

**VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE  
Go Global with UBC:  
Make Your 'Local' University Your International  
Business Partner  
September 15, 2010—Hyatt Regency Hotel**

*[conversational ...]*

Thanks, Lindsay [*Gordon, HSBC*], and thank you all for this opportunity to be with you again. It's an honour and a pleasure. I've got this big topic of internationalism I want to talk about with you today, but my message actually isn't a complicated one, and in fact I'm going to start with a little story.

I stopped by the office of my Vice-President of Finance a few weeks ago, and as we were talking, I noticed a book on the desk behind him that caught my eye. Someone had obviously given it to him as a gift when he left his home in Europe and come to North America, or maybe when he left his position as VP Finance with Best Buy International to join our team at UBC. But that was early 2009, so I was surprised I hadn't noticed it before. What caught my eye was the type of book it was, the graphics on the cover, the

name of the author. This author, a doctor, didn't earn his PhD at UBC ... or anywhere, actually. You see ... it was Dr. Seuss.

The book is called, *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* You might know it. People give it to high school or university grads, or to someone who's just started a new job. Like *The Cat in the Hat*, or *Green Eggs and Ham*, it has colourful illustrations with wild characters, and of course everything rhymes. Seeing it reminded me of the times I had read it to my children. You know what, it's good! It's especially good because you can read it as a fun kids' story about a character who gets up to all kinds of adventures, *or*, as an adult, as a message about what to expect – good *and* bad – when you push yourself *way* out of your comfort zone.

I'm sure Pierre had no idea of 'the places he'd go,' when he left the private sector and found himself at the financial helm of an institution the size of a small city just as the worst global financial crisis in recent memory was gathering steam. He was suddenly in charge of Finance *and* Treasury *and* Land and Building Services *and* Campus and Community Planning ... and where he went—with a leap that his previous training and experience had only partly prepared him for—was “sustainability.” Economic, quickly

stabilizing and conserving in a way that many other post-secondary institutions were unable to do; environmental, so that now delegations from all over the world come to learn how it is that our greenhouse gas emissions will be zero by 2050; and social, where the campus and surrounding community are being transformed into a true university town that supports students, staff, faculty, and university and non-university residents alike.

I had no idea of ‘the places *I’d* go’ when I left the Trudeau Foundation for UBC. I’ve made nine trips to six different countries since January first.

That’s just *this* year, and the year’s not over yet! One of the key elements of my job is to nurture UBC’s 300-plus formal partnerships with institutions and organizations around the world, and to forge new ones. Our goal is a UBC that’s recognized around the world as a global hub for study, research, partnership, and dialogue on the key issues of the day, and although we still have a lot of work to do, I’m excited that in many countries, that is already the way we’re known.

I guess I’m just surprised by how *right* Dr. Seuss got it. When I think of Dr. Seuss, I think ‘familiar,’ I think ‘comforting,’ but I think ‘children.’ Not adults, not *me*. It’s easy to forget that he wrote over 60 books translated into

15 languages with over 200 million copies sold worldwide. His books have been millions of young people's first encounter with the ideas of environmentalism, anti-consumerism, racial equality, anti-fascism, and internationalism. Not kids' stuff at all.

There's a verse in the middle of *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* that I especially liked for today, where the way forward is suddenly not clear. It reads:

*You will come to a place where the streets are not marked.*

*Some windows are lighted. But mostly they're darked.*

*A place you could sprain both your elbow and chin!*

*Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?*

*How much can you lose? How much can you win?*

To go or not to go, that is the question. Or is it? My answer, my message today is a really simple one: We are all too interconnected now—you, and me, and the flood victims in Pakistan, the entrepreneurs in China, the HIV sufferers in Africa, and the financiers in New York—too interconnected, and too interdependent to pretend any longer that we can just stay home and mind our own business. It's no longer a question of whether you go international; it's a question of *when*. The marketplace—for everything—is global, and our competitors *and* our collaborators are everywhere. We *have*

to be international, all of us, large or small, in our thinking, in our strategies, and in our operations.

