

**Address by UBC President Arvind Gupta
To Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
Coast Capri Hotel
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Thank you Deborah (Buszard) and thank you everyone. It's always great to be here in Kelowna; in fact, my goal is to be here so often that everyone stops thinking of me as a visitor. At the same time, it's also heartening to know that our Okanagan campus is in good hands under Deborah's leadership.

I am, as I said, delighted to be here today, in Kelowna and with the Chamber of Commerce. And I'm honoured that so many of you have chosen to join me for this occasion.

I'd like to do three things in my presentation today. As a first order of business – and an overarching theme – I want to speak to the synergistic relationship that exists between great universities and great cities. I especially want to address the excellent relationship that exists between UBC and the great city of Kelowna.

Second, as a still-new President and Vice-Chancellor, I'd like to talk about the opportunities for UBC in the next five to 10 years. I will identify five areas through which we hope to improve what is already one of the top two dozen public research universities in the world.

Third, I want to talk about innovation, which I know is a topic of interest in the Kelowna business community. UBC is rolling out a new innovation strategy – designed to ensure that our own programs and activities are as innovative as they need to be, while maximizing our capacity to support innovation in the wider community.

Let's begin with what I think is one of the most important points of the day – the strength and potential of the relationship between UBC and the Okanagan.

Great cities and great universities exist in symbiosis, feeding, inspiring, and energizing one another. Today, every city counted amongst the world's "most liveable" boasts a world-class university.

The urban theorist Richard Florida explained this in his 2004 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Researching places like Austin and Boston, Florida documented how town and gown work in synergy, enhancing the social and cultural components that underpin a knowledge economy. He also tracked the remarkable results, from Stanford and Silicon Valley to the university cluster around Research Triangle Park in North Carolina.

His most profound conclusion was this: Industries used to choose locations based on access to physical resources – or tax breaks. Today, they move in search of knowledge workers – intellectuals and artists.

On that basis, you might expect that I am here today to tell you all about UBC's role in making Kelowna a great city – and I am. I'm incredibly proud of the contribution we have made, especially in the nine short years since founding our Okanagan campus.

Even more, however, I want to impress upon you the importance of this region and this city in making UBC a great university. Our relationship is entirely reciprocal. Everything we do to help you, helps us in turn. And everything that you do, as businesses, as community members – as the demanding parents of worthy students – helps to make us better.

Consider our Okanagan campus as it stands today. With 8,200 students, we have doubled the number of university spaces and added immeasurably to the graduate-level offering for Masters and PhD students.

We have invested \$400 million to double the size of our land base and to triple the square-footage of our built infrastructure. We have also tripled annual research budget, from \$6 million to \$18 million, and I can promise that's a number that will continue to rise quickly. Our total annual economic impact in the valley is already \$1.4 billion.

We have introduced professional schools, such as Engineering, Management and – critically for the whole province – Medicine. And our Health and Social Development program is proving to be one of the most impressive academic start-ups in the country.

I know I speak on behalf of our entire UBC team in Vancouver and Kelowna is saying that together, we are determined to ensure that this community has what it wants and needs from our university.

I'm especially excited that UBC Okanagan students voted last month to fund one-third of a proposed 45,000 square-foot library expansion. This project has the potential to double the dynamic, technologically enhanced learning environment in the current library. I would like to recognize Rocky Kim, President of our local student society who is here today and congratulate our students on their successful campaign.

As I contemplate how we've grown, I can't help but to reflect that at every point in our development, we have been embraced by the people and businesses of Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley. I have often commented in Vancouver that the people in *that* great city could learn some important lessons from the level of community engagement between UBC and the people in this room.

So, before I go any further, I want to thank you for the interest, the engagement and the support that you have already shown. You have played a critical role in UBC's success to date and we appreciate it enormously.

I also want to take this opportunity to say to you directly that I am personally committed to being a very active and present partner with you to the point that – as I said at the start - it won't be news anymore that the President of UBC is in town. Going forward this will be the normal course which I am very much looking forward to - and so is my wife Michelle. We have been warmly welcomed by all we have met so far and we are eager to give back. Our goal now – and again this is a goal I hope that we pursue together – is to take what is

already regarded as one of the world's top 25 public institutions and push it into the top 10. This is what we in the Improbabilities Business call an "aspirational goal." And while I have set the target, I haven't yet been bold enough to commit to a deadline.

But I am deadly serious about this objective, because, in hotly competitive environments, you can never stand still. Among the world's best universities, if you're not moving up in the rankings, you'll quickly find yourself sliding down. For me, the only acceptable direction to go is up.

UBC Okanagan is critical in any push to improve. I have no doubt that this campus – and this community – have benefited by the prestige associated with being a University of British Columbia. For example, our international reputation has helped us attract some incredible talent to Kelowna and surrounding communities.

