

Quality Assurance Process Audit

Vancouver Campus Ministerial Brief



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The signatures below acknowledge the responsibility for the contents of the report.



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Note: For Appendix references please refer to the appendix folder to review files. The appendix documentation use the same numbered documents across both the Ministerial Briefing and the Institution Report.

Summary

UBC begins by acknowledging that the University of British Columbia's (UBC's) two main campuses are located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xwmə0–kwəy̓əm (Musqueam) and Syilx (Okanagan) peoples, and that UBC's activities take place on Indigenous lands throughout British Columbia and beyond. In recent years, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the publication of its Final Report and Calls to Action, and the development of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, have brought attention to the ways in which Canadian educational and other institutions have failed and oppressed Indigenous people. At this historic juncture, UBC renews its commitments, articulated in the 2009 Aboriginal Strategic Plan, to address this history and chart a way forward that provides a basis for productive co-existence and a more equitable future. UBC has defined a comprehensive approach to Indigenous engagement, which is described within this brief.

UBC is a global centre for research and teaching, consistently ranked among the top 20 public universities in the world. UBC's Faculty of Medicine is one of the largest medical schools in North America and provides innovative educational and research programs in the areas of health and life sciences through an integrated province-wide model. In the province, UBC is the sole provider of education for other health professions, including: Audiology and Speech Sciences, Dentistry, Genetic Counselling, Midwifery, Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

UBC has two major campuses – in Vancouver and Kelowna – with a division of powers among four bodies: a single Board of Governors, a Council of Senates for matters of academic governance of a cross-campus nature, and the Vancouver and Okanagan Senates, which are responsible for the academic governance of their respective campuses. The facts and figures cited in this brief, and in the accompanying Institutional Report, deal only with the Vancouver campus.

UBC aspires to be a great institution, and as noted as part of the institutional profile below, is recognized by others as one of the twenty best public universities in the world. There is a culture of excellence and improvement at UBC that is reflected in the commitments to developing and implementing strategic plans at all levels from UBC overall to plans developed by individual academic units, hiring world-leading faculty, providing high quality teaching and research facilities, recruiting the best students; and hiring the best staff.

Over more than a century, UBC's Vancouver campus has grown to house a highly complex learning community in which a large number of fields of inquiry are represented. Each one of these disciplinary areas and interdisciplinary collaborations carries with it its own norms, aims, and best practices. Some of these fields of study are centuries old, while others are at the cutting edge of technology. As a result of this diversity, UBC has adopted a decentralized model

of policy and governance. Centrally, UBC's policies are designed to be broadly enabling, allowing for adaptations to fit the practices of various disciplines and fields.

The strength of a large university is that differences among its academic units contribute collectively to an effective institution whose overall contributions are greater than the sum of the parts. While there are umbrella policies and strategic priorities at the highest level, it is unsurprising that the academic units that comprise a large, diverse institution will have different strengths, different priorities, and will have adopted different means toward achieving common ends.

Following this model, UBC's approach to quality assurance and quality improvement is a mixture of policy, principles, and prescribed processes. There are strategic plans with annual accountability in place across all levels of UBC. In addition, UBC has a government mandate to report annually using agreed upon metrics. Collectively, this mixture of policy, strategy, process, and accountability results in measurable and verifiable progress in improving many aspects of educational provision at UBC. Individually, no single one of these approaches would be suitable or sufficient for a university of this size and complexity.

UBC's decentralized structure presents many administrative challenges, but it also allows our many constituent units to be nimble and adaptive. It would be counterproductive to the pursuit of quality to fetter our academic units' abilities in this regard. Therefore, over the past seven years UBC has adopted a budget model that allocates resources to Faculties, thus allowing Deans greater discretion in meeting the changing requirements of students and society. The University Act gives Faculties the power to determine which programs of study they offer (subject to approvals by the Senate and Board), while Deans of Faculties determine which research directions to prioritize, the balance of research and teaching faculty, and the allocation of resources.

Throughout this document generalizations have been made where possible, while acknowledging variations that exist in the structure of Faculties (which may or may not contain Departments, for example), their research-focused versus teaching-focused personnel, and in their processes, procedures, and practices — even among different units within a given Faculty. The report identifies gaps in areas and proposes plans for improving our approach to quality assurance at both the institutional and unit levels.

