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Good afternoon and thank you so much, for the introduction and the welcome. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered today on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, the Musqueam, the Squamish and the Tsleil Waututh.

It's a great pleasure to appear once again before the Vancouver Board of Trade, which has been such an important supporter and partner for all of UBC's 100-year history. It is also an enormous privilege to be back....to be back at UBC, working with the university, as it positions itself for its next 100 years.

While I have been clear that my role as Interim President is not to chart a new course or vision for the university, it is difficult not to have an opinion as to what the future holds for this century old institution—the flagship university of this province.

My mother once said, "Age permits you liberties" – so with her permission, and given my age and given the age of UBC, I am going to take some liberties here this afternoon. If I *were* going to chart a vision for UBC for the next decade, it would be this: UBC should be universally accepted and recognized as Canada's best university. Full stop.

Now, that audacious vision may be as much a challenge as a promise, for as all of you know, aspirational goals do not just happen.

But here's something that I believe without reservation: UBC is not merely on the brink of greatness – it is already great. It already moves, confidently, among the top 40 research institutions in the world. On this, our 100th anniversary, we have a century of accomplishment and excellence upon which to build. We are old enough to have established an impressive foundation and a history of excellence, while still young enough to be nimble in a world of accelerating change.

And, we have a track record of provincial government support that has allowed British Columbia to create an academic ecosystem that is, arguably, also the best in the country.

Think about it. Look at the most recent *Mclean's* ranking of Canada's best universities: in the Medical Doctoral category, UBC was listed among the top three; in the Comprehensive category, Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria were rated first and third; and in the Primarily Undergraduate category, the University of Northern British Columbia was ranked number one. That is a stunningly consistent – and consistently stunning – performance.

I honestly don't know if the people in the rest of Canada understand how much progress that represents in the last two decades, and how much potential it promises in the decades to come. And, if for some reason they have been blind as to what is happening in our most western province, I am, today, putting them on notice. We are on the move—Canada's centre of gravity is shifting from Ontario to British Columbia; the 21st century will be B.C.'s and UBC will be critical to the success of our province.

So, that's where we're going. Let me take a minute to remind you where we have come from and where we are today.

1915 feels like a long time ago, but among the universities in our category –the top 40 research institutions – UBC is barely a teenager.

A short century ago, ours was a rough, barely ready regional college: we had a student population of 379 and we were stuck on Fairview Slopes in a set of buildings fondly known as “the shacks.” UBC's first president, Dr. Frank Wesbrook, a former Dean of Medicine at the University of Minnesota, noted at the time that:

“The present sanitary arrangements render the University culpable from the public health standpoint.” There was little he could do to address the problem: the cash-strapped provincial government gave the new university a budget of only \$175,000.

Today we have a student population of 60,000 and a budget of more than \$2 billion, which includes annual research spending of over \$530 million. I'm happy to report also that our sanitary arrangements have greatly improved since President Wesbrook's day.

In addition to the state-of-the-art Point Grey campus, we have an impressive footprint in downtown Vancouver – in our Robson Square campus and in the DTES through our Learning Exchange; we have a significant presence in the Great Northern Way campus; and we have a complete and remarkable second campus in Kelowna, with 10,000 students, its own impressive research profile and an amazing community connection.

UBC has an estimated \$12.7 billion-a-year impact on the BC economy, including an estimated \$1.5-billion stemming from UBC-Okanagan alone.

And that is the poorest measure for our actual contribution. Consider, instead the successive generations of nurses, doctors, lawyers, teachers, architects, engineers, social workers, artists, politicians and entrepreneurs.

Consider the Nobel Prize winners – seven among our alumni and current and former faculty. Consider the 69 Rhodes scholars, and the Academic All-Canadians and Thunderbirds who have won as varsity athletes and gone on to represent Canada on every sporting podium.

Consider the premiers – there have been three – and the Prime Ministers: John Turner, Kim Campbell and, now, Justin Trudeau. Among alumni and former professors, you can also add jurists of the highest calibre and accomplishment – including Frank Iacobucci and the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Beverley McLachlan. Consider the artists – like Sam Black, BC Binning, Ben Hepner and Judith Forst.

We have provided extraordinary health care, educated thousands of children, contributed to the justice system, performed in every theatre and on every stage, revolutionized the resource sector and seeded whole new industries.

Consider, again, our place on all those lists: Number 40 in the Annual Ranking of World Universities and Number 34 as measured by the Times Higher Education.

