

# FOCUS ON PEOPLE



## 2010 ANNUAL REPORT



a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



PROFESSOR  
STEPHEN  
J. TOOPE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**D**id you know that UBC is one of the largest employers in British Columbia, and the biggest employer of students in the province, with over 28,000 faculty, staff and student employees?

As part of Place and Promise: The UBC Plan, the university is committed to providing an outstanding work environment – one that inspires and encourages the wellbeing of faculty and staff, enabling them to excel professionally and personally. In 2010, efforts to support this commitment continued through Focus on People, UBC's people practices framework that is intended to transform our vision into tangible outcomes.

I am pleased to share the results of just a few of Focus on People's initiatives in this annual report. These stories show how the university is building career and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, continuing to provide childcare options for UBC families and fostering a healthy workplace to support wellness within our communities.

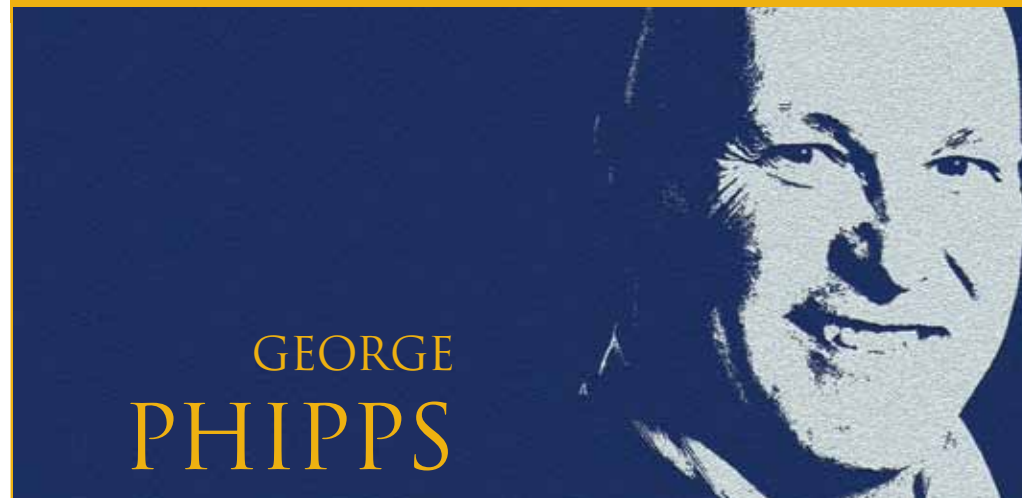
While the university is making tremendous strides towards providing a fulfilling place to work, live and learn, there are still opportunities to improve and more work to be done, including the completion of some large-scale and complex Focus on People projects currently underway.

To keep our commitment to providing an outstanding work environment, we need to come together as a community, build relationships and engage in institution-wide conversations.

Two years ago, the university started an institution-wide conversation by introducing the first Workplace Experiences Survey. Your survey feedback provided valuable insight into the UBC faculty and staff experience, our strengths, and areas of opportunity that could be translated into Focus on People initiatives and priorities.

UBC will conduct its second Workplace Experiences Survey in October 2011. I invite you to join in the conversation by participating in the survey this fall. Your input is invaluable for shaping Focus on People initiatives in the future, which will make a difference to over 28,000 faculty and staff at UBC.

**PROFESSOR STEPHEN J. TOOPE**  
UBC PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR



GEORGE  
PHIPPS

## STARTING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING CONVERSATION

**T**he team at UBC Robson Square has always created business plans in the past, but this year with the help of Integration Team Lead George Phipps and his team, they are creating a strategic plan that maps to the people elements in Place and Promise: The UBC Plan.

Recently Phipps met with Jane Hutton, the Director of UBC Robson Square, and Marni Fraser, the Operations Manager for UBC Robson Square, to ensure that the goals in their strategic plan referenced key messages and wording in Place and Promise.