UBC offers undergraduate and graduate students a wide choice of degree programs, elective courses, and research opportunities, together with cultural and sporting amenities at the Point Grey campus, other locations throughout the province, and at affiliated teaching hospitals. As well, being recognized for our long-standing commitment to innovation in teaching and learning. Our Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) supports faculty members and academic units in pedagogy, curriculum design, and learning technology. Since 1991, UBC has funded over \$65 million to individual faculty members and faculty teams for proposals that

enhance teaching and learning. Central support from CTLT is complemented by faculty-based learning support units that offer local resources and domain expertise.

Faculty and alumni are internationally recognized: UBC has 7 Nobel laureates, 3 alumni who have served as Canadian Prime Ministers, 10 3M National Teaching Fellows, 208 members of the Royal Society of Canada, 65 Olympic medals won by varsity athletes, and 69 Rhodes Scholars (including one in each of the last five years).

Entrepreneurial perspectives encourage students, staff, and faculty to challenge convention and lead discovery. UBC is a leading partner in advancing British Columbia's technology, natural resources, life sciences, cultural, and information sectors. UBC is at the forefront of innovation in green buildings and communities, and in researching and demonstrating the potential for smart cities. Fueling such innovation is an expanding network of support for entrepreneurship at UBC.

Institutional Profile

Through UBC's role in providing diversity and breadth of programs to meet the needs of British Columbians, the University supports the local economy, attracts a wide range of research opportunities, and reaches out to the global community through the development of online and joint programs.

Institutional data for UBC – 2016/2017

- 318,000+ alumni in 150 countries
- 12,800 degrees granted
- 17 Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offered at UBC (as of July 2017)
- 600+ sustainability-related courses (as of April 2017)
- \$12.5B annual economic impact
- \$2.5B annual operating budget
- \$580M for 8,808 research projects (including 1326 research projects with industry partners and 1172 research contracts and agreements with government and non-profits)
- 199 companies spun-off from UBC research (as of July 2017)
- 34th place in the *2017 Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings* (one of three Canadian universities in the top 50)
- 1st place among North American universities for international outlook in the *2017 THE World Rankings* (also 1st place in 2016, 2015, and 2014)
- Canada's 1st Fair Trade campus
- Earned Canada's 1st Gold in the STARS sustainability rating system

Table 1: Student Information

Student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	
Student Full-Time Equivalent 2017/18 (FTE)	49,030
Student Full-Time Equivalent 2017/18 (FTE) –undergraduate*	40,922
Student Full-Time Equivalent 2017/18 (FTE) -graduate	8,108

*Includes residents in Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy

Student profile 2017/18	
Total Student Enrolment Headcount	54,319
Undergraduate Head Count (domestic and international)	44,378
Graduate Head Count (domestic and international)	9,941
Headcount enrolled in degree programs	49,392
Headcount enrolled in non-degree programs	4,927

For a full report of enrolment at UBC, please refer to the 2017/18 Annual Report on Enrolment.

