

DRAFT

UBC Global Engagement Strategy

2020-2030

***IN SERVICE***

June 2020

## A Message from the Vice-Provost International

It is with gratitude and optimism that we share with you UBC's new Global Engagement Strategy 2020-2030 '*IN SERVICE*'.

First and foremost, we are grateful for the safety and wellbeing we enjoy as guests in the traditional, unceded, and ancestral lands of the Musqueam and Okanagan peoples of British Columbia. We are also grateful for the thousands of voices, from within the UBC community and from a range of our external partners, that have come together to produce this plan.

We are launching this strategy at a time of great change and fracturing across the globe. Even as the planet is engulfed by the COVID-19 crisis that has driven societies to greater isolation, we are recognizing the shaky foundations upon which global prosperity gains of the recent past rest. Indeed, despite progress in many areas, deep-rooted and increasingly widening social, environmental and economic divides and disparities characterize our world today.

We live in a time of astounding inequalities. From poverty and lack of access to education for many, from the disproportionate impact of climate change on the vulnerable to racial injustice and gender inequality, and from basic incivility to disrespect for those who don't look, talk and think like us, the challenges we face together are innumerable. In turn, COVID-19 has vividly laid bare the undeniable fact that the shocks and stresses that are an increasing part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century disproportionately affect the world's most vulnerable people who live in informal settlements and slums without access to running water or adequate housing.

We are optimistic, however, that as we cautiously emerge from the long shadow of this new crisis, voices are emerging that urge for greater collaboration, inclusion, and multilateralism, so we can together bridge divides, and mutually benefit from the thinking and talent of partners with whom our individual and collective futures are inexorably and

inextricably linked. And as we have, in a very short period of time, witnessed the value of technology in teaching our students while they shelter in safe places across the globe, many feel that we may be arriving at a point in time where conversations about the democratization of education may yield more tangible results and set us on a technology-paved path towards greater access to education for all.

It is to this chorus of inspiring voices that we add ours. In developing UBC's new Global Engagement Strategy, we have discovered broad consensus around the idea that UBC's global engagement presents a profound opportunity for UBC to stand *IN SERVICE* – to ideas, to peoples, and to the planet. At its core, this is a call to action, buoyed by a deep commitment to act on the basis of humility not hubris, compassion not competition, and engagement not estrangement.

Embracing the view that universities are global actors, and working collaboratively with partners from a range of sectors and geographies, the plan focuses on two aspirations. First, we seek to catalyze transformative learning experiences in global contexts and on global issues that will help shepherd our students on their voyage towards global citizenship and leadership. Second, humbled by the countless challenges confronting our world, we hope to enhance the impact of our scholarly activities, creative endeavours, and service capacity to help build a more just, sustainable, resilient and thriving world.

We hope to work with you to realize these goals, and we look forward to a conversation that brings us together.

Murali Chandrashekar  
Vice Provost, International

## CONTENTS

---

Preamble	2
Approach and Framework	3
UBC as a Global Actor	5
Students as Global Citizens	10
Issues of Global Relevance	14
Developing Global Capacity	18
Action Directions	22
Conclusion	23

---

DRAFT

## PREAMBLE

The University of British Columbia's two campuses are situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Musqueam and Okanagan peoples of British Columbia. Through our friendship with BC's First Nations, we continue to learn how our stewardship of the local informs our thinking about the global. How we treat each other at home says a lot about how we see ourselves collectively as global citizens. We understand our responsibility to contribute to global society derives from our commitment to serve our local communities. In no small part by honouring our commitments to truth and reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada, we hope not to replicate the histories and systems of colonialism within our global aspirations.

Our allegiance to all humanity means we strive in our global engagement for a world that is inclusive, equitable, sustainable, just, thriving, and prosperous. We seek to bring into sharper focus the notion that UBC has the capacity to convene and serve. We aspire to realize our potential to bring together students, staff and faculty from across the world, expose us all to knowledge and experiences that teach us about the world, explore new opportunities to seek knowledge and understanding, and empower us to work with others to address the profound challenges facing humanity and the biosphere.

We recognize our colonial past and present, and our contribution to systemic inequities. In seeking to eradicate the remnants of these systems, we commit to advancing practices of global engagement that rest on the foundations of integrity, inclusivity, equity, and accountability. We aim for mutual benefit through partnership building that realizes positive impact. In making visible the links between knowledge and solutions, we hope to increase the societal impact of

universities. We embrace an approach where knowledge knows no boundaries, and where collaboration across continents, disciplines and institutions is fundamental to addressing the complex issues facing our society both locally and globally.

We reaffirm our commitment to celebrate and pursue, in a global context, a wide range of scholarly activities and creative endeavours – from seeking to understand the tiniest of particles and quantum matter to artificial intelligence and how humans and machines process information; from nature and its evolution to the human condition, peace and justice; from science, law and business to language, poetry and dance; from built environments and ecosystems to planetary health, and beyond.

We are inspired by and embrace the challenge of addressing complex issues facing the planet, not just in other places in the world, but here in the local community as well. We partner widely to form global networks in which we facilitate convergences of knowledge and expertise around the pressing global issues of our time such as those called out in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

We are grounded in people, and are invested in empowering our faculty, students, staff and alumni to contribute to building a better world. As an institution that stands *IN SERVICE*, we act together – where no voice is left behind, where listening is fundamental in each collaboration, where research is also responsive to needs faced and identified by communities, and authentic partnerships are formed with organizations and institutions at all levels (college, corporation, community, city, country) to achieve greater impact, acquire a deeper and more holistic perspective, and to ensure sustainability.

## APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

In 2018, UBC articulated a new strategy, “Shaping UBC’s Next Century,” to serve as a roadmap for the institution. It set out a collective vision, purpose, goals, and strategies for the years ahead. Building on the successes of the past 100 years, the plan embraces a vision to “Inspire people, ideas and actions for a better world,” and commits the institution to the 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.”