As a country, this is an area where we're lagging dangerously behind. The striving and the ambition, the innovation and the sense of urgency I see in places like India and China are not apparent here. We lack a national strategy, something the 'big five' universities are pushing for with both government and industry, and it needs to happen soon.

I spoke recently with *BC Business Magazine* editor Matt O'Grady, and he said that BC companies doing business overseas are the exception rather than the rule. He quoted a particularly eloquent senior trade commissioner as saying, "The biggest obstacle ... is getting small- to medium-sized ... companies to make that first tentative step .... If you want to be a global player you've got to get off your ass."

I'm not so sure it's a question of *wanting* to be a global player or not. The desire is there. I'm more inclined to agree with Dan Muzyka, Dean of UBC's Sauder School of Business, when he says in one of his regular *Globe*

& *Mail* columns<sup>1</sup> that the primary reason companies don't move forward is fear of risk.

*Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?*

*How much can you lose? How much can you win?*

He adds, though, that *not* taking the risk may be the biggest risk of all.

This past Saturday marked the anniversary of an event that changed the way North Americans think about the world, and especially about the notions of security and risk. But the current economic crisis tells me we have yet to learn all the lessons of that event. In a book called *The Age of the Unthinkable*, author Joshua Cooper Ramo, a former managing editor of *TIME Magazine* and now managing director of Kissinger Associates says there's no predicting global dynamics, no mastering the environment. What it comes down to is resilience.

Security is no longer about the size of your military, or your bank account, and it's certainly not about certainty. It's more like an immune system: the ability to respond; a *comfort* with uncertainty and an appetite for change, even revolutionary change. It's the ability to create and innovate. An ability

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<sup>1</sup> "Commercialize or calcify," August 16, 2010.

to empathize with whatever and whomever you consider ‘other.’ And it’s an instinct for looking deeply at the world—a quality more suited to a university than, say, a Tweetup.

We’re all ‘international,’ whether or not we yet think of ourselves that way. And the other part of my message today is that UBC can help, in a number of very practical and very profound ways. Today is about inviting you, encouraging you, to take advantage of UBC. It’s your university! One of the three reasons UBC exists, alongside learning, and research excellence, is to be of service. I think we often do a better job of letting you know when we need *your* help and support and contributions, and not such a good job of letting you know all the ways we’re here for *you*. So that’s the message I want you to take away with you today. And if you also happen to take away an idea about *how* we can help, an idea you can act on, then I’ll have done what I hoped to do at the Vancouver Board of Trade.

With a challenge as daunting and complex as internationalizing your business, UBC may not have been the first place you thought of turning to for answers. After all, it’s the campus on the Point, part of the Vancouver backdrop, the place where your or your neighbour’s kids go to school, where

you get your 100-Mile organic veggies on Saturday mornings, or where that fabulous museum is that you take your out-of-town guests to. Or maybe it's the ol' Ivory Tower, a kind of Harry-Potter-at-Hogwarts freeze frame in your mind's eye, owls and all.

If you think of UBC as any of these things, you're right (well, except for the owls). But you're only partly right. Just the way you'd be partly right to say that Wendy [Lisogar-Cocchia] has a nail bar up the street. Or that Jason [McLean] heads up a mom-and-pop operation. Or Lindsay [Gordon] runs the savings and loan around the corner.

All true. But it's also true that Absolute Spa Group has opened 11 locations in 11 years, won three international awards, and now distributes its *Soluzione* spa products to resorts worldwide. That the McLean Group of Companies deals in international real estate, film production services, telecommunications, and aviation, and is one of the top exporters in BC. That HSBC Bank Canada is part of the world's largest banking and financial services group and the 8<sup>th</sup> largest company in the world. *And* that all three do tremendous philanthropic work in the community.