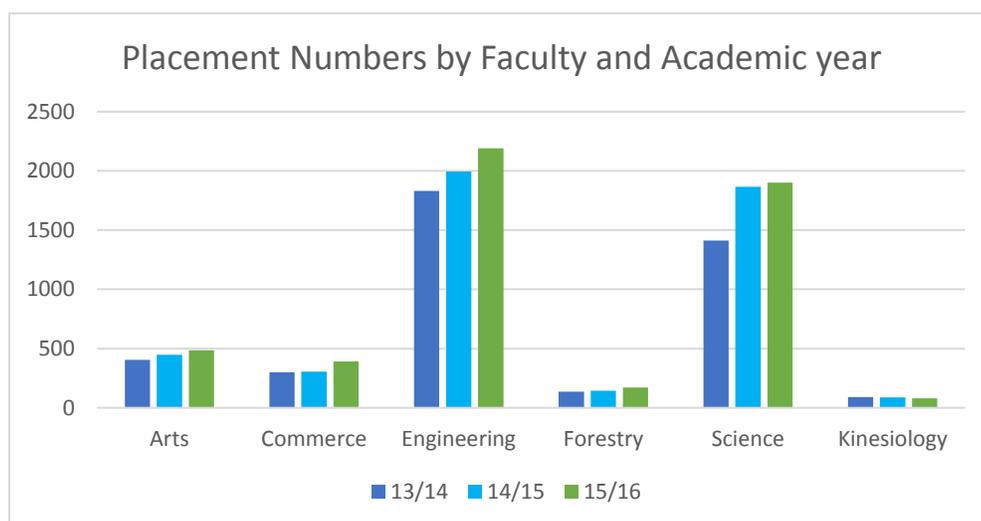
Lifelong Learning

All Faculties and UBC Extended Learning offer career and personal education. Each year, UBC serves over 50,000 learners in continuing professional development (Applied Science Dentistry, Education, Forestry, Land and Food Systems, Law, Medicine, Pharmaceutical Sciences), graduate credit certificates and professional Masters’ degrees (Applied Science, Arts, Education, Forestry, Science), and non-credit offerings for life-long learners (UBC Extended Learning).

Co-operative Education

UBC operates the largest co-operative learning program in western Canada with 5,107 work placements in 2015-2016 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Co-op placement numbers by Program and Academic Year



Student Access

UBC provides exemplary access to domestic students in several ways; for example:

- The University continues to honour its Board Policy #72, which states that no eligible student will be prevented from commencing or continuing her studies at UBC for financial reasons alone.
- Providing nearly \$94 million in student financial aid in 2016/17, an increase of 6.2% over the previous year.
- Late in 2017, the Blue & Gold Campaign for Students was launched with the goal of raising \$100 million in student support over three years, making this the largest fundraising campaign for students in Canadian history.
- Doubling our use of open textbooks in 2016/17 compared to the previous year, saving students \$1.4 million in textbook costs.
- UBC has established a student diversity initiative to increase access to and support for disadvantaged and under-represented groups.
- Last year UBC accepted 3618 (8.5%) more full-time student equivalents than are funded by the Ministry.

UBC participates in the BC Transfer System, which offers students more affordable pathways to degree completion through taking the first year or two of their study at a more local and/or inexpensive post-secondary institution. Direct transfer credit is granted for specific UBC courses when possible. In cases where an exact UBC equivalent has not been articulated, general transfer credit is granted at the subject level (e.g., English), the Faculty level (e.g., Arts), or the general elective level (e.g., 3 first-year credits). It is left to individual Faculties to determine how many credits, and which credits specifically, can be applied to the requirements of a particular program.

UBC is continuously improving the quality of undergraduate and graduate education by combining intellectual rigour with practical experience. The Centre for Community Engaged Learning supported 6,850 students in participating with 272 community partners in experiential learning projects across BC. Overall, by the end of their studies 75% of enrolled undergraduate students participated in enriched educational opportunities outside the classroom in 2015/16 (e.g., undergraduate research opportunities, Go Global exchanges, and co-op placements).

UBC is a global leader in applying research findings to improve teaching, with the Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative acting as a strong catalyst for innovation. Over the past five years UBC has transformed more than 500 courses that reach 40,000 students to provide the best learning environments for students, supported in part by our annual investment of \$2.5 million from our Teaching Learning Enhancement Fund. Student satisfaction surveys show that 93% of our undergraduates agree or strongly agree with the statement that they are satisfied with the quality of their education experience at UBC (see Appendix 2).

UBC is an important contributor to the provincial economy. The University has more than 15,000 employees, making it one of the largest employers in BC, and provides about 10,000 graduates a year who make a lasting contribution to the province. Our University-Industry Liaison Office has helped create 199 spin-off companies based on UBC research patents that attracted over \$540 million in investment, Entrepreneurship@UBC supports students launching companies.

As British Columbia's largest research university, UBC makes major contributions to the research ecosystems across the province that in turn attract companies wanting to invest in BC. Faculties continuously monitor student demand, labour market, and sector needs to create, revise, or phase out programs. Many Faculties maintain advisory councils with representatives from professional associations and industry to ensure the continued relevance of their programs. Expanding and improving programs that support student entrepreneurship and the training of highly qualified personnel.