Since the launch of the UBC strategic plan, members of the UBC community came together through working groups, workshops and surveys to provide input. Working articulations of the two key aspects of UBC’s purpose in the context of our global engagement – fostering global citizenship, and contributing to building a better world – were created by a working group, and feedback obtained from the broader UBC community. The consultations then focused on outlining the key themes that would support these pillars, and developed pathways for action supporting each of the themes.

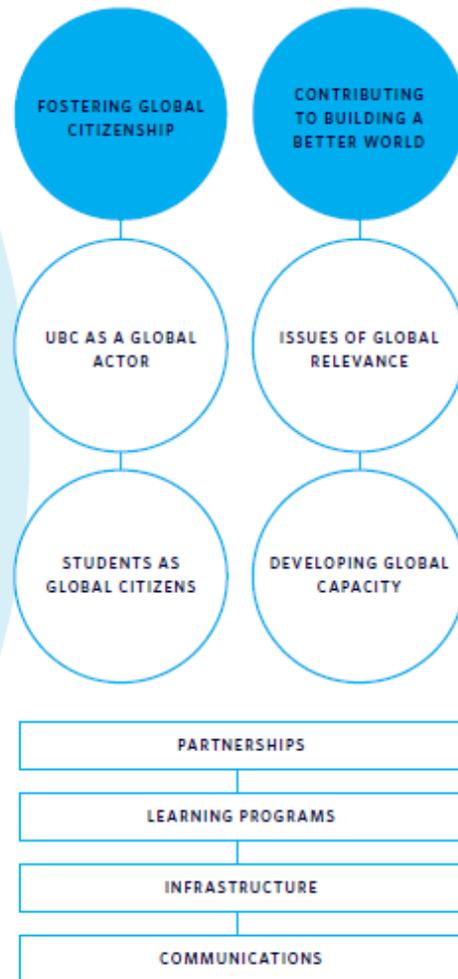
These ideas were tested at a series of workshops held for faculty, students, staff and alumni. That input was further shaped by feedback from the deans, UBC’s executive leadership, and a range of external partners, including partner universities, consuls general and ambassadors of many countries, several NGOs, chief resilience officers of many cities, and a number of ambassadors of countries to the United Nations.

This valuable input formed the basis of areas of strategic focus that have been articulated within this plan as **pillars, themes** and **action directions**. Each plays a significant role as follows:

- The **pillars** are the two key aspects of UBC’s purpose that global engagement can help deliver: (a) fostering global citizenship, and (b) advancing a sustainable and just society across British

Columbia, Canada and the world – “contributing to building a better world.”

- The **themes** represent vehicles that will help operationalize the pillars and channel transformational change in what we engage, with whom we engage, and how we engage in the coming years. These vehicles will enhance our academic and societal impact in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.
- The **action directions** represent broad pathways to guide our collective action. They will subsequently form the basis for us to derive an operational strategy and implementation priorities.



## Working Articulation of the Pillars

### Global Citizenship

- Acting from a place of inclusiveness, equity, open-mindedness, curiosity, and humility in our global engagement and global community at home.
- Participation in and contribution to shared communities and shared futures, both locally and globally.
- Shared social and ecological rights and responsibilities as individuals, as an institution, and as a member of the global community.

### Contributing to building a better world

- Engaging with the world beyond our borders for impact locally and globally.
- Being a change agent by helping accelerate impact (through research, learning and engagement) for the mutual benefit of more people globally.
- Educating and empowering students to contribute to a (socially and economically) prosperous and more inclusive future for all humanity.

DRAFT

## Theme 1: UBC AS A GLOBAL ACTOR

*“Universities can definitely have a role in the development and social justice sphere because they are interdisciplinary hubs bringing together the brightest minds and the tools and resources to research key pressing issues facing the world.”*

- a UBC staff member

UBC is a global actor in a highly interconnected world. This speaks to our rights and responsibilities as an institution in relation to our modes of global engagement both locally and globally.

At the outset, input from the UBC community strongly recognized our continuing and unwavering commitment to creative endeavours and fundamental research for the sake of knowledge and better understanding of the world in which we live. Building on this, the consultation surfaced the view that universities *also* evidence significant potential, and bear responsibility, to bring knowledge, talent, and convening power to address the pressing needs of our planet.

One lens that emerged consistently in the consultation is the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A set of 17 ambitious goals, the SDGs were adopted by world leaders in 2015 at a historic UN summit and came into force on 1 January 2016. The goals call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to enhance planetary health, prosperity and vibrancy. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling the causes and consequences of anthropomorphic (human-driven) climate change, such as rapid urbanization, excessive resource extraction, pollution emission, and inadequate conservation. But it’s not just countries that need to address the goals – it’s all of us, including universities.

Universities have long committed themselves to studying global issues from multiple disciplinary points of view. *IN SERVICE* recognizes that these institutions are now, more than ever before, in a

position to serve by convening impactful partnerships to address broad and profound challenges related to the economy, society and the biosphere.

Inspiring discussions in the consultation process focused on possibilities such as “what if UBC required its 65000 students to spend just one week every year working collaboratively with community members on issues of global relevance here in British Columbia?”, and “what would the resulting 2.6 million person-hours produce in terms of learning for students and value for community?”

While these and similar questions will find their way into an operational strategy for UBC’s local and global engagement, at the core of the discussion on this theme are the notions of cross-disciplinary engagement and partnerships.

In terms of cross-disciplinary engagement, the consultation noted that the UN SDGs represent a unique platform to bring together scholars from multiple disciplines to work together in a proactive and purposeful way.

The input from the UBC community also addressed several dimensions of UBC’s partnership canvas.