UBC Okanagan is also a national and international destination for top-quality students. Okanagan residents still comprise the largest part of our student cohort – 28%. But another 25% come from Metro Vancouver, 20% from the rest of Canada and 11% from the rest of the world.

They and the 1,061 local faculty and staff will be as important as every other UBC student, staff or faculty member in lifting this institution into the top 10.

The question, for me as President and, I hope, for you as community partners, is how do we get there – how do we get better?

I believe that we must work in five critical areas.

First and foremost, UBC is a Place of Learning. Our primary responsibility is to our students – to your sons and daughters, your future employees and shareholders. Increasingly, the “student” category includes all of us. A knowledge economy requires a well-educated populace and a lifetime of learning; a challenge to which UBC must respond.

Second, UBC is a Place of Engagement. The question for me is never: what UBC can do for you; or what you can do for UBC? It is always: what can we do together?

Third, UBC is an International Place. We are positioned globally. We compete globally. And for the people of Kelowna, B.C. and Canada, we are a nexus – a gateway to the whole social, economic and, we hope, sustainable world.

Fourth, UBC is a Place of Innovation, in the way we operate, educate, and participate in the community and the economy.

And Fifth, UBC is a Place of Research. That is fundamental, because excellent research is a distinguishing characteristic. Research excellence makes our reputation.

It puts our students at the cutting edge of knowledge, giving them access to the latest discoveries and revelations.

It allows us to nurture the leaders you need and to answer the questions you bring us.

Research excellence is one of the central reasons that a great and innovative city needs a great university – we keep one another at the forefront.

These themes are interwoven and I could easily look at UBC through any of the five.

For today, however, I would like to concentrate on innovation. UBC is currently developing an innovation strategy, which will have five parts:

1. Build strategic partnerships;
2. Improve community access;
3. Increase the employability of our students;
4. Support the innovation ecosystem in our communities; and
5. Build UBC's internal innovation support structure.

Let me touch briefly on each.

First, **Building Strategic Partnerships** highlights our determination to be pro-active in our engagement. UBC has always listened to our partners, integrating their needs into our academic mission. We plan to take that up a level. We want to be so connected that we aren't waiting for partners to call us; we are looking ahead, together, anticipating the next challenge.

Consider as an example the STAR initiative, in which the federal Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, Michelle Rempel, recently announced a \$3.8 million investment. STAR is an acronym for Survive and Thrive Applied Research. Based here, the initiative connects UBC and other world-class research partners with industries that need the expertise and equipment that we can provide. STAR researchers are concentrating on interdisciplinary research in everything from human physiology, mental health and social work to manufacturing processes, product prototyping and marketing.

One of the first STAR projects is led by Professor Paul van Donkelaar here in the Okanagan working with Professor Peter Cripton from UBC Vancouver in a collaboration involving UBC, Helios Global Technologies, and Imperial College London (UK), working together on a high-tech helmet that will reduce the risk of concussion in sports such as hockey and football. It's part of the mandate to help individuals – and industries – survive and thrive.

Our second innovation strategy is **Improving Community Access**. We want to be so enmeshed in community – connected by so many strands – that people and ideas flow freely in every direction. We want to be perfectly positioned to understand and adapt to what is happening in industry and society.

That means augmenting existing infrastructure, such as the UBC Corporate Relations Office and the University-Industry Liaison Office.

One such addition, unique to UBC Okanagan, is the recently-established partnership with the BC Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizen's Services, which is placing one of its own, Janice Larson, on the UBC Okanagan campus. Janice will help coordinate government programs and promote innovation. And UBC will fulfil a double role: improving community access to our own services; while facilitating the connection between the community and the government of British Columbia.

When I talk about access, I also mean literal, physical access, which is already much improved thanks to expanded BC Transit service to key destinations including West Kelowna, Okanagan College and Kelowna General Hospital. Physical access will get better still with the extension of John Hindle Drive, connecting Glenmore Road to the western part of the campus and improving cycling safety.

Access can also be a factor of proximity. Consider, that 1,000 students already live in Quail Ridge north of campus. And major new private-sector residential developments south of campus will soon offer convenient housing to students, staff and faculty and a new opportunity for others to locate closer to the services, entertainments and cultural offerings that are inherent in any great university.

This suggests more than the creation of a vibrant new Kelowna neighbourhood; it's a further example of UBC and the city of Kelowna drawing closer to one another, again for mutual benefit.

Access also speaks to our ability to accommodate all prospective students. For example, this campus has distinguished itself provincially and, I suspect nationally, by making space and providing the support necessary to ensure the success of aboriginal students. Thanks to programs such as Aboriginal Access Studies, the number of undergraduate and graduate students who self-identify as aboriginal has gone from 58 in the 2005-2006 academic year to 333 this year; that's an increase of 474 per cent. Those numbers on their own answer the access question. For a further comment on "success," I'd point out that 26 of these students working on Masters or PhDs.