Fraser said that Phipps brought a broader perspective to the planning process and helped clarify how Robson Square could support the people themes in the university's plan. For example, Fraser emphatically says Robson Square is committed to creating and maintaining an outstanding work environment. "We try to be supportive and help our team find its best potential by being collaborative." She reminds herself of other examples that illustrate an outstanding work environment: the management team promotes professional development by working with the staff to develop career paths; numerous staff members have part time schedules to allow them flexibility to manage professional and personal commitments.

Community engagement is very important for Robson Square; Fraser explains that her unit sees itself as a portal to UBC. "We are physically separated from Point Grey, but within the past couple of years we've become more connected with UBC as a whole, and this [process of creating a strategic plan] is definitely helping too."

With the adoption of Place and Promise, the university has asked all of its departments and work units to create strategic unit plans that will support the nine commitments in the plan. But not everyone is experienced at creating a plan that will map to their broader department's plan, which in turn is expected to map to the strategic goals laid out in Place and Promise.

Sometimes when people are confronted with new procedures, they may decide to put off doing the work because it's unfamiliar, and seems difficult. A key Focus on People strategic initiative was to create the position of Integration Team Lead to build a team to support departments in the creation of their unit plans. Phipps says that the team's role will be to offer experience, tools and resources to those who are working on their unit plans or creating a plan for the first time.

While Place and Promise outlines nine commitments, Phipps explains that the first work of the Integration Team will be to help units identify what they are already doing well to create an outstanding work environment and develop intercultural understanding and how they might go a step further.

Fraser is a volunteer coach with the Integration Team, and says her role on the team is seen both as an element of her own professional growth, and as a way to support Robson Square in achieving the commitments in the Place and Promise plan. "I have the support of my director. She's committed to UBC, and to the strategic goals of Place and Promise. And support of the staff at Robson Square."

If you would like help with your planning process, please contact the Integration Team: [www.focusonpeople.ubc.ca/making-it-happen/integration-team/](http://www.focusonpeople.ubc.ca/making-it-happen/integration-team/). ■





TERESA  
HOWELL



HANNAH  
LEWIS

## FEAST BOWL

FOSTERING AND CELEBRATING WELL-BEING

**T**hrough a Healthy Workplace Initiative Program grant, a team from the First Nations House of Learning (FNHL) and the Institute for Aboriginal Health (IAH) has begun hosting a monthly community Feast Bowl meal that celebrates Aboriginal traditions, healthy eating, locally grown food, and the community of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people on the Vancouver campus.

At the February Feast Bowl meal, about 40 faculty, staff and students, who represented an array of cultures and UBC departments, gathered in Sty-Wet-Tan Hall at First Nations House of Learning to eat a home-cooked meal and enjoy the opportunity to speak with colleagues and friends they don't see every day. Following a blessing by Dr. Richard Vedan, a professor in the School of Social Work, participants served themselves a meal of chilli, bannock and homemade jam, and roots and shoots salad with mugs of hot coffee and mint tea made from dried mint grown on the UBC Farm.

"From an Aboriginal perspective, holistic health is the foundation of wellness," says Dr. Teresa Howell of the Institute for Aboriginal Health, and she says addressing health from a mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual perspective are vital components to the Feast Bowl.

The Feast Bowl cooking is done by volunteers, and meals always incorporate eating for heart health and diabetes prevention. A fall meal featured curried squash, and in the spring, there are plans for a meal focused on traditional protein sources such as buffalo.

Hannah Lewis, the Institute for Aboriginal Health Garden and Community Kitchen Coordinator, says that students from dietetics and nutrition have previously come to speak to the kitchen volunteers on an informal basis about nutrition and health and how it relates to food. Beginning at the next Feast Bowl meal, she is planning a more formal presentation series featuring elders from various nations and volunteers from the Wellness Centre, a health and wellness resource for UBC students located in the Student Union Building (<http://www.students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell/services-resources/wellness-centre/>).

## UBC's Healthy Workplace Initiative Program in Action

At the spring Feast Bowl, Musqueam elder Bonni Hanuse will speak about the importance of investing energy, prayer and spirit into cooking.