### **Partnership principles and effective practices.**

The UBC community strongly advocated for a continued focus on ensuring that partnerships are built on strong principles and effective practices – integrity, inclusivity, equity, accountability, mutual benefit and positive impact. For instance, the International Reporting Program (IRP) in UBC’s School of Journalism is an initiative aimed at teaching and producing enterprise global journalism by offering students the opportunity to report on under-covered stories from around the world. Rather than

‘parachute’ students from UBC into global contexts and curate stories on their own, the IRP has set up strong partnerships with journalism schools around the world. UBC seeks to partner with these schools and their students to assist in us all securing holistic insights based on deep local knowledge and sharing openly lessons and perspectives that UBC students bring to the endeavour.

### **Who should UBC partner with?**

Over the years, UBC has partnered extensively with other universities and research institutions in many parts of the world. These have contributed significantly to research, new knowledge and greater understanding. For instance, UBC’s Stewart Blusson Quantum Matter Institute (SBQMI), in collaboration with University of Tokyo and the Max Planck Society, identifies and explores quantum materials and phenomena, and exploits its knowledge to discover, design and build world-transforming future technologies. Likewise, the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences (PIMS) collaborates with a range of research institutions in the US, Mexico, China, Australia, Japan and Chile to facilitate cooperation in scientific research, development of joint scientific activities, and exchange of researchers. Such partnerships provide valuable access to research sites and complimentary assets that help expand our reach, amplify our impact, and enrich our understanding of the world. For instance, UBC’s Institute for Asian Research (IAR) leverages the range of partnerships in Asia to facilitate PhDs’ fieldwork access in Asia by connecting students to visiting scholars and officials to build up links for field work.

These partnerships also bring outstanding scholars and creators to our campuses. For example, through UBC’s partnership with the University of Otago, a

visiting scholar from that university to UBC’s Centre for Cinema Studies in the Department of Theatre and Film helps enhance our collective understanding of film festival attendance and indigenous activism through case studies of New Zealand, Canadian and American indigenous film festivals.

Engaging deeply with other universities has also offered unparalleled opportunities to bring together students from different universities, geographies and cultures. UBC is privileged to have student mobility arrangements with over 200 universities around the world that significantly contribute to student learning, intercultural understanding, and the development of global citizenship. For instance, ‘[A Place to Stand, A World to Explore](#)’ is a program created by the University of Otago’s Office of Māori Development, aimed at connecting Indigenous students from different communities across the globe; UBC became a partner in this initiative in 2019.

Building on this strong and impactful platform of partnerships, the UBC community recognized that addressing complex issues of global relevance, such as those called out in the UN SDGs, would require UBC to partner more widely and purposefully. The consultation surfaced a 5 C’s approach to guide potential partner institutions – Colleges and Universities, Corporations, Community organizations, Cities and Countries. The spotlights on “[Learning and service – Global health in Ghana and Zambia](#)” and “[RESEAU Centre for Mobilizing Innovation: Creating a high impact water health innovation strategy for rural communities](#)” are two of the many examples that illustrate current work at UBC covering a range of partner institutions.

## The 5Cs: Towards a New Global Engagement Partnership Canvas

*Colleges & Universities* – UBC has long engaged with other academic institutions in many parts of the world, and many of these are leading research universities. These partnerships have served us well – bringing together researchers to engage in collaborative research, and helping exchange students to engage in academic pursuits in different parts of the world. *IN SERVICE* recognizes that we can build on this strong foundation to also partner with academic institutions that share this deep desire to contribute to building a more just, prosperous and sustainable world. This will require us to look not only at global rankings as a currency for partnerships, but to seek convergence on values. Such institutions offer much to UBC, UBC has much to offer to them, and the collaboration has much to offer the world. As many of our innovative student mobility programs reveal (see the spotlight on “[Learning and Service – Global Health in Ghana and Zambia](#)”), partnering with such institutions offer life-changing experiences for our students and enable our researchers to be in greater service.

*Corporations* – Similarly, UBC has partnered with industry for both research and student engagement (e.g., Co-op programs). The UBC community felt that we could do more and be more purposeful. For instance, the United Nations Global Compact, formed in 2000, is a “voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to implement universal sustainability principles and to take steps to support UN goals.” From very modest beginnings, when just 44 corporations became signatories to this initiative, the UN Global Compact today represents the world’s largest sustainability initiative – 12,000 corporations have become signatories, from over 160 countries, both developed and developing, representing nearly every sector and size. And they want to work together with a range of stakeholders. Launched at the 2019 UN General Assembly, the *UN Global Compact-Accenture Strategy 2019 CEO Study — [The Decade to Deliver: A Call to Business Action](#)* — reveals that CEOs from many of the world’s leading organizations believe that an unprecedented shift in public expectations is encouraging businesses to get ahead on sustainability. This represents a very promising avenue for partnerships for UBC. From collaborative research on sustainability, to co-creating learning experiences for students and working together in communities on sustainable development, many possibilities exist.

*Community organizations* – Institutions in different parts of the world, focusing on improvements to their local community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning, and with deep local knowledge, are crucial for UBC to be a learning organization, and for its students to learn about the world in which we live. Such institutions are very important in the articulation of community needs so that research can be responsive to those needs. Likewise, NGOs, composed of volunteers working under a small professional staff, serve often at the front-lines in providing housing, clean water, sanitation, medical services, micro-credit, economic development and countless other services to local communities, often faster and cheaper. Partnering with such organizations is important for us to secure a holistic understanding of complex problems and to be *IN SERVICE*.