I am looking forward to meeting with and listening to local First Nations representatives in the coming months to learn more about how we can strengthen our partnership in other areas. One of those I want to focus on is improving access to health care services through our UBC Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health and collaboration with British Columbia's new First Nation's Health Authority. The third innovation strategy is **Increasing Employability** – and here again I want to emphasize *lifelong* employability. The university constituency is no longer limited to 18- to 22-year-old undergraduates or even 22- to 30-year-old Masters and PhD students. In a knowledge economy, everyone must be a lifelong learner. How can UBC extend its reach?

UBC Okanagan was itself an answer to that question. But we must go further.

Technology can play a critical role. In addition to enhancing the classroom experience, technology can bring UBC into the homes of mature students who are juggling the demands of careers and family or those who live a long way from our campuses.

For example, our new Flexible Learning Initiative will leverage mobile technologies and internet connectivity to make 98 UBC courses available to an additional 30,000 students over the next three years.

For employability, we are also committed to providing our traditional cohort with career-building opportunities that strengthen their academic and employment outcomes.

Here we look to all of you as partners. The strategies we have in mind include:

- increasing student exposure and training with industry advisors;
- expanding experiential learning;
- boosting internships, practica, and research placements;
- further embedding professional development into curriculum; and
- enhancing international mobility opportunities.

One of the great mechanisms for creating experiential opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students is called Mitacs, the organization I ran for the past 15 years. Mitacs is fundamentally an engagement mechanism, working with 60 universities, thousands of employers in the private and public sectors, and with every provincial jurisdiction in the country.

For example, the Mitacs Accelerate program connects graduate student interns from all disciplines with partners in industry and civil society – to address pressing social or technical problems.

In Kelowna, that has included an intern working with the health food leader Natural Factors to reduce waste and hazardous materials in the development of nutraceuticals. Another intern studied sustainable winemaking practices in the winemaking through a partnership with Quails Gate Winery. Helios Global Technologies, which I already mentioned in the context of the new STAR investment, is also a Mitacs partner.

These internships pay incredible dividends to students, as well as industry:

- Mitacs interns have been placed into 2,500 jobs, 900 of which were brand new positions;
- a decade out, Mitacs graduates are earning an average of \$10,000 a year more than their graduate-level colleagues; and
- 14% per cent of Mitacs interns start their own company – twice the usual rate for graduate students.

As for industry impact:

- 97% of Mitacs' partners said the Accelerate experience made them even more interested in collaborating with academic researchers;
- while 74% said they now intend to increase investment in R&D.

So, we're excited that Mitacs has opened an office at UBCO with a new director, Jennifer Tedman-Jones, on the ground to promote university-industry collaborations.

Mitacs is part of our fourth strategy, **Supporting the Innovation Ecosystem**. This is part of our commitment to link research to community – to ensure that cutting edge ideas coming out of UBC flow seamlessly into partner organizations, especially those that may not have in-house R&D capabilities.

Consider Professor Anoush Poursartip at UBC Vancouver who led the establishment of the western-Canadian Composite Research Network that includes Professor Abbas Milani at the Composites and Optimization Lab here at UBCO. Together, they are working with Kelowna-based Flightcraft on the feasibility of finding an aircraft application for Armourgel – the same material that goes into the STAR/Helios safe helmets.

These are projects that are only possible because of the depth of talent we can call upon across the whole UBC family.

And there will be more where that came from: In my Installation address, I committed UBC to investing an additional \$100 million to expand our total research capacity. This will be a transformative investment in the people who lead B.C.'s innovation agenda. It will multiply our research impact many times over.

The final strategy is to **Build UBC's Internal Support Structures for Innovation.**

We will begin by improving our own entrepreneurial potential. Entrepreneurship implies an appetite for risk – and innovation – in whatever you do, from starting a new business to designing a new outpatient service.

On this front, you might look to the UBC Okanagan Faculty of Management, which is about to re-launch its Master of Management program, now designed to maximize the learning experience for enterprising, imaginative and adaptive managers in organizations that are facing rapid change and global competition. We're also collaborating closely with the Kedge Business School in Bordeaux, looking to help the Okanagan Wine Leaders Forum better understand how expand access to international wine markets.

The net effect of our five new strategies will be to make UBC more innovative, improving everything from the quality of our teaching and research to the accountability of administrators, including me.

We are turning UBC inside out, tearing down any remaining walls between us and you, putting our resources – human, physical and virtual – in service to the community.

And to be clear, by community I mean you, whether you are in industry, government or the non-profit sector, in high tech or health management. In every sector, our goal is to raise the bar, improving the health, prosperity and sustainability of the Okanagan Valley, the province, the country and the world.

It's a tall order in which I am, again, pleased to have such great partners. I want thank you again for coming today, and thank you as well for all that you have done – and will do – for UBC. I hope we can do even more for you.