As part of the Focus on People strategy to develop a sustainable, healthy workplace, the Focus on People framework supports the Healthy Workplace Initiative Program (HWIP). The HWIP provides \$100,000 in funding per year for UBC departments and units that wish to promote healthy behaviours. The goal of the program is to help reduce long-term and chronic disease, and to promote the health of UBC faculty and staff.

The request for funding to run the Feast Bowl community meal was approved in its entirety in the fall of 2010. Suzanne Jolly, Coordinator for Health Promotion Programs, says that the application from FNHL and IAH fit the criteria of the HWIP funding in several ways. The Feast Bowl was created to address Aboriginal health needs, which are often underserved by broader health initiatives, and also uses UBC resources such as the UBC Farm. Moreover, the meal is a way to bring together resources and experience from across the Aboriginal community such as traditional knowledge about food and medicine from elders in the community.

When the FNHL and IAH applied for the Healthy Workplace funding, they hoped that by cooking the Feast Bowl meals, attending the presentations and eating together as a community participants would increase their understanding of the food system, learn skills to grow their own food and medicine, begin to identify and use Indigenous plants, and connect this information and experience to their health and lifestyle.

Howell notes that some of the goals of the Feast Bowl meals are already being realized. In addition to building relationships with others who come to the meals, some attendees have decided to plant gardens at home because of their experience with the Feast Bowl.

A medicine-making workshop was held in the longhouse in conjunction with a previous Feast Bowl meal. The workshop was led by Alannah Young, a PhD student at UBC who is studying indigenous education and who has been growing medicines on the IAH plot at the UBC Farm, and Jeri Sparrow, an elder from Musqueam, who is involved in the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project at the Farm. Lewis notes that almost all of the plants used during the workshop, including calendula, comfrey, yarrow, plantain and balsam, were grown at the IAH plot on the UBC Farm.

Lewis and her team are producing a newsletter for each Feast Bowl. The newsletters contain recipes from previous Feast Bowls, tips on growing food, cooking and eating healthily, special topics (such as cooking with children or eating to manage or prevent diabetes), and information on foods that are in season, including tips for growing and cooking it. A cookbook is in the works as well, with a planned release in the late summer or early fall.

Beyond the funding commitment from HWIP, the FNHL and IAH hope to continue with the Feast Bowl based on the success of the program and on available funding. ■



ELINOR  
DELGATTY



LISA  
SUNDSTROM

## SUPPORT UBC FAMILIES WITH CHILD CARE SERVICES AND OPTIONS

**E**linor Delgatty, an Academic Advisor with the Faculty of Arts with twelve years of experience at UBC and two children who have been through the UBC child care system, recalls a serious February cold that kept her home from the office. After ensuring her four-year old daughter made it safely to daycare on the Vancouver campus, she went back to bed to rest, assured that her daughter would be well looked after at her day care centre.

Excellent child care provides peace of mind for parents, and boosts morale and productivity in the workplace. UBC has committed to improving access to child care for its faculty, staff and students in order to give them that peace of mind.

The university is working to help provide child care options to parents who are waiting for spaces in UBC child care centres. These options include referrals and resources from the West Coast Child Care Resources Centre, which maintains a registry of Licence Not Required (LNR) family day cares. UBC is working with the Resources Centre to encourage and aid the development of new LNR spaces on the Endowment Lands. Another database is available by registering with Human Solutions, UBC's Employee and Family Assistance Program provider.

Parents in the UBC community waiting for child care can also access child care spaces and emergency care at Kids & Co. The university has a membership with this national child care company, which currently has facilities in Richmond and North Vancouver, and a new centre scheduled to open soon on Vancouver's west side. In addition, the university has an existing agreement with the Developmental Disabilities Association that provides day care spaces in Vancouver, Richmond and at Vancouver General Hospital.

Two parents lauded UBC's child care centres as "the gold standard" and said they were pleased with the steps that the university has taken to support parents in the UBC community by providing them with child care options.

Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom, an Associate Professor and Graduate Advisor in the Department of Political Science since 2002, says that having the convenience of high quality child care on site is helpful for her productivity at work. She became involved with the UBC Daycare Parent Council when it began lobbying departments to support expanded child care as an investment in faculty productivity.

UBC committed two years ago to boost to 1000 the total number of licensed and LNR child care spaces available to UBC staff, faculty and students on the Vancouver campus. Darcelle Cottons, the Director of UBC Child Care Services, says 70 new full-time spaces will open by the end of 2011, and credits the rapid pace of openings to the ability to renovate existing UBC child care centres.

Both parents agree that their lives changed for the better once their children found spaces at UBC child care. "I love the child care community, access to green space, education and commitment levels of staff," says Delgatty.

Both Delgatty and Sundstrom say they are thrilled to have excellent child care provided by the university, although they, like everyone on campus, know people who are waiting. Excellent day care creates demand, and waits are now as long as two years for toddlers and slightly shorter for infants and pre-school-aged children.

Waiting for quality child care is a national problem, however; and both parents acknowledge that it's unrealistic for the university to be the sole provider of care for its employees' children. Further, they say that UBC has put a tremendous amount of resources behind providing excellent care for their children. "Are there any employers out there that actually provide child care, that guarantee child care for everybody?" says Delgatty. "No. There are very few employers that have the level of child care that we do." And Sundstrom notes that what's important to her personally "is the signal that UBC communicates through the commitment to high-quality day care – that employees and their ability to integrate work with family life are important to the university." ■





NIRUPA  
GOEL



DAWN  
HALL

## ADVOCATING FOR THE WORLD'S BEST RESEARCHERS

Postdoctoral Fellows, Dawn Hall and Nirupa Goel, say that new Postdocs have an easier transition to UBC since the inception of the Postdoctoral Fellows Office (PDFO) within the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Postdocs at UBC are among the best of the best in the research world, according to Dr. Tony Farrell, the Associate Dean, Postdoctoral Fellows, and they need to be welcomed, supported and given the tools to continue to their next job.

The PDFO was established in May 2010, and has become both a strong advocate for Postdoctoral Fellows and a resource centre committed to enhancing their UBC experience and expanding their professional skill set. At many institutions, Postdocs can find themselves without a support structure because they are neither graduate students nor faculty. There are more than 800 Postdocs working across the UBC campus and at the various hospital sites who previously, lacked a smooth transition to UBC and received no regularly organized professional and social networking opportunities.

The PDFO hosted their first event in June 2010, a Meet and Greet at St. John's College. It was a on a beautiful sunny day in June, remembers Hourik Khanlian, the Manager of Human Resources and Postdoctoral Fellows Office. By the fall of 2010 the first ever Postdoc Orientation was complete and is now a scheduled semi-annual event. Feedback from the inaugural session pointed out that an all-day session is difficult for most Postdocs to accommodate given their workloads, so the office has moved to a half day orientation. The orientation covers topics that are especially relevant to Postdocs who are new to Vancouver and the UBC campus. In addition to the orientation session, the PDFO has created a comprehensive website and a Postdoctoral Fellow Handbook ( [www.grad.ubc.ca/postdocs](http://www.grad.ubc.ca/postdocs)), tapping into the expertise of the third member of the PDFO, Daniel Maldoff.

Hall, whose work is on plant-specialized metabolism, specifically on conifer trees and their defence against insects, says UBC has done a great job to become a leader in its advocacy for Postdocs.

## *Postdoctoral Fellows Office Prepares UBC Postdocs for Their Future*

The transition from graduate student to Postdoctoral Fellow can be lonely, or even rocky without established systems of support. Hall says she looked to her supervisor to help her negotiate human resources processes at UBC. Because she was among a substantial number of Postdocs who aren't paid directly by the university, but who are instead paid through a fellowship, she learned that she wasn't eligible for benefits such as extended health and dental. To address this need, UBC Human Resources collaborated with the VP, Research to put in place expanded benefits for PDFs receiving fellowship earnings.

