



Date: June 15, 2010 - 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.  
Location: Sage Bistro  
Attendance: Approximately 80

## Background

The March 26, 2010 Heads Up meeting recommended that this group continue to meet, but with an increased focus on networking and delving into university wide issues, sharing perspectives and ideas. This June meeting was the first of the new format.

### 1. Facilitating Pan University Ideas at UBC

**Background** – Organizations the size of UBC necessitate very formal structures, budgets and hierarchy which make developing and implementing new cross-institutional ideas a challenge. Often individuals or a small group of people are passionate about a concept, but the sheer challenge of getting buy-in, persuading budget holders, and establishing a practical governance structure can be overwhelming.

**Opportunity** – UBC is blessed with a wealth of passionate committed staff who deeply believe in the University's mission. By providing a forum for these committed staff and their innovative thinking we can build ownership of the changes necessary at UBC and encourage our leading lights to step forward. Ultimately this could model desired behavior in an enhanced culture of collaboration, and provide widespread benefit realized across the university.

**Role for Head's Up** – As a uniquely pan university group of thought leaders, Heads Up participants are uniquely positioned to provide valuable in-sight to passionate people to help them move their idea forward.

Heads Up broke into small group discussions around this concept of facilitating Pan University Ideas at UBC. Each group reported back and key points raised were:

- overall support for bringing such items to Heads Up
- like the networking aspect and felt this approach provides potential synergies due to the diversity of the group, breaking down silos, providing a 'horizontal' approach
- will leverage collective intellect and provide a 'creative serendipity'
- could also include social media aspects for communication
- provides a forum for exchange of best practices
- identification of topics/issues is important, stay on strategic issues
- items should be brought to Heads Up before a decision has been made so project owner receives feedback from this diverse group
- internal communications are a challenge at UBC and discussions are happening around this

**ACTION:** forward suggestions for topics, or suggestions on how we can better improve our internal communications, to [patricia.stevens@ubc.ca](mailto:patricia.stevens@ubc.ca)

### 2. Promoting Intercultural Understanding

Professor Toope spoke about intercultural understanding, that it was one of nine commitments in *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*. He further elaborated on the depth of the topic, before turning it over for small group discussion. Key points raised include:



- need for education for our communities to develop cross-cultural competencies
  - is our first year curriculum serving us or creating silos that carry through the student's experience here
  - embed into curriculum
  - do our faculty have the skill set to effect change in this area
  - need new forms of dialogues
  - individuals must take more responsibility in this area, be more self aware
  - can the student see (her)himself in the course content
  - who needs to make change (students, faculty) to reach cultural understanding
  - build mandatory training into performance reviews
- language is an integral part
  - what is the role of the university in language education
  - what standards should we set (both for students and faculty)
  - how does the university handle accents for instructors where English is their second language
  - should language learning be separate from cultural understanding
- use a diversity consultant when doing program development or curricular review
- do our administrative policies and priorities support cultural diversity; are there biases present
- do our structures support diversity, e.g. can a single parent attend an 8 am or evening meeting
- does UBC's population reflect our City? Are we as diverse as we think – consider Harvard who deliberately chooses students to provide a broad cultural base
- we want international students and want to treat them with respect, but in budget documents they are represented as a commodity
- belonging vs diversity – a sense of belonging can raise cultural intelligence
- involves many facets – gender, ethnicity, academic diversity – we need to clearly understand the definition of 'cultural diversity'
- ask students what they think
- what are the fundamental principles we want to see
- exchange best practices in this area with each other through various forums (note, may need other forums as there are few cross-faculty/department forums, e.g. a UBCpedia)
- how do we break down those silos between groups

**ACTION:** please take ideas raised back to your areas for further discussion and implementation