And while all of that is impressive, we can be better – indeed, we must be better.

Some people ask whether it's even practical for us to be so presumptuous – so un-Canadian – as to assume that we could emerge as the best. Other than hockey, we Canadians are annoyingly ambivalent about claiming pre-eminence. Why is it that we have no difficulty in rooting for the Blue Jays as a nation, but when it comes to education and knowledge discovery, we like to think that all of our institutions are equal ... and perhaps worse, that it is inappropriate to aim to be the best?

We need to change that culture. I am tired of hiding UBC's light under a bushel. We are really good and we should not be afraid to say so.

You might ask why? What is so important about setting our sights on being the best university in this country? What does it mean for British Columbians? Is it just for bragging rights, the mere pleasure of saying, "We're the best"?

No. There is something much more profound at issue.

We are living in the most remarkable times. Over the past several decades, we have experienced the decline in communism, but a worldwide explosion of ethnic and cultural tensions. Who can watch what happened in Paris last weekend and not wonder how we will solve this crisis – how we will mitigate the fear that such violence brings to our own cities and country?

We have seen the undeniable effects of global warming. We have come, perhaps belatedly, to recognize that, like it or not, resource-based economies such as ours must now

achieve the most admirable environmental standards – or risk being shut out of international trade.

We have seen the increase in computing strength and the mapping of the human genome. We have seen the emergence of new areas of science, such as nanotechnology and quantum matter research—areas that will deliver unimaginable new technologies, even as they transform our economies.

Or perhaps I should say, *further* transform: we have already witnessed a tectonic shift from national economies to a global economy – along with the concomitant rise of India and China. Where once the greatest potential to add value was in the manufacturing of things, we now recognize the greater value of knowledge-based innovation, where success is not measured by the products we make but rather by the ideas we pursue.

It is also widely recognized that new ideas, new technologies, new approaches to solving complex problems come from research. And not just any research—not mediocre research, not acceptable research – but research that is original, cutting edge, ground breaking—research that is the best in the world.

In a recent study it was noted that 2/3 of the R & D in the United States occurs in only 10 states, and almost half occurs in three states, California, Massachusetts, and Texas. Now what do these three states have in common? Neither weather nor geography; natural resources nor manufacturing capacity. No—what these three states have in common is world-class universities. There is Silicon Valley, where Stanford, Berkeley and Cal Tech helped incubate Google, Yahoo!, Cisco, Sun Microsystems and many other world-changing firms.

There's the University of Texas at Austin, which has helped create a high-technology cluster that employs 100,000 people in 1,700 companies. There are the great research universities around Boston, which inject billions of dollars into the local economy.

It's really not that complicated: In this new world, we will compete by our talent and our ideas. The regions that harness their universities and work collaboratively with them will thrive, while those that either do not have universities or do not utilize them to their fullest, will wither.

And, excellence matters. We will not compete by turning out graduates with a "satisfactory" education or with research that is interesting but is neither innovative nor cutting edge.

In the 21st century, our graduates must stand toe to toe with the brightest graduates from every corner of the globe. And the ideas they pursue – the innovations that form the basis of their new companies, or products, or public policy – will be tested against the very best of what is emanating from Harvard and Stanford, from Oxford and Cambridge, from Beijing and Fudan universities in China, from the IIT's in India and the National University of Singapore.

There is more at stake than winning the World Series. This is serious business, and we will need a serious commitment, to build the very best in our educational and research environments. Nothing short of best in class will do.

Think of a file like LNG – the development of which we know requires a large increase in skilled tradespeople.

Which is absolutely true. But what also is true is that we will need engineers, geologists, geophysicists; foresters, biologists and resource managers. We will need lawyers and Indigenous Studies grads to negotiate land agreements. We will need managers and marketers, accountants and business people. And not just okay professionals, but the best in their fields – individuals who can compete on the global stage.

And, by the evidence of what has just happened with the Keystone XL pipeline, we will also need environmentalists, politicians and diplomats – people who can convince the rest of the world that what Canada does, what British Columbia does, we do exceptionally well. That we can support what we do through evidence-based research, by having the best-educated work force, and the most progressive public policies. That was part of the thinking that inspired the launch, this spring, of the new UBC Pipeline Integrity Institute. For oil or gas, we have to know – if you build it – that it will be safe.