The UBC experience is much improved for Postdocs, says Goel, a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences since September 2009, because of support from the PDFO. "It's one of the things that can make UBC more attractive to (potential) Postdocs." After her arrival from Philadelphia, Goel sought out opportunities to meet other Postdocs, and soon joined the UBC Postdoc Association (PDA). She began planning monthly social events, and was recently elected the Association's president.

The staffers of the PDFO are passionate and enthusiastic supporters of the Postdoc community. Tony Farrell is the "perfect" dean for the office, says Goel, and "Hourik is great at addressing the needs and questions coming from Postdocs." Farrell says his job is to put smiles on Postdocs' faces and to help them feel pleased about what they're doing and what their future is. "We want UBC to be the university of choice when researchers are thinking 'where do I go next for post-doctoral training?' And we want Postdocs leaving UBC saying 'I'm so glad I chose UBC. It was a phenomenal experience.'"

While some Postdocs will land faculty roles, the reality is that a majority of Postdocs will find careers elsewhere. To help Postdocs prepare for their future careers, the PDFO has established a series of professional development workshops, including: communicating through conflict, people skills in collaboration, a faculty panel discussion on the first five years in academia, a presentation on alternate career paths and workshops on the effective supervision of grad students and grant writing.

Other achievements include allowing Postdocs to extend their position to five years from three. Postdoc assignments are renewed annually, but had been limited to a maximum of three years. Hall explains that expanding the limit to five years better facilitates the development of some projects to publication.

A key near term goal for the PDFO is to find funding that would extend travel benefits to Postdocs. Most graduate students have access to grants and other monies they can use to attend conferences, but for Postdoctoral Fellows, travelling to share research is only a dream. There are travel funds for Postdocs available for the coming year from the Office of the Vice President Research, and the PDFO is fine tuning a Travel Award Competition it will unveil later this year. Part of the research mandate is to communicate, notes Farrell, and UBC can easily showcase its excellent research talent by sending its researchers to engage with the best in the rest of the world. ■



DAVE  
LAMPRON



BOB  
MACDONALD

## IT CAREER FRAMEWORK

ILLUMINATING CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**D**ave Lampron, the Faculty of Medicine's Director of Technology-Enabled Learning, never gave any consideration to a management role while he was completing his computer systems studies. The former research assistant was turning a knack for desktop support and web development work into a new career, and had his eye on a database administrator role. "If there was some sort of career pathing that I could have referred to, then it would have given me a better idea of career opportunities."

The framework that's being put in place for IT professionals provides resources and information so that staff in all IT departments can better understand their roles relative to their colleagues and make more informed decisions about professional development and career options. Lampron notes that the framework provides standardization and clarity for IT professionals entering the organization as well as for those who have been with UBC for some time.

"We need to offer careers in a framework that is transparent about both the opportunities and the individual capacity necessary for the roles," says Lisa Castle, Associate Vice President, Human Resources and one of the IT Career Pathing project sponsors. "While we have had ad hoc approaches over the years, it is crucial that we approach career and personal development and progression in a more thoughtful and deliberative way."

The IT Career Pathing project was launched in February 2010 with four pilot groups: UBC IT, MED IT, the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) and IT Services Okanagan, and the initial focus among the pilot groups was to create a comprehensive career framework. Julie Kothlow, the project lead, explains that the various IT departments at the university previously listed more than 300 different job descriptions, which have been trimmed by more than 50%. There are now career framework ladders in 13 different career areas, from project managers to systems analysis to management streams.

In addition, the framework provides information to help staff and managers define great

performance so that IT professionals can learn how to leverage their strengths and make even stronger contributions to their teams. Oliver Grüter-Andrew, UBC's Chief Information Officer, says "We view it as a platform from which to specify professional development programs for every individual's career aspirations."