UBC is committed to engaging Aboriginal people in mutually supportive and productive relationships and works to integrate understandings of Indigenous cultures and histories into its curriculum and operations. In 2017/18, there were 1191 students at the Vancouver campus (roughly 80% undergraduates) who self-identified as Aboriginal persons. While Aboriginal enrolment has increased over the past five years, Indigenous students continue to be under-represented. Indigenous curriculum is required in two Faculties (Education and Law) and is under development in a third (Medicine). Initiatives including the Indigenous Teacher Education Program, the Indigenous concentration in the School of Community and Regional Planning, the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program, Faculty of Forestry's Haida Gwaii, Aboriginal Medical Program and the Certificate in Indigenous Public Health based curriculum all address community priorities in the community. Overall, UBC offers 138 courses with significant Aboriginal content, 16 of which are offered in First Nations communities.

The University is committed to addressing systemic challenges for Aboriginal students seeking postsecondary education and is developing clear pathways to ensure that qualified First Nations, Metis and Inuit students can enter UBC. The UBC-Langara College Aboriginal Transfer Partnership has expanded to include seven Faculties. Aboriginal recruiting activities have increased and support for Aboriginal students has been strengthened. For instance, the Medicine undergraduate program is training more Indigenous physicians than ever before. In 2002, the program set a goal of graduating 50 more Indigenous doctors by 2020. This goal was reached, in 2015, five years ahead of schedule. In addition, a revised draft of our Indigenous Strategic Plan was distributed for public comment in March 2018 (see Appendix 5) and UBC's Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre – which is affiliated with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's National Research Centre in Winnipeg – opened in April 2018.

UBC Strategic Planning Context

Place and Promise (2009-2017)

As noted above, UBC engages in strategic planning at all levels, continuously reflecting upon these plans to ensure that they reflect our vision and priorities. All of the external academic reviews chosen by QAPA for close analysis were written during UBC's Place & Promise era (2009-2017) and were aligned to that plan's strategic goals, (see Appendix 10). In developing Place & Promise, UBC made several specific commitments, each paired with aims and actions designed to see them through. The core commitments were to student learning, research excellence and community engagement. Additional specific commitments were aimed at supporting UBC's central mission, capitalizing on strengths, and centering attention on where the University most needs to grow – examples include Aboriginal engagement, intercultural understanding, international engagement, and sustainability. All annual reviews and new programs were required to identify how they align with these strategic priorities and promises.

Shaping UBC's Next Century (2018 and beyond)

UBC Board of Governors has recently endorsed a new strategic plan, Shaping UBC's Next Century, (see Appendix 4). The plan's overarching vision for UBC is "inspiring people, ideas and actions for a better world" with a purpose of "pursuing excellence in research, learning and engagement to foster global citizenship and advance a sustainable and just society across British Columbia, Canada and the world". The plan is underpinned by five enduring values: excellence, integrity, respect, academic freedom, and accountability. It provides both a roadmap to help UBC reach its potential and a mechanism through which we can be held accountable.

UBC currently tracks, and will continue to track, metrics at the institutional level, many of which are highlighted in the University's Institutional Accountability Plan and Report, (see Appendix 2).

UBC's Next Century aligns well with government priorities, and the plan's emphasis on metrics to measure progress and success establish the institutional framework and context for quality assurance.

University Planning Framework

In addition to the strategic plan for the overall institution, the portfolio of each Vice-President also has a related strategic plan. All UBC plans are governed by Board and Senate policies and are informed by the government mandate and priorities. UBC's strategic planning framework provides overall coherence and direction to all plans at UBC's campuses.

The Senate approves any and all academic policies and plans relating to academic policy, admissions, curriculum, teaching and learning, and scholarships and student-awards.

Furthermore, the Senate receives annual reports on the budget, and from the University Librarian

and Ombudsperson. From time to time the Senate also hears reports on important topics including diversity, student experience, and student advising.

Collectively, these plans and their oversight fall under the governance framework established by the University Act to provide transparency and align UBC's goals with government mandates.

Quality Assurance

UBC's overall approach to quality assurance has evolved over time and will continue to do so. However, at every level, quality assurance is animated and underpinned by a number of key academic principles as described below.

