undergraduate research experience, which can be seen as part of a second strategy to enrich UBC's capacity as a Place of Learning.

A third strategy is to invest in UBC as a Place of Innovation.

That means we will dovetail the learning and research

needs of society into that of UBC so that we support and promote innovation in the broader community.

That leads to the fourth strategy. I hope that you already recognize our commitment to UBC as an International Place.

No institution in Canada is more focused on the Pacific Rim or better connected throughout Asia.

That focus also guides our fifth strategy, to be a Place of Community Engagement. Please rest assured that community includes our alumni and friends both here and in Asia!

In the broadest of brush-strokes, these are the strategic goals I envision for the next phase of UBC's evolution. UBC is fortunate to have an engaged group of supporters and friends from around the world.

And it is your presence that underscores, more than anything else, my belief in UBC's potential to climb even higher than where we are today, and to join ranks with the world's most pre-eminent research universities.

And so I wish to use this opportunity to thank you and your families for intuitively understanding the inherent value of British Columbia being home to a world-leading university,

and for understanding the global imperative of wide-ranging learning and research.

I also want to thank you for the action you and your family members have taken over the years as advisors of UBC, as advocates, as builders, and for helping us to establish connectivity to an ever widening circle of friends and partners both here and in Asia.

I also have one formal request - (pause).

Please, stay with us.

Keep showing us different ways to think. Keep talking to us, keep guiding us, keep connecting us, and keep advocating for UBC within your spheres of influence.

With that in mind, I give you my sincere assurances that I will look forward to this luncheon every year, and for any other opportunity to share your wisdom and friendship.

Thank you, and my very best wishes for the New Year.