What about The University of British Columbia? With more global partnerships, international programs, and multi-national research projects; more personnel – students, staff, faculty, and alumni – overseas; more international students and faculty, than any other British Columbia organization. Ranked among the top 40 in the world in the post-secondary equivalent of the Fortune 500. With a hundred years of intercultural exploration, through law, international relations, anthropology, languages, and business. You want to benefit from somebody else's mistakes, take ours! The lessons we've learned through a century of study and on-the-ground experience infuse every course we offer. UBC is a destination of choice for literally thousands of brilliant students and accomplished scholars from all over the world—and I'm not talking Vancouver here but UBC specifically—and every one of them is prepared to bring their unique talents and skills, and their networks of connections here with them.

What may look like an Ivory Tower in our hometown looks like a beacon of opportunity and innovation in China, Mexico, England, Iran, Germany, India, Japan. Just like William Shatner, Pamela Anderson, and Mike Myers, maybe we've had to make our reputation abroad before we could be fully

appreciated here at home. But I want UBC to be that kind of beacon for you, too.

There are three broad categories, three things I think UBC has to offer a business in BC that's looking to internationalize in some way. The first thing we have to offer is MINDS—or what's commonly called talent; the second is IMMERSION—or the chance to try on different aspects of internationalizing before you take the risk, especially around intercultural relations; and the third is IDEAS—ideas UBC researchers generate that you can use, and ideas *you* generate that UBC can help you develop. Minds, Immersion, and Ideas. I'd like to spend the remainder of my time with you exploring these three potential points of partnership between UBC and the business community. And I'm looking forward to hearing your questions and ideas.

### Minds

Kaushik Anand left home without knowing when he'd see his family again, and with a group of other young students, all of them strangers to one another, moved into a hostel in Madras, India. For a year, he spent every waking hour studying for the JEE, or Joint Entrance Exam, dreaming of the

opportunities a post-secondary education could give him. Then, along with over 200,000 others, he sat for the exam. One of the lucky (read: brilliant) ones, Kaushik earned a place at the India Institute of Technology—or IIT—Madras.

It was there that he learned of a program called MITACS Globalink, which places the very best Indian undergraduate students in top research universities in BC, Ontario, and New Brunswick. Students who win a spot in Globalink work with local business people while conducting research under a global expert in their field. Kaushik made it to UBC.

“The networking events, industrial visits, and skills enhancement workshops differentiate [Globalink] from other internship programs,” Kaushik says. “I am thankful to MITACS, UBC, and the Province of British Columbia for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

It’s being hailed as “the brain gain,” or “the great brain race.”<sup>2</sup> The most brilliant researchers internationally now exhibit a global brand mentality

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<sup>2</sup> *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities are Reshaping the World*, by Ben Wildavsky.

when it comes to choosing where they'll work, and the world's brightest students are doing the same.

The choices scholars are making have transformed post-secondary education from a largely local practice to a global one, characterized by fluidity, mobility, and meritocracy. International education has become a form of free trade, where the "goods and supplies" of the knowledge economy are these phenomenal minds, and the currency is ideas.

The competition is such that BC's Provincial Government has taken a leadership role by branding British Columbia education abroad from kindergarten through grade 12. Over 5,900 students in China, Egypt, Thailand, South Korea, and India are currently enrolled in the BC curriculum, and their graduation certificate will be the Dogwood.

Developing countries are scrambling to hang onto their best and brightest by building opportunities at home. In China, for example, the government spent \$4.4 billion on 40 leading universities from 1999 to 2005 in an effort to vault them into the top tier, and their number of undergrad and graduate degrees quadrupled.

What's important for *you* to know is that UBC is already *in* that top tier. In addition to the 30 Globalink students and other interns we host each year, in 2009 UBC was the top choice for 6,800 full-time international students from 142 different countries. Enough to fill some of the labour gaps we're starting to see, if all of us together can find ways to convince them to stay.

We call UBC a place of mind. One reason is the freedom researchers are accorded to pursue their flights of the imagination, their leaps of logic, that currency of ideas. Those open, supportive conditions attract the best researchers from around the world, who in turn help draw the top students, and who *together* produce the "next, next thing."