*Cities* – The world continues to urbanize. In the 100 years starting in 1913, the proportion of the world’s population that lives in cities grew five-fold from 10 to 50 per cent, and estimates suggest that 75 per cent of the world’s population will live in cities in 2050. Though history reveals that urbanization has always been an accelerator of growth and development, it also poses profound challenges. As Canada’s current ambassador to China, Dominic Barton, noted when he was the CEO of McKinsey & Co., “Making cities great is the critical infrastructure challenge of this century.” Indeed, [UN Sustainable Development Goal 11](#) focuses on “Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” Cities represent an amazing cauldron in which cross-disciplinary teams can engage in research and solution-generation. Partnerships with the system-of-systems that cities are can help facilitate the creation of pedagogical programs in which teams of students from multiple disciplines can learn about complex systems, and about working across boundaries.

*Countries* – Over the years, UBC has recognized the importance and value of understanding complex issues that shape prosperity and development at the national level. Initiatives such as the China Council, that assist the University in forming mutually beneficially partnerships with various ministries in China, or IC-IMPACTS, that has helped operationalize research and engagement between India and Canada, are examples on which UBC can build a more purposeful partnership with many more countries in which we already conduct research and pedagogical programs.

## **SPOTLIGHT: Learning and serving: Global health in Ghana and Zambia**

Commitment, passion, and the ability to think critically and creatively are essential attributes for those who want to practice global health. For the past 17 years, UBC Okanagan undergraduate nursing students have been travelling to Africa during their fourth year of study for a Global Health practicum that puts their skills and stamina to the test.

The journey began when visionary associate professor Joan Bassett-Smith was awarded a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency to develop a Rural Nurse Practitioner Program in Northern Ghana. Others from the nursing faculty soon joined her. In 2001 nursing instructor Joyce Henderson accompanied the first group of Okanagan nursing students to Ghana. Nearly 20 years later, students are still making the life-changing trek to help develop local community capacity and work with African colleagues to address health inequities.

Based on the program's success, a second partnership was established in Zambia, where students also have the opportunity to collaborate on research projects.

With a broad partnership canvas that includes rural clinics, government-funded health centres, universities, schools, and non-government organizations, building strong relationships and coming together to solve issues are the keys to the program's success. "All of our work is driven by [local] needs and areas where there is greatest demand," explains nursing instructor Fay Karp.

Says one student of her experience: "I came into this practicum expecting to change lives, not knowing how much they would actually change mine."

## **SPOTLIGHT: RESEAU Centre for Mobilizing Innovation: Creating a high impact water health innovation strategy for rural communities**

Despite global progress, billions of people lack access to safe water and proper sanitation.. As the rapid pace of urbanization leads to the reallocation of resources and migration of skilled workforce to populated urban areas, rural communities with over 3 billion people will become increasingly more vulnerable to water contamination and scarcity. Recognizing that it is a key global issue of our time, **UN Sustainable Development Goal 6** focuses on “Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”

Focusing on addressing this global challenge, UBC researchers are also helping over 6 million Canadians, living in Indigenous and non-urban communities, who face potentially negative health, social and economic impacts from unsafe drinking water.

RESEAU is hosted at UBC, primarily funded by the Government of Canada’s Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE), and growing participation and investment of like-minded experts from international public and private organizations and communities. RESEAU’s vision is to accelerate achievement of socioeconomically and technologically sustainable outcomes in water health and well-being for Indigenous and non-urban communities.

RESEAU has developed multi-award-winning models for creating ecosystems with cross-sectoral actors participating in strategic open innovation for marginalized markets, deemed too small to justify the costly infrastructure investment. These models are predicated themselves on the notion that the core of the relationship between innovators and communities is about a service and not a product. The impact or outcomes are defined as benefit to community well-being beyond the academic research.

## Theme 2: STUDENTS AS GLOBAL CITIZENS

*“Canada being a multicultural nation is based on the idea of inclusion. With the world being so connected now, anybody thinking about the future needs to be thinking about global citizenship. Being able to jump out of the comfort zone of one’s own culture requires people to have an open mind and be curious about the world around them.”*

- a UBC alumnus

UBC is committed to fostering the global citizenship of all students. The framework recognizes that this is enhanced through learning in global contexts and through internationalization at UBC (inclusive learning experiences on campus and in the local communities).

In addition to the themes surfaced in the working articulation of global citizenship and the position espoused in the preamble to *IN SERVICE*, UBC strongly endorses the burgeoning view of the Canadian government (through its 2017 “Report of the Study Group on Global Education”) and Universities Canada (through its 2018 release “Connecting Canadian talent to the world”). UBC served as an active and contributing member in the development of both reports that outlined additional benefits of academic learning in global contexts as the following:

- ***Future-proofing Canada’s youth and economy*** – “The essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills gained through global experiences – abilities to problem-solve, adapt, collaborate and communicate with people from other backgrounds – will help Canada’s young people adjust to the shifting nature of work, and are critical to building a strong economy in the face of disruption.”
- ***Strengthening global ties*** – “The people-to-people ties forged through study abroad help build and maintain strong foundations for diplomatic and trade relations. To compete globally, Canada must maximize its trade agreements, sign new ones, and help Canadian businesses (of all sizes) and your entrepreneurs succeed within them. This is accomplished by investing in talent, equipping students with global competencies and encouraging them to build valuable international networks through global study.”
- ***Increasing social equality*** – “Studying abroad gives students better academic and employment outcomes after graduation – and those benefits are particularly pronounced for those from low-middle income, Indigenous, and special needs students, to increase life chances. Far from being a luxury or an indulgence for the wealthy few, study abroad is vital to driving future prosperity for all Canadians” (see the spotlight on “**Social equality through international learning programs**”).