So, UBC stands – as it always has – in direct support of BC's resource sector. But in our complicated future, UBC also stands – as it always has – behind a capacity to innovate. Consider the current strength – and future potential – of BC's high tech sector.

High tech, in this calculation, comprises a host of subcategories. It includes telecommunications, a West Coast strength that traces its roots to a little company formed in 1969 by the UBC Professor John MacDonald and his most promising student, Vern Dettwiler.

It includes clean tech, as exemplified by BC's largest clean-tech company, the UBC spinoff Westport Innovations.

It includes healthcare and Life Sciences: a recent KPMG analysis showed that there are 8,500 highly-paid British Columbians working in Life Sciences today, which traces its genesis almost exclusively to innovation and discovery that originated at UBC.

So, we need a great university to develop the talent and generate the ideas to support the current strengths in our society and foster our future well-being. We need a great university to protect our environment, develop a globally competitive economy, support entrepreneurship and generate commercializable technologies – to keep pace with the world. We need a great university to confront international terrorism, help evolving democracies, fight human rights violations, and establish creative public policy. British Columbia needs a great university—the best university—to create a sustainable economy, compete globally, attract investment, and secure our environment....to lead Canada and the world

And so, why am I, the second time around, putting my money on UBC? Why do I believe so fervently, that this is our time...that the stars are aligned, that we have all the right stuff, and that we truly have it within our reach to be the best university in the country and one of a handful of outstanding universities in the world?

First, we have just come through an Atlantic century, during which the attention of the world was hyperfocused on Europe – in bad times and good.

For most of UBC's first 100 years, Canada looked across the Atlantic as the point of origin for most of our population; and we looked to Europe and the United States for the lion's share of our trade and commerce. As such, the universities in central Canada were built, strengthened, and positioned to be indispensable in advancing Canada's agenda.

That has changed. The Pacific is in the ascendance and Vancouver is the trading nexus and the social and cultural centre best positioned to take advantage of this shift. We can leave our eastern colleagues to celebrate their longer pasts, their deeper roots, in Europe and the U.S. And we can seize the future.

Second, we have the raw material. Our students, our most important asset, are the best in this country. They come from every province and every region of the world. They are smart; they are intellectually curious; they are socially aware; and they are ambitious. Do you know how hard it is to get into UBC? I would put our student body up against ANY student body (and I mean any student body!) in the world. Universities around the globe would crave our students. More than an opportunity, we have a responsibility to provide them with the best education we can imagine.

Third, our research and faculty are amazing. Look at UBC's position in biotechnology; look at the wonderful crowd that gathered around the Nobel Prize-winning Michael Smith, and those who have followed in his wake.

You have people like Brett Finlay, working in the areas of immuno-biology and microbiology. Brett can tell you things that you may not even want to know about E. coli. But it's the kind of stuff that could save thousands – maybe hundreds of thousands – of lives.

And UBC's recognized excellence is not contained in just one faculty or specialty. Consider the recent \$66.5-million federal investment in quantum materials research – the largest-ever government investment in a single UBC research program.

Devices fabricated from quantum materials promise to revolutionize consumer electronics, telecommunications, renewable energy, and next-generation computing. We built this program around the remarkable Quantum Materials Institute Director Andrea Damascelli – who, in turn, helped us to attract Jennifer Hoffman, an amazing young researcher who we tempted away from Harvard to become UBC’s newest Canada Excellence Research Chair.

This kind of excellence matters. And it, too, can be measured. For example, we have 15 professors this year listed among the Thomson Reuters most Highly Cited Researchers in the world; and to be clear, you get cited as a research author because your work has significantly changed people’s understanding. With 15 of the most Highly Cited Researchers, we are tied for first among all Canadian universities.

These scholars stand – undeniably – among the very best in the world.

Fourth, we have a distributed university with two campuses, reaching beyond Vancouver and into the fastest growing region of the province—the Okanagan. In 2005, UBC was asked to help convert the former campus of Okanagan University College into a fully formed graduate-level research institution –UBC Okanagan. It’s a nice symmetry that as UBC celebrates its 100th anniversary, UBC Okanagan celebrates its 10th.

And, fifth, we have the support from both levels of government and the generosity of our donors. Over the past decade, the two campuses have exceeded anyone’s wildest expectations. I’m amazed by the new buildings and humbled by the government support and philanthropy that made it possible.

In the 10 years since I was president the last time, there has been \$1.5 billion in development on Point Grey, and almost \$400 million at UBC O in Kelowna.