Peer Review – Peer review is a fundamental academic principle that was originally developed to assess quality of research output, whose details are field-dependent. This principle has been applied to the assessment of academic units, which must be reviewed regularly by a team of external and internal faculty reviewers. The process was first formalized in 1977 by Senate policy and the overall process is overseen by the Vice-Provost Academic Affairs. This office provides guidance on the composition of review teams, the remit of the reviewers, preparation of self-study documents, and reports to Senate annually on all external reviews. All academic units ensure that their members contribute to the self-study and have the opportunity to meet the reviewers. Moreover, the units make the review reports and their response to reviews available to their members. Some units make the reviews and responses publicly available while a summary of the recommendations and responses are publically available in the annual report to Senate. It is now standard operating procedure to assess administrative as well as academic units, using the same principles of rigorous peer review by external experts, and to publish the results of the reviews on the website of the Vice-President Academic.

Performance Metrics – Over time, closer connections have been established between the overall UBC planning process and the development of metrics to monitor performance and progress, and to identify gaps for both academic and administrative units.

Student Surveys – UBC routinely surveys faculty, staff, and students, using the internal Students Evaluation of Teaching Survey and the external National Survey of Student Engagement Survey. Student evaluation of teaching is mandatory for all courses. The results are communicated to the appropriate unit Head and Dean, and are used in reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions. Both formative and summative peer assessments of teaching are well-established in all academic units. Summative peer reviews of teaching are required in all academic units for consideration of cases for promotion, reappointment, and tenure. Common institutional principles have been developed to guide the process, but specific operationalization is left to individual Faculties to design processes that best fit the local context. A strong culture of formative peer review (as one component of a broader set of mentorship activities) to enhance and develop faculty as educators supports the formal evaluations.

Academic Planning

The principles outlined above are complemented by practices of planning and accountability that are embedded throughout the institution. For instance, Faculties have existing strategic plans and the same applies to many other academic units, such as Departments and Schools. Like university plans, unit plans identify strategic priorities, actions to support the priorities, and metrics for tracking progress and success. Unit plans typically establish strategic priorities for research, teaching and learning, student experience, and community engagement. While all unit plans embrace the UBC-wide priorities established in various university plans, the ability to implement plans and redirect resources to support them can vary with the skill of the Head and culture of the unit.

Regular Assessment of Achievements

Accountability for delivery on strategic plans and actions is institution-wide. The recent focus on metrics to define progress and success, plus the use of surveys, means that UBC now expects verifiable data for assessing the achievement of our stated goals, which in turn makes it easier for members of different units to prioritize their actions.

The expectation of accountability and reporting on progress is present at all levels. All Vice-Presidents are accountable to the President for meeting the goals established in the UBC Strategic Plan, and for those established in the plans of any units that report to a particular Vice-President. There is a similar cascade of reports to the Provost and Vice-President Academic: all Deans report annually on the progress of their units toward achieving the goals of the University, Faculty, and unit plans respectively. Analogously, all unit Heads report annually to their Dean on progress in achieving Departmental, Faculty, and University goals.

In turn, the President and Vice-Presidents report annually to the Board on progress in meeting institution-wide plans, and the data contribute to the annual Institution Accountability Plan and Report. Deans also present highlights from their Faculty to the Board of Governors. Similarly, the Senate receives an annual presentation from the Provost on general academic plans.

The combination of external reviews, annual evaluations, incorporation of performance metrics and the establishment of clear connections between performance and budget allocations has created a culture of continuous quality improvement. Nevertheless, there could be clearer or more visible feedback loops between these various methods. We are seeking ways to build upon these strengths toward a framework for a more cohesive future approach to quality assurance and enhancement that offers clear opportunities for follow-up and response.

Quality Assurance Policy and Practice

While Ministry guidelines require that learning outcomes be delineated for any new degree program, UBC is also working towards developing program-level learning outcomes for long-standing, non-accredited programs as well. There has been strong leadership in this area in

direct-entry Faculties. UBC faculty members have made major contributions to the development of methodologies that assess teaching practices, and student ability to learn and solve problems, although this is easier in some disciplines than others. In particular, the large-scale adoption of blended learning at UBC allows students to spend more time in active learning. A recent analysis of more than 200 published studies shows significant improvements in student retention and effective learning as active learning increases¹. UBC is actively incorporating the research findings of its own faculty, and from advances made elsewhere to improve our existing courses and curriculum across the UBC.