UBC is recognized as a leader in student mobility in Canada. Through a range of flexible and innovative programs, over 20 per cent of UBC undergraduate students participate in learning and service abroad experiences during their degrees, compared to the Canadian average of 11 per cent. While we should continue to develop and offer more innovative programs that bring students from multiple disciplines together to work on complex issues of global relevance, *IN SERVICE* recognizes two important issues that need careful consideration:

- ***For the vast majority of UBC students, global citizenship needs to be cultivated locally.*** For a range of reasons (financial constraints being the most important), almost 80 per cent of UBC students do not avail themselves of opportunities to study abroad. If we are to deliver on the promise of global citizenship for all students, we will need to leverage the knowledge and experiences of our diverse student body – including over 17,000 international students from more than 160 countries. Viewed through this lens, diversity in our student body is important to ensure diversity of world-views and to the ability of UBC to deliver on global citizenship more effectively. This ‘internationalization on campus’

idea will require us to connect all students through intercultural engagement and through active engagement with issues of global relevance. Linking some of these directly to the academic mission of the institution and having them be part of curricular experiences affords immense opportunity to also deliver on UBC's strategies related to transformative learning experiences of students. For instance, we have a unique opportunity to leverage the place in which we are situated, in Vancouver and the Okanagan, to enable all of us to learn more about an issue of profound global relevance – the history of the land of the Indigenous peoples, how we have contributed to systemic injustices in the past, what truth and reconciliation is, what it means to connect with the land, nature, and culture, what it means for collaboratively solving issues of global relevance, what it means for all peoples to pursue their own visions of economic and social development and prosperity, and how we can all eventually stand *IN SERVICE*.

- ***UBC does not need to do this alone and getting on long-haul flights is not the only way to do it.*** UBC is in a privileged position of having an amazing set of partners across the globe. As the future of work evolves and students increasingly find themselves working in global virtual teams, we have an opportunity to leverage our partners *and* technology to help deliver on global citizenship. Many institutions around the world are positioning their contribution to society around the UN SDGs. Connecting students from UBC and such partner institutions through technology-enabled learning spaces represents an immense opportunity to gain benefits from living in an interconnected and networked world (see the spotlight on “**Cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional and cross-continental learning experiences in cities.**”

### **SPOTLIGHT: Creating connections: Social equality through international learning programs**

In 2019, UBC was honoured to become a program partner of Tūrangawaewae, Pōkai Whenua (A Place to Stand, A World to Explore), a unique student exchange program created by the University of Otago's Office of Māori Development and International Office that emphasizes face-to-face relationships between Indigenous representatives of universities around the world.

A formalized Indigenous student exchange program is a new initiative at UBC that reflects our goals of creating exceptional learning environments through Aboriginal engagement, international engagement, and intercultural understanding. In this program, Indigenous students from UBC take courses in Māori Studies at the University of Otago while experiencing contemporary Indigenous community life in Dunedin, New Zealand. Indigenous students from the University of Otago receive priority access to First Nations coursework at UBC and are engaged in Indigenous student events.

In 2019, UBC also collaborated with the Indigenous Student Leaders Program at Monash University in Victoria, Australia. The program connects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with local Indigenous students, leaders and Elders, offering a unique international study tour to help develop global skills and experiences. Participants reflected on the similarities and differences that exist in the histories and circumstances of First Nations peoples.

These initiatives led to UBC becoming a founding member of the Indigenous Studies Network, whose activities include facilitating Indigenous student and staff international mobility, strengthening connections between Indigenous peoples globally, evaluating best practice approaches to reconciliation, and examining the structural nature of injustices against Indigenous peoples from a multidisciplinary perspective.

### **SPOTLIGHT: Urban action: Cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, and cross-continental learning experiences in cities**

In 2016, UBC launched a learning platform focused on urban resilience for students in the Global Network for Advanced Management (GNAM), a network of 32 universities across 27 countries. Created and delivered in partnership with several GNAM schools and the Rockefeller Foundation, the synchronous online course **Urban resilience: Complexity, collaborative structures, and leading change** and related face-to-face courses have engaged over 350 graduate students from 15 universities, representing over 20 nationalities and multiple disciplines, to work in global-virtual and face-to-face teams on 30 projects offered by Chief Resilience Officers from cities across the globe.

Another outcome of this engagement is the Collaborative for Urban Resilience and Effectiveness (**CURE**), a global mobilization of talent, knowledge, and experience across disciplines, universities, community organizations, cities, and corporations to contribute to urban prosperity, innovation, and development.

In the summer of 2019, undergraduate and graduate students from four CURE members (UBC, Cambridge, Yale-NUS, and Indian Institute of Technology-Madras) worked in virtual and face-to-face multidisciplinary teams on projects for the city of Chennai focused on rainwater harvesting, sustainable housing, civic engagement, and urban horticulture. Supported through UBC Strategic Plan funding, this program represents a pilot course on which UBC continues to curate innovative learning programs for students.

Today, CURE is collaborating with World Resources Institute, Slum Dwellers International, and Rockefeller Foundation's Global Resilient Cities Network to build a capacity development platform that will bring together colleges and universities, community-based organizations and cities to help shape scaled global action on urban resilience.

### Theme 3: ISSUES OF GLOBAL RELEVANCE

*“We need to encourage folks not to work in silos and to highlight the interconnections between each of the faculties/ departments/ units and the shared responsibility we have in progressing towards more just, equitable, sustainable, and healthy communities”*

- a UBC student

Advancing new knowledge for the betterment of lives around the world has long been in the DNA of our university. In partnership with universities, industries, government, and communities worldwide, our research discoveries are hugely influential. This collaborative work has led to new ideas, innovations, discoveries, and countless new products, treatments, and services. In areas ranging from advanced materials to brain health, culture and diversity to digital technologies, business and economics to the environment and genomics, heart and lung to HIV/AIDS, UBC scholars serve humanity and the planet.

More recently, UBC has purposefully sought to spawn, and support with seed funds, research excellence clusters – interdisciplinary networks of researchers focused on solving key challenges facing society that transcend the traditional boundaries associated with departments, institutions, and funding agencies. Research excellence clusters led by researchers on the Vancouver campus are currently funded through the Research Excellence Clusters Initiative, and by the Eminence Fund program on the Okanagan campus.