There are new homes for the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Peter A. Allard School of Law; a huge expansion for the Life Science labs.

We are energizing our athletics programming with a variety of new facilities and expanding domestic student housing. UBC students are celebrating the opening of their new student union building, the NEST, and alumni have a brand new home in the Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre.

As you might know, we have been in the course of a major fundraising campaign. It was called *start an evolution*. In 2011, we set a fundraising goal of \$1.5 billion for the UBC Vancouver campus and \$100 million for UBC O. It was the most ambitious fundraising campaign in Canadian university history.

And yet, here I stand, delighted to report that we raised **\$1,624,355,991. 26**. This total came from 178,209 separate gifts and from 61,419 unique donors. That's more than 60,000 individuals who agreed with me that UBC is a worthy investment.

And, we surpassed our 100-million dollar goal in the Okanagan. Totally amazing.

But more than the dollars, more than the figures, this track record says very clearly, that the community – our fellow British Columbians, our alumni who have benefited from their UBC education, here and in Kelowna – they all understand and support the quest to be

exceptional—to excel in today’s world—to position UBC as the leading university in this country.

So, now: what must we do to surpass our eastern colleagues – to be the best? Once again, I must leave the specifics to the person who will assume the president’s mantle next year – but in the INTERIM, let me suggest four things to keep our eye on:

1. First and foremost, we must succeed in appointing an extraordinary leader—the next president of UBC—to take us into our next 100 years. This person, whether from within our community or external to British Columbia, must share the vision for this province and this university and must be prepared to advocate for and support excellence at every step. We cannot fail in our quest for the most exceptional person to lead this exceptional university.
2. Second, we must continue to attract and educate the best students. Great universities are great because they have great students. Think about Harvard or Oxford. True, they distinguish themselves through their faculty, but what really sets them apart is their students—diverse, exceptional, intellectually gifted, socially responsive, and globally oriented. Students stimulate students. They push each other to think outside the box. They ask faculty tough questions and engage in discourse that sets the intellectual agenda. They pressure administrators to act and change. We MUST attract the best students in order to be the best.
3. Research. We must keep our eye on our research mission. We are a research-intensive university: that is our definition—that is our mission. Great universities excel because

they create knowledge as well as disseminate it. While our current research performance is impressive, it must be better. We must seek every opportunity to attract faculty who can propel us to greater heights. We must seek every opportunity to obtain research funding by competing and winning in the peer-reviewed competition. We must lobby governments to continue to support our research agendas by paying the indirect costs of research and rewarding excellence through significant research funding. And, we must integrate our research mission into our learning objectives. I envision a research-based learning environment in which every UBC student is engaged and exposed to the ground-breaking research that is being conducted in their field of study.

4. Finally and perhaps most importantly: we ALL must believe. We ALL must be bold in making this a priority for our province. We ALL must take pride in our university and promote it and its mission at every opportunity. This perhaps is the most difficult challenge.

Interestingly, people around the world already recognize how great UBC is—they acknowledge it—they celebrate it. While this is rewarding, I find it disheartening that British Columbians are less aware or less impressed. We underestimate the power of UBC. And, then we underutilize its strengths and capabilities—we demand less of it than we should—we fail to recognize the potential it brings to everything we do.

Now, I can see that you are all still Canadian and, as such, I can see that you remain vaguely suspicious of anything that smacks of boosterism. I get it. I was born in Ohio, but I have been a

resident – and a citizen – of this country for long enough that I also apologize when someone steps on my foot.

Even so, I can't abide the notion of a wasted opportunity. I am reminded of my grandfather who loved to drive a Cadillac—probably the most powerful car on the road in his time. He once told me, when he was teaching me to drive, that I was driving with the brakes on! I have never forgotten this. Not just when I am in a car, but equally when I have an opportunity to be associated with a powerful institution—that is, UBC!

British Columbia is, similarly, a powerful province. It represents the best of our future as a nation—freedom, beauty, entrepreneurship, security, civility, skills, intellect and hard work. So my simple message today is this: Don't drive with the brakes on! Use all the strengths and assets of this wonderful province—strive for excellence at every turn. Develop the skills and talents of our people and support the research that will discover the ideas we will need to compete. Take risks and do not fear success. And, insist on having the best university in your midst! If we do that, I am convinced, by working together, by striving to be the best we can be, we WILL build a future, based on creativity, innovation, sustainability and increased productivity.

Thank you.