Here are just a few more examples of UBC as an international talent hub, and a place of mind.

Matthew Farrer leaves the Mayo Clinic in Florida in May to become UBC's first Canada Excellence Research Chair in Neurogenetics and Translational Neuroscience, a \$10 million dollar award. Already, researchers and graduate students are clamouring to join him in the search for solutions to the brain

diseases, disorders, and injuries that affect nearly a third of this country's population.

In August, the new “entrepreneurship@UBC” program sends six companies—three student and three alumni—to Silicon Valley's Plug and Play technology centre, an uber-accelerator for 300 companies that are innovating around the clock. They make their pitches to the C100: a hundred successful Canadian CEOs, CFOs, and CTOs working in the Valley, several of whom are UBC alumni and all of whom are looking to give back. Now, UBC, the City of Vancouver, and other regional players are looking to create a Plug and Play right here.

Rio Tinto CEO Tom Albanese and geologist/entrepreneur Ross Beaty are helping spearhead the creation of a new training facility for geologists and scientists here in the mineral exploration capital of the world. The new Earth Systems Science Building at UBC will draw students and faculty from countries around the globe, including Mongolia, Australia, and South America, and graduates will help fill the need for 60,000 new skilled workers in mining and oil in the coming decade.

If the minds you're looking to hire reside in people who have a foot in two worlds, speak multiple languages, have worked with researchers and entrepreneurs and financiers before they graduate, and can hit the ground running, look to UBC.

### Immersion

Within UBC Continuing Studies is a well-kept secret whose time has come. It's called the Centre for Intercultural Communication, and it offers programs such as Diversity in the Workplace and Preparation for International Assignments, as well as a Certificate in Intercultural Studies, that are targeted specially to the business community. In operation since 1982 and with a staff of 32 specialists from all over the world, the CIC's client list includes post-secondaries such as Royal Roads University and the University of Toronto; government and non-profit organizations; and international firms including HSBC Bank Canada, Korea Telecomm, and YVR Vancouver Airport Services.

If one of the stumbling blocks to internationalizing your business is a fear of saying, doing, or hearing the wrong thing, I get it! Cultural misunderstandings can kill an international venture and can cost you a lot,

both in dollars and reputation. What the CIC programs allow you to do is immerse yourself in that ‘foreign’ culture, but without the risk.

At this point, I want to acknowledge that not every BC business needs to open a branch office in Asia. There are lots of ways to internationalize, where having a broad range of perspectives, a new awareness of your own beliefs and attitudes, and a specific set of skills and strategies will help. It might be marketing your product internationally via the Web. Or finding a distributor or retail markets overseas. It might be making your business more attractive to those elite students I talked about—the international ones *and* our home-educated global citizens—or to an untapped market locally. It might even be providing the time and resources for your staff to contribute to international development projects. Whatever the case, the immersion opportunities available at the CIC can make your business more resilient.

Here are two more entry points into UBC that can give you this kind of immersion advantage.

The Office of the Vice-President Research and International, or VPRI, maintains a wide range of contacts with Vancouver-based Consulates,



Embassies and High Commissions of foreign governments in Ottawa. They also have links with Canadian diplomats abroad. If you're interested in engaging UBC's diplomatic contacts, get in touch with the VPRI for contact details, introductions, and advice on how best to use the network.

And if it's deep immersion you're after, go work in Shanghai ... and earn a UBC MBA at the same time. The 20-month International MBA, run by Sauder School of Business in partnership with the Antai College of Economics and Management at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, features senior UBC faculty and an award-winning curriculum.

If you're looking for a safe place to make your mistakes, we're just up the street. We've seen them all. We've *made* them all! And we can help.

### Ideas

J.J. Liou was a politician in Taiwan, and a businessman in Taiwan, Japan, and here in BC. His son still runs the Nicola Valley Cattle Ranch. In 1970, J.J. took his mother to the Osaka Expo, where the theme was Progress and Harmony for Mankind. The sight of the world's nations coming together for such a reason made an impression that has lasted to this day. In the late

1980s, he approached then-UBC President David Strangway with an idea:

Let's find a way to bring people together in dialogue to further the ideals of harmony and peace.