For instance, the Wingspan Dis/ability Arts, Culture & Public Pedagogy Cluster is composed of and by the Wingspan Collaborative at UBC. It is an intellectual ‘studio’ of interdisciplinary scholars in disability studies, arts, culture, and public pedagogy across many disciplines who collaborate on common projects regarding the rights of people with disabilities. This project promotes research into and engagement with the idea that while individual disabilities pose impairments, they should not be seen wholly as deficits, but rather as differences that enrich collective human experience and the arts (see as well the spotlight on “**Biodiversity research: An emerging global research priority**”).

In light of this kind of interdisciplinary thematic research engagement, considerable interest surfaced across UBC to cast ‘international’ less in terms of countries and geography and more in terms of ‘issues of global relevance.’ This focus on addressing complex challenges facing humanity, such as those called out in the UN SDGs, requires multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder collaborations, leveraging expertise across the university and engaging with networks of a wide range of partners focused on the same. UBC is already being recognized for our impact through the UN SDG lens, ranking third amongst 500 institutions in the 2019 Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings for work within our campuses and immediate geography.

There is much to be done, however, towards *global impact* on the UN SDGs, where the beneficiaries of the work provide evidence of impact. The input from the UBC community points to the need to first secure a better understanding of the various issues of global relevance on which UBC scholars are already working, and utilize those data to purposefully convene cross-disciplinary teams of researchers. For instance, knowledge of who in the University is interested in the area of “good health and well-being” (SDG 3) will permit us to bring those researchers together to then engage with the topic more holistically. It is very likely that there are scholars in the STEM fields, as well as those in Land & Food Systems, Education, Arts (including creative arts practices) and Humanities, Forestry, and Business, all interested in health and well-being but from different disciplinary approaches. The resulting collaboration would enable us to engage far more holistically with the theme. The Okanagan campus, for example, has made an Eminence Fund award to researchers in Performance, Education, and Medicine to support a collaborative cluster engagement with colleagues at

the Wellcome Centre for Cultures of Health at the University of Exeter.

*IN SERVICE* recognizes that the University will continue to strongly support individual researchers and Faculties seeking to create international collaborations to assist in their research, pedagogy and service no matter what their areas of inquiry. Proactively facilitating, however, the formation of such powerful, cross-disciplinary teams of scholars focused on issues of global relevance will afford the University a unique opportunity to then pursue funding from global foundations and supra-country agencies (e.g., The World Bank) that value such holistic and cross-disciplinary engagement of issues of global relevance. It will also expose us to a range of actors also interested in working collaboratively to find solutions for global challenges.

The desire to enhance research excellence in service to society underpins UBC's participation as a founding member of the Highly Integrative Basic and Responsive (HIBAR) Research Alliance (see [www.hibar-research.org](http://www.hibar-research.org)), a U.S. & Canadian network of research universities that coordinates volunteer expert participants from all interested organizations. The participants cooperate to encourage the time-honoured practice of combining fundamental research with leading-edge use-inspired investigation. Specifically, the HRA's goal is to boost HIBAR research four-fold over the next decade, from about one project in 20 today, to one in five by 2030.

Critically, each HIBAR research project is co-led with a volunteer expert in society who deeply understands the specific problem being tackled. The immense challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century call for much more HIBAR research.

Funding for work that is grounded in societal problems is evident in the patterns of funding by global foundations. Data compiled by the Foundation Center as a part of the SDG Philanthropy Platform initiative (funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the MasterCard Foundation) reveal that since 2016, foundation funding towards achieving the SDGs was over USD152 billion. The top five areas that foundations funded were SDG3 (Good Health and Wellbeing; USD49 billion), SDG4 (Quality Education; USD60 billion), SDG5 (Gender Equality; USD10 billion), SDG11 (Sustainable Cities; USD9 billion), and SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; USD15 billion). The data also reveal significant overlap between funding across the goals pointing to the need to approach the goals with cross-disciplinary focus. For instance, of the USD49 billion funding towards projects focused on SDG3 (Good Health and Well-being), almost USD5 billion simultaneously focused on SDG4 (Quality Education). UBC has an opportunity to build on the work in sustainability and its global partnerships in this space (see the spotlight on **“Leading by example – Universities as living labs and global actors for sustainable development”**).

### **SPOTLIGHT: Biodiversity research: An emerging global priority**

The most remarkable feature of our planet is the diversity of its life forms, but this biodiversity is threatened by anthropogenic impacts, including climate change. The Biodiversity Research Cluster, a world leader in biodiversity research, seeks to identify global change impacts on biodiversity and offer solutions to challenges associated with these changes.

Scientists at UBC's Biodiversity Research Centre investigate the ecology, evolution, and conservation of biological diversity through research at all levels, from genes to ecosystems through to interactions with society. As the scale of global climate change, human-caused habitat alterations, and associated extinction rates expand, the need to understand and conserve biodiversity – and the ecosystem functions it sustains – has never been more pressing.

Encompassing a broad range of research interests, with over 70 scholars from ten different departments across UBC, the Biodiversity Research Cluster epitomizes the cross-disciplinary approach to focusing attention on **UN Sustainable Development Goal 15**: “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”

UBC scholars working collaboratively in this space come from a range of disciplines, including biology, zoology, forest conservation sciences, oceans and fisheries, geography, mathematics, immunology, botany, and environmental sustainability. From oceans to deserts to far-off jungles, these researchers are roaming the globe and uncovering answers to questions about our world, promoting understanding and appreciation of biodiversity, and providing independent advice on biodiversity stewardship to governments, the private sector, and the public.

## **SPOTLIGHT: Leading by example: Universities as living labs and global actors for sustainable development**

While universities house researchers focused on sustainability and help develop future leaders for the planet, they also have also an immense opportunity to lead by example.

