

**Trek 2010 Launch**

**March 10, 2005, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**Chan Centre for the Performing Arts**

**Dr. Martha C. Piper**

**President**

**The University of British Columbia**

Good morning everyone and welcome to the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts.

We are here today to launch a new strategic plan for UBC – to embark on a new Trek – and I want to thank you all for joining us as we set out on this important journey.

It is in the nature of life that the very minute you get a good plan up and running, it's time to start over – to start reassessing your goals and redefining your strategies. Yet, even in that context, it's hard to believe that seven years have passed since we conceived Trek 2000 – the strategic plan that brought UBC into this promising, sometimes daunting, new millennium.

We tried, with Trek 2000, to build on the very foundations of this university – to evoke the vision of those bold British Columbians who, in 1922, marched from downtown to Point Grey,

demanding that the provincial government make good on its commitment to give UBC a proper campus.

We tried to take the very best of what was already an excellent university, and leverage it into something even stronger—to raise it onto a new plane. We set a course to make UBC “Canada’s best university” and to do so by providing “students with an outstanding and distinctive education,” and by conducting “leading research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada, and the world.”

We set for ourselves an ambitious series of goals that were erected on five pillars – People, Learning, Research, Community and Internationalization.

And the plan worked extremely well. To a greater or lesser degree, it became a basic guide, a reminder of our common goals, and a framework for action.

I can say with pride that we met most of our objectives. Yes, we have sometimes fallen short in one area or another, but overall, working together we have made huge advances. We have more qualified people, and, than ever before. Our student population is up by more than 20 per cent and the quality of those students is the highest in Canada. We have been able to attract some of the best teachers and researchers in the world. And our staff has worked tirelessly to make UBC the most efficient, accessible, beautiful and equitable campus possible.

On the Learning front, we have updated our pedagogical approach across the campus. For example:

- We have implemented or refined innovative programs like Arts Foundations, Science One, and Integrated Science;
- We have instituted problem-based and project-based learning in Dentistry, Medicine, Applied Sciences, Pharmacy and the Faculty of Land and Food Systems;
- We have developed a distributed medical education program with UNBC and UVic and built the largest Life Sciences complex in Canada.

And of course there is the library – the ultimate learning tool: we are in the middle of a \$68-million renovation that will deliver the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre – the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest library in Canada and one of the most technologically advanced in the world.

Our Research successes have, been spectacular. We lead the country in attracting funding for new research infrastructure and

have more than tripled the amount of research dollars we receive annually, attending over \$350 million of funding.

We have also been extraordinarily fortunate in the support that we have received from donors – people like Ike Barber, who is with us today, Bill Sauder, Ross Beatty and Stewart Blusson. We could never have performed so well without the incredible support of our alumni and other donors – to all of whom we are most sincerely grateful.

What of Community? One of the first Trek programs, established in 1999 is the Downtown Eastside Learning Exchange, directed by Margo Fryer, one of our panelists today. This year, more than 800 students have volunteered through the Learning Exchange and have worked with between 35 and 40 community partners – an experience that students say enriches their learning opportunities at least as much as it helps those they have chosen to serve.

Another huge community initiative was the opening, in November 2002, of the UBC campus at Robson Square. We reversed the direction of the 1922 Trek and brought UBC back into the centre of Vancouver, allowing us to offer educational programming and make community connections more effectively than ever.

Finally, responding to an invitation from the provincial government, we have also trekked somewhat further afield, establishing the new UBC Okanagan, which opens this September. This may be the biggest initiative the university has undertaken in its history. UBC is no longer a place; it is a system – one that will allow us to extend the offering of quality education to more British Columbians, and distribute our research endeavours throughout the province.

The last Trek pillar is Internationalization. We have certainly enjoyed successes and met goals on the international front. We now have three international houses on campus – residences that we have established in partnership with other universities and that make space for 100 of our students and 100 of theirs. Our partners include Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Korea University from Seoul and Mexico's Tec de Monterrey.

On a wider front, UBC has taken a leading role in the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, as well as in the university research consortium *Universitas 21*.

So, we made a plan; we executed it and we succeeded in meeting many of our goals. So why do we need a new plan? Many universities work on strategic plans for years. Why do we feel compelled to extend ourselves and create a new plan, Trek 2010?

Well, if you haven't noticed, a lot has happened in the world since September 11, SARS virus, Iraq war, the decoding of the human genome, avian flu, human security issues, global warming, the tensions in the Middle East, the ongoing challenges in Africa, and the recent tsunami disaster — all underline the fact that there must be another way of leading, another way for UBC to meet these challenges, another way of taking Canada's place in the world. These world events, coupled with the sense that Trek 2000, needed to be revised, updated, and stretched—led us to reflect upon the next phase in the history of UBC.

From October 2003 to March 2004 we circulated a discussion paper called *The Future of Trek & UBC's Long-Term Planning*, and we invited suggestions about the directions in which UBC should move over the coming decade. Hundreds of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and interested members of the public responded.

And from their responses, and the many rounds of internal consultations that followed, we identified three questions and two more general themes.

The questions were these:

1. What should the role of a research-intensive university be in helping to create a civil society?
2. What should our role be in educating citizens who have a perspective and a sense of responsibility that is truly global?
3. What contributions can the university make toward social, economic and environmental sustainability – locally and globally?

The two other themes, which I described as “more general,” are really underlying principles which must sustain any goals we set for ourselves. These are the principles of Excellence and

Community Partnership. No university can flourish if it does not seek excellence at all times and in everything it does. And a university can fulfill no useful purpose if it is not connected to the community – the society – that it serves.

