

Thank you and welcome everyone to UBC.

I want to begin today by declaring common cause with all of you. I was installed, formally, as UBC President and Vice-Chancellor just last week, so to that extent, I can say that we are all in our First Year. Lucky us!

But I also want to say this: if I was in a room with any other First Year students, I would be inclined to congratulate them on their good judgment and to say, frankly, how lucky I think they are to be at UBC.

This is one of the top 25 public universities in the world. The quality of the research conducted here is

superlative. The opportunities that you will have to interact with the best scholars could be equalled only at the very finest and often the most exclusive institutions on the planet.

That message – the declaration of UBC’s high status – is as true in this room, as it would be in any other.

But while I might start by congratulating others for being *able* to choose UBC, I want to thank you for being willing.

You are the most accomplished students among an already remarkable First-Year cohort. You are the

people who we hope will make this excellent institution even better.

That may seem like a lot of pressure in your first month. It is; but I think that's okay. You have shown yourselves to be deserving of our support. You have shown your potential.

Now, I challenge you to take the next, bold – and even-more difficult – step.

UBC will test you; it will ask you to work harder than ever before. If it didn't we wouldn't be doing our job.

But it should also provide you with resources that are, again, unparalleled.

In classes and labs, in Western Canada's best library, in student government, in sports and clubs and in the direct connection to UBC's community partners, you will have opportunities like never before.

I urge you to make the most of them.

But for now, I urge only that you enjoy the moment.

You've earned the recognition that we offer today. And we are, again, honoured to have you at UBC.

Thank you for coming, and all the best in what I trust will be a fabulous first year.