UBC has long been committed to campus sustainability. In 1990, UBC signed the Talloires Declaration, an action plan for incorporating sustainability into higher education. We were the first Canadian university to adopt a sustainable development policy in 1997, and the first to open a sustainability office in 1998. UBC is committed to integrating our operational and academic efforts in sustainability, and the UBC Sustainability Initiative, established in 2010, is our way of advancing this broad goal. Through our Campus as a Living Laboratory approach, and thanks to the dedication and commitment of our faculty, staff, and students, sustainability is deeply embedded across UBC.

But like any global challenge, addressing sustainability requires collaboration with a range of global actors. As campus sustainability programs become more sophisticated, there is an increasing need to share experiences, measure achievements and report on performance. UBC's partnership with the [University Climate Change Coalition \(UC3\)](#) and leadership of the [International Sustainable Campus Network \(ISCN\)](#) are two examples that serve as strong foundations for further engagement. Both networks serve as global forums for collaboration on sustainability: UC3 brings together thought leaders, researchers, and policy-makers to find effective solutions to climate change, and ISCN facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices to achieve sustainable campus operations and integrate sustainability in research and teaching.

## Theme 4: DEVELOPING GLOBAL CAPACITY

*This theme is probably the most consequential. The most in need cannot come to UBC; UBC must come to the most in need. Facilitating, providing support and credit for these activities for faculty is crucial. This has the potential to materially change more lives than any other activity.*

- a UBC faculty member

The input from the UBC community noted that even as globalization and technological advances have fueled growth in global GDP and prosperity in many nations, we continue to live in an era of astounding inequality. The gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen, posing a threat to world peace. The recently published Global Wealth Report by Credit Suisse, a global financial services company, reveals that the richest one per cent own half of all the wealth in the world. Developing economies as a result fall further and further behind in building resilience in the face of the physical, social, and economic challenges that are an accelerating part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For many developing economies this is a critical time. The presence of large institutional and infrastructure voids makes it difficult for these economies to accelerate in areas such as poverty reduction, access to education, water, food, energy and healthcare, access to decent work and economic growth, and disaster-resilient infrastructure in ways that developed economies have been able. Unless there is a concerted effort to address these institutional and infrastructure voids through capacity development in a range of sectors, the inspiring sustainability goals outlined in the UN SDG framework will be elusive and increasingly challenging. Importantly, as outlined in **SDG17 “Partnerships for the Goals,”** a successful sustainable development agenda requires inclusive partnerships, at the global, national, regional, and local level, built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the center.

The infrastructure challenges faced by many regions goes beyond hard infrastructure. It also calls for technical assistance, systems and training for greater access to education (see the spotlight on **“Sauder Social Entrepreneurship – Kenya: Empowering**

**impoverished communities”**), systems for delivery of cost-effective healthcare (see the spotlight on **“From a person to the planet – Consortium of Universities for Prosperity and International Development”**), decision-making approaches, governance processes, and assessment for effective resource allocation.

The consultation surfaced countless examples of global capacity development across UBC, many involving individual faculty members and staff quietly engaging in amazing acts of service to build capacity where needed. We identify a few initiatives at the faculty-level:

- The Office of Pediatric Surgical Evaluation and Innovation (OPSEI), situated in the UBC Faculty of Medicine and at BC Children’s Hospital, is committed to improving the health of Ugandan children by increasing the number of Pediatric Surgeons in Uganda. In partnership with Makerere University and Mulago Hospital, OPSEI has participated in three Pediatric Surgery Camps since 2008. These camps are unique; BC pediatric surgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses travel to Uganda to work alongside their Ugandan counterparts and provide free surgical care to hundreds of children. While the camps will continue to benefit children with urgent surgical needs, OPSEI’s vision is to form a Training Alliance to increase the number of pediatric surgeons in Uganda.
- The Canadian International Resource Development Institute (CIRDI), incubated within UBC in 2013, works at the request of country governments that are seeking to ensure the sustainable stewardship of natural resources as a catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The collaboration seeks to co-design and implement projects that develop public

sector capacity so that resource development is guided by transparent and effective legislation, robust regulatory frameworks, strong environmental protection and best-in-class health and safety regimes. CIRDI's projects to date have spanned 22 countries and over 186 partners.

- The Dental Mission Project Society (TDMP) was formed to support marginalized and developing communities both locally and internationally in need of oral health care, prevention and education. UBC Dentistry partners with the Dental Mission Project in support of a joint mandate of oral health education, research and community outreach. This partnership also provides the opportunity to engage UBC dental students and alumni to enhance their clinical skills as well as better understanding of their own sense of social responsibility as oral health care professionals.

This theme has captured the interest of people across UBC. On the foundation of an incredible range of activities individual faculty members, students, and staff are already engaged in around the globe, we have an opportunity to amplify, support, and recognize the strategic importance of these activities, and convene groups across disciplines for even greater global impact. *IN SERVICE* recognizes that impact in this space requires (a) articulation of an inspiring institutional positioning that is strongly communicated and celebrated, (b) building and connecting to networks that incorporate local expertise, and (c) creating infrastructure to ensure effective and sustainable partnerships and programs.

The idea that universities indeed have a unique civic and social responsibility as global actors has captured the attention of many universities and countries. In July 2019, UBC joined the **U7+ Alliance** – an international alliance of 45 universities from 21 countries representing over two million students around the world – to engage both in discussion and in concrete action by making commitments that universities may take to address the most pressing global challenges in a multilateral context. It is the very first alliance of universities aimed at structuring and advancing their role as global actors across the multilateral agenda that can take concrete action for local, regional and global impact.