In September of 2000, UBC's Liu Institute for Global Issues opened its doors to scholars, students, entrepreneurs, and citizens from all over the world to talk about health, the environment, poverty, war ... and peace. J.J. is in a wheelchair now, but when we visit he still ponders how to bring people together. He has said that of all the places he's been where there is a mix of people from different cultures, BC is the place of greatest harmony. He hopes the Liu Centre and UBC will be able to extend this harmony to other regions and nations.

The means by which we internationalize, whether we're a business, a university, or an individual, is through ideas. Your business began as an idea, and it's through a constant infusion of *new* ideas that it's able to grow. With access to literally a world of ideas, in the form of cutting-edge research, multi-national collaborations, and effective commercialization channels, UBC can help you connect to ideas that will drive your business to the next level.

Or maybe it's *your* idea that's looking for an outlet, like J.J.'s was, an idea that needs some R&D, some fresh insight, an infusion of energy to power it forward. Before you start recruiting researchers or buying test equipment or breaking ground, call us. UBC brought in over \$546 million dollars in research funding last year, and many of those dollars are designated for strategic partnerships with industry.

Here are a few examples of ideas that grew from small seeds to significant scope with support from UBC.

In our quest for zero GHG emissions by 2050, UBC partnered with Nexterra Systems Corporation, a local biomass gasification company, to install a combined-heat-and-power system on the Vancouver campus. The system will save enough electricity to power 1,500 homes, and reduce GHG emissions by up to 4,500 tonnes per year—the equivalent of taking 1,100 cars off the road. The project of turning UBC into a living research laboratory so interested international powerhouse General Electric that GE asked to be part of the partnership. Not bad for a local start-up!

Doug Goldenberg of UBC's Earth and Ocean Sciences department has been working for 20 years to create models and methods for detecting sub-surface anomalies in the earth. His technologies have had massive impact in mineral and oil exploration, and attracted a great number of transnational geophysics corporations whose reach exceeds 40 countries. The technology can also be used—*is* also being used—to detect unexploded land mines. What could *your* company do with it?

In 2007, a group of students led UBC to become the first university in Canada to develop a policy for ensuring global access to its technologies, particularly in health care and environmental sustainability. In 2009, the policy led to the development of the Neglected Global Diseases Initiative. Funding for health research tends to focus on first-world diseases, and yet infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis kill millions of people, including children, in poor and marginalized areas, even though effective treatments already exist. The Initiative attracted the attention, and the support, of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and has begun to save lives. Is international development part of your passion?

Simon K.Y. Lee had the idea of creating a second home at UBC for students, professors, and researchers who are visiting from abroad, and established the Simon K.Y. Lee Hong Kong University-UBC House.

Tom and Caleb Chan had an idea for bringing the University and the community closer together. Their idea took the shape of a landmark concert hall that is home to symphony, opera, theatre, dance, jazz, classical, and world music almost every night of the year.

Bob Lee had the idea of making UBC secure into the future, and created UBC Properties Trust to perpetually strengthen the University's endowment.

C.K. Choi, who was never able to attend university himself, established UBC's Institute for Asian Research, which has become one of the strongest Asian Studies programs in North America. When UBC awarded him an honorary degree, his words to the audience were these: "Work hard for the common good. It is what life is all about." Now, *there's* a good idea.

## Conclusion

And so may I simply say in conclusion ...

*Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?*

*How much can you lose? How much can you win?*

*When you're alone, there's a very good chance*

*you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants.*

*There are some, down the road between hither and yon,*

*that can scare you so much you won't want to go on.*

But wait! Here's a partner who's been there before,

with whom you can practice, and practice some more.

A partner who brings the best minds to your door,

and supports your inventions with research galore!

Oh, the places you'll go ... now's the time, don't you see?

You don't have to go solo ... you've got UBC!

Thank you. Thank you very much.