With a career ladder and multiple other resources now available to the groups, the first step for implementing the program will be to train managers to align their staff's job descriptions to the career framework. Step two will be training all 300-plus staff members from the pilot groups to understand and utilize the career framework for professional development, and how to use the online resources to take those next steps.

The third step will be integrating performance development. UBC IT will immediately begin tying performance and career development into the framework for its staff. Bob Macdonald, Manager, UBCNetwork and Infrastructure Facilities, says that the most exciting part of the pilot rollout for him is the ability to give his staff increased responsibility to manage their job performance and career development goals and to continue that conversation throughout the year.

Not only will the project illuminate career paths that some professionals hadn't previously considered, but it's also expected to improve retention, and contribute to an improved atmosphere of community as IT professionals see how much they have in common.

Already the career ladders have provided greater transparency for IT staff in the Okanagan. According to Don Thompson, Director, Information Technology, ITServics Okanagan, his staff are better able to see where their function fits into the whole organization. Moreover, those who do similar work in different departments can connect and share common experiences.

Christopher Pryde, Medicine's Director of IT Operations, says that it's in everyone's interest to provide IT professionals with additional career opportunities and room for growth. Pryde manages the most geographically diverse pilot group with staff at multiple sites throughout the province. He explains that retention is a key benefit of the career pathing project for managers throughout IT, who will be able to more clearly illustrate the opportunities for advancement for ambitious, high performing employees who might otherwise look elsewhere.

UBC IT's Macdonald believes that his path to management would have been smoothed by the new career pathing ladders. "I had to build a big case for some of my ideas," he says. "Previously, there was nothing formal and structured to take yourself to the next level."

The process is very beneficial to UBC as a whole explains Thompson. "People can see they are not simply a box on an org chart. They have a better sense of where they will fit in the future." This sense of belonging is a clear highlight for the pilot integration in IT. And because the university plans to extend career frameworks across the organization in the future, the hope is that staff in other departments and units will eventually experience similar opportunities and benefits. ■




## UBC'S OUTSTANDING WORK ENVIRONMENT COMMITMENT UPDATE

**I**n 2009, UBC offered its first Workplace Experiences Survey. This survey was intended to give faculty and staff in the UBC community an opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences confidentially and anonymously. Over 2,700 faculty and staff responded, and the survey findings were shared at town halls and on the Focus on People website.

Since then, themes and areas of opportunity that emerged in the survey have helped to confirm, identify, and prioritize Focus on People strategic initiatives, along with other inputs, such as retention and recruitment data and trends. Please visit [www.focusonpeople.ubc.ca/workplace-experiences-survey/](http://www.focusonpeople.ubc.ca/workplace-experiences-survey/) to learn more about how the 2009 Workplace Experiences Survey key findings map to Focus on People strategic initiatives in 2009-2010.

Every six months, Focus on People reports progress on strategic initiatives to the university community through Perspectives and our Annual Report. We encourage you to read the stories in our 2010 annual report and learn more about some of these strategic initiatives which support an outstanding work environment at UBC. We acknowledge that there is still work to be done and efforts continue on projects, many of which are complex and longer term.

Providing an outstanding work environment is a continual process and we would like to hear from you again on how we are doing. We invite you to participate in the 2011 Workplace Experiences Survey this fall. Your feedback will to help us to better understand the impact of the people practices work completed so far, and also to identify future priorities for Focus on People that support the Outstanding Work Environment commitment in Place and Promise: the UBC Plan. 

# YOURVIEWPOINT

PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OR READ MORE FOCUS ON PEOPLE STORIES:

**[WWW.FOCUSONPEOPLE.UBC.CA](http://WWW.FOCUSONPEOPLE.UBC.CA)**

FOCUS ON PEOPLE ANNUAL REPORT 2010

PROJECT MANAGER CATHERINE PITMAN

WEB DIRECTOR ADRIAN LIEM

PRODUCED BY UBC DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

DESIGN DIRECTOR SHARM THIAGARAJAH

PHOTOGRAPHER MARTIN DEE