The consultation also noted that capacity development is not about UBC embracing a 'saviour' role. Rather, efforts at collaborative capacity development need to be responsive to the 2005 Paris Declaration and the 2008 Accra Agenda. Together, these represent commitments for effective capacity development in which "individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time." We need to ensure that research and training that underpin such long-term development efforts are responsive to needs faced and identified by communities. At the same time, *IN SERVICE* notes such engagement affords researchers an opportunity to learn from decision-makers on the ground about effective innovations that surface in response to local contexts and challenges.

## **SPOTLIGHT: Sauder Social Entrepreneurship – Kenya: Empowering Impoverished Communities**

Now in its 15th year, UBC Sauder Social Entrepreneurship – Kenya (SSE – Kenya) provides a unique opportunity for UBC Sauder School of Business students who are interested in social entrepreneurship to make a difference in the lives of aspiring young entrepreneurs from three communities in Nairobi: Kibera, Mathare and Makadra.

For four weeks each summer, a group of students and faculty supervisors travel to Kenya, team up with business students from Nairobi's Strathmore University, and lead a series of business planning workshops. To date, approximately 1,000 local residents have participated in the program and learned the fundamental skills they need to expand existing companies or develop new micro-ventures.

The mission of SSE – Kenya is to uplift the lives of African youth and their communities through sustainable entrepreneurship. In the long-term, the training received from SSE plays a crucial role in reducing the high unemployment rate in the three communities. At the same time, the program provides Sauder students with an opportunity to put theory into practice, to develop their presentation and leadership skills, to teach and mentor Kenyan youth, to build international networks, and to foster an ethical approach to entrepreneurship in a globalized context.

In the words of one of the UBC participants, Maggie Yip, “We weren't there to ‘give.’ We were there to share knowledge, to empower these youths to sustain their own lives, families, and communities so that they could reach their potential.”

## **SPOTLIGHT: From a person to the planet: The Consortium of Universities for Prosperity and International Development**

The Human Genome Project fundamentally changed how we approach science and medicine, facilitating personalized treatment tailored to an individual's genetic profile. Yet there is profound inequality in the genomic sciences. Ninety per cent of all genome sequences are derived from white European populations. This is slowly changing, but genomes derived from African populations are underrepresented.

Jamal Kurtu, Corey Nislow, and Robert Sindelar from UBC's School of Pharmaceutical Sciences launched the Ethiopian Translational Health Innovation (ETH-I) with the goal of developing a collaborative local, stakeholder-driven effort that uses genomics and genomic data to empower innovation in healthcare and wellness in Ethiopia.

Inspired by the ETH-I initiative, a meeting with the President of Ethiopia at UBC in June 2019 sowed the seeds for the creation of the **Consortium of Universities for Prosperity and Integrated Development**. The Consortium embraces guiding principles for effective capacity development that are responsive to the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action. It is led by the premise that wide collaboration, involving institutions from the North and the Global South, is crucial to help foster prosperity and development on a global scale.

Supported by the Office of the President of Ethiopia, representatives from UBC, Addis Ababa University, Cambridge University, Aga Khan University, University College London, Sciences Po, Ashoka University, Gondor University, the African Union, and the Government of the United Kingdom will co-create the blueprint, and the Consortium will be launched at a Global Summit in Ethiopia.

## ACTION DIRECTIONS

The following action directions will help shape the University's global engagement in the coming years. All action directions embrace multiple parts of our university community and our external partners. Each is intended to provide support and guidance to the activities of faculties, schools, departments and other cross-cutting initiatives expressed in the UBC strategy.

### Action direction 1 – Partnerships

- 1) Continue to deepen and strengthen effective partnerships with institutions that have developed over the years.
- 2) Expand our current set of partnerships to include communities, corporates, cities, and countries, based on convergences of values that relate to the University's purpose to work collaboratively on addressing issues of global relevance and global capacity development.

### Action direction 2 – Learning programs

Better equip students to respond to a globalized world by curating, facilitating and supporting curricular and co-curricular activities and experiences that:

- 1) incorporate global perspectives and issues of global relevance

- 2) provide learning opportunities on UBC's campuses, in our local communities, in global contexts and via global virtual classrooms
- 3) are inclusive and accessible to all UBC students.

### Action direction 3 – Infrastructure

Develop processes and infrastructure in order to:

- 1) simplify and facilitate the creation and stewardship of global partnerships
- 2) effectively partner with the wide range of stakeholders needed for sustainable global capacity development
- 3) create a global engagement 'heat map' to identify areas of expertise and overlap, and convene multidisciplinary researchers to engage on issues of global relevance, linked to global funding opportunities

### Action direction 4 – Communication

Develop mechanisms and a communications strategy to:

- 1) advance the purpose of the University, aimed at building a more just, sustainable and prosperous society both locally and globally, and
- 2) highlight and celebrate the significant capacity-development activity being carried out by faculty, students and staff across UBC.

## CONCLUSION

As we raise our sights and seek more ways of making a positive impact in this world, we recognize that good strategy is not only about an aspirational vision, it is also about making choices. Indeed, the plan will be impactful only if we align our efforts with a limited set of priorities, focusing on areas where we can make the biggest difference. Because of time and monetary constraints, it is imperative that we focus. We will also need to commit to ensuring that our people and teams are appropriately resourced and connected in the various initiatives that support the Global Engagement Strategy.

This will require us to coordinate the story-telling across the institution. The stories will also need to reflect themes that are captured in the preamble to the Global Engagement Strategy – that we act on the basis of humility not hubris, compassion not competition, and engagement not estrangement.

Throughout the process of consultation, the UBC community constantly challenged us to consider that the path to greatness is through gratitude and service. As Martin Luther King Jr. espoused “every one of us can be great, because every one of us can serve.” It is in this spirit, that *IN SERVICE* is offered as the voice of the UBC community looking to shape its Next Century, develop leaders for a just, sustainable, prosperous and vibrant world, and have positive impact locally and globally.

Tuum Est.