Validated measures of competency, proficiency, and understanding are often mandated for programs that are externally accredited. These include Engineering, Nursing, Business, Dentistry, and many health disciplines. To cite one example, the Faculty of Medicine uses a Competency Based Medical Education (CBME)² framework that assesses how training is done, and how effectively students achieve the desired outcomes. The Royal College of Family Physicians of Canada developed the Triple C CBME Curriculum for family medicine education that was implemented at UBC in 2012 based on principles of comprehensiveness, patient care, continuity of education, and centeredness in family medicine. The College is incorporating Competency by Design (CBD) into specialty medicine education to align with the CBME framework. This initiative requires preceptors to observe and coach medical residents in ways appropriate for each stage of learning, and provides for Required Training Experiences (RTEs) and other supporting documentation (such as exam scores).

UBC is now focusing on further development of learning outcomes for programs, as outlined in our new strategic plan *Shaping UBC's Next Century*. To support this, UBC is committed to resourcing the administrative and cultural-change processes necessary to achieve the goal of having all programs at UBC contributing to best practices for research-intensive institutions, and

Over the past three years, UBC Vancouver's largest Faculty, the **Faculty of Arts** developed degree outcomes for all majors.

- A collaborative approach was taken, led by the Dean's office, and with dedicated support from the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology
- All Departments within Arts developed program learning outcomes, employing various approaches to meet the needs of each unit.
- 33 majors have articulated and refined program-level learning outcomes, and a Program Outcome Toolkit was created to support future work.
- Outcomes have formed the starting point for curriculum mapping of courses and major curriculum reform to align course offerings and objectives.

¹ <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1319030111>

² <http://postgrad.med.ubc.ca/cbme-competency-based-medical-education/>

learning from our peers. This will include further development of program-level outcomes and progressing the inclusion of these into regular program reviews.

In addition, UBC now requires that intended learning outcomes or objectives be included in the sample syllabi submitted to Senate as part of the curriculum approval process, or for any new course submitted as part of a new program proposal.

The [Carl Wieman Science Education initiative](#) (CWSEI, 2007-2017) has transformed the way science teaching is done at UBC, and is an approach that has been emulated by other institutions across the world.

- 75% of all undergraduate course registrations in Science are now in transformed courses
- A novel educational development strategy was pioneered, partnering Faculty with Science Teaching and Learning Fellows (PhD graduates in the respective disciplines),
- Course teams were supported with training and development in pedagogy and curriculum design to transform the learning design and delivery of courses,
- Research emphasis on evidence-based approaches of assessment of the effectiveness of transformed courses.
- Faculty members frequently and spontaneously transferred teaching-design elements and activities to other courses they taught.

Student Progress and Assessment

Assessment activities reflect specified learning outcomes and provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of the outcomes. Increasingly, UBC is using assessments as opportunities for learning, rather than measurements of learning, with the goal of teaching students to acquire skills that help ensure achievement of learning outcomes. Making effective use of learning technology tools available on the core Learning Management System to support peer and group-based assessment activities. Assessment of students in individual courses varies by discipline (creative arts versus engineering for example), learning objectives, and by instructor. Departments and programs often provide additional oversight and coordination for key core and gateway courses in the discipline to ensure consistent year-to-year comparisons. Similar oversight is provided for multi-section courses that are team taught to ensure consistency across sections.

External Reviews of Academic Units

As part of the continued learning processes for UBC, the development of this report has been an opportunity for self-reflection of our policies and processes. The policies and processes that guide our external reviews of academic units are an example of where the University has discovered an opportunity for improvement. The strength of our approach is its provision of a

common framework for review that can also be adapted according to the specific needs and characteristics of individual units. However, we believe that we can strengthen the process while monitoring this flexibility by building in more regularity, feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for following up.

Progress

We are indebted to the QAPA process for providing the impetus for self-reflection about UBC's practices, policies and accomplishments. In the development of the Institutional Report that follows, we learned more about the initiatives and practices undertaken institution-wide that combine to make UBC a world-class public research university. We look forward to receiving feedback on the report to follow and from the QAPA site-visit as we continue to work to enhance the quality of UBC for its students, its faculty and staff, and for the broader community that we serve.