So, thanks in large part to the guidance and direction we received from the UBC community and beyond, today we have a new plan, a new vision, **Trek 2010: The University of British Columbia, aspiring to be one of the world's best universities, will prepare students to become exceptional global citizens, promote the values of a civil and sustainable society, and conduct outstanding research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada, and the world.**

Together with this new vision, we have developed a new set of goals and strategies to serve as an overarching plan, which are outlined in the blue document, *Trek 2010*, you should have

received on your way in. Like the original Trek document, this includes a set of specific targets listed in an “Operational Timetable,” actions we want to take over the next 12 to 18 months as steps towards meeting the objectives set out in the blue Trek document.

You’ll also notice that in both documents the plan is broken into five familiar sections: People, Learning Research, Community and Internationalization. This organizational framework has served us well over the past five years, and we are not going to give it up.

Let there be no doubt: This new vision presents us with a challenge. For underlying all of the Trek themes is the recognition that universities have an increasingly important role to play in society, not only as educators of our future leaders, but also as

active participants in the search for solutions to the political, economic, and environmental problems of our time.

What then does all of this mean? It really is simple. This Trek, Trek 2010, will not be accomplished by others—it will be accomplished by us. Trek 2010 will only be a reality if each of us chooses to act, everyday—fulfilling our responsibilities as global citizens and promoting the values of a civil and sustainable society. Whether it is cleaning our buildings, processing our research applications, developing our information systems, serving our alumni, teaching our students, or conducting ground-breaking research, we all have a role to play.

Let me be clear. No one has a monopoly on this vision. It is not owned by the President or the professoriate. It is not the sole responsibility of Faculties or Departments, the Board or the Senate. Rather, we all have claim to this vision. For if there is one goal to

which we should dedicate ourselves above all others, it is to make UBC a leader and a driving force in the world-wide effort to create a positive and healthy relationship between human beings, the societies in which we live, and the natural environment upon which we all depend. Day in and day out, we all must do whatever we can to advance that goal—knowing that each of our actions, regardless of where we work or study on campus, will affect our ability to be one of the world's best universities.

Let me close by sharing a simple, true story with you. A story that I hope underlines the importance we all play on a daily basis in meeting the goals of Trek 2010. Several weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending a wrap up session of UBC students who had participated in the Trek Volunteer program in the DTES during Reading Week. Over 300 UBC students had volunteered throughout the week at a variety of schools in the DTES doing projects in concert with the students at those schools. At the close of the session, a 10 year old boy who attended one of the schools

came up to me and said meekly, “Dr. Piper, I want to thank UBC for coming to my school this week—and I just want you to know that I want to come to UBC when I grow up.” I, of course, was moved by this small boy, and desperately tried to say the right thing, to encourage him, to say to him to never give up the dream, to tell him I believed in him. My words were inadequate. But what I really wanted to say to him was this: Don’t thank me. I am not UBC. Thank the students who volunteered their time. Thank the staff who recruited the students and organized, administered, registered students and set up the forum. Thank UBC Food Services who prepared the food for the lunch for the forum. Thank the donor who gave so generously to support the Learning Exchange. Thank the IT staff who connected the Learning Exchange to UBC and set up the computers in the program. Thank UBC Properties who found, renovated, and leased the space for the Learning Exchange. Thank the Community Advisory Board who

encouraged us to take this initiative. Thank the faculty who provided credit for service learning courses. Thank UBC!

It is stories like this one, that makes it clear to me—that when we work together, united in a vision, determined in our cause, that we will make a difference. None of us are UBC—yet all of us are UBC—and it will require all of us, to reach the goals for UBC in Trek 2010.

Thank you.

We have assembled a panel today, a panel that, first of all, will probe the definitions and implications of the three questions that have informed the Trek 2010 vision – after which we will throw the floor open to questions.

Our panelists are **Peter Boothroyd, Margo Fryer and John Robinson** and they will address themselves, respectively, to the issues of Global Citizenship, Civil Society and Sustainability.

**Peter Boothroyd** is a development planner whose work focuses on understanding and enhancing the potential of community-based planning to contribute to sustainability and equity. Before joining UBC, he was a consultant on urban policy, social planning, impact assessment, and community development.

In the last 15 years, he has led UBC projects funded by the Canadian International Development Agency to build planning capacity in Thailand, Vietnam and Brazil. Through these experiences, he has become increasingly interested in the development role of universities.

**Margo Fryer**, as I have already mentioned, is the Director of the Downtown Eastside Learning Exchange and has been since its inception in 1999.

With a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies, Margo has collaborated on research projects with community groups, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. This research has been concerned with a wide variety of issues, including childhood sexual abuse, immigrant women's perinatal health, child poverty, the needs of seniors, women's health care and multicultural service delivery. Margo has also evaluated pilot projects aimed at implementing policy initiatives such as using community development strategies to promote health, involving the community in health care decision-making, and building collaborative partnerships among health care agencies. Margo has also taught research and evaluation principles and skills to community members.

**John Robinson** came to UBC in 1992 with a Master's in Environmental Studies, a PhD in Geography and more than a decade of experience in the Department of Environment and Resources Studies at the University of Waterloo.

At UBC, he moved in as the Director of the Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI) and Professor in the Department of Geography. In 2001, he stepped down as Director so that now, when he isn't teaching, he can spend his time creating research projects on a wide range of sustainable development issues.

At SDRI he currently directs several research programs in the areas of climate change and policy, analysing sustainable futures in the Georgia Basin, building computer game-like simulations for public engagement, and proposing new buildings. His personal research interests include sustainability theory and practice,

regional-scale integrated assessment, involving the public in the analysis of sustainable futures, business and sustainability, and the relationship between science and decision-making.

I know you will now join me in welcoming our Trek 2010 panel members.