

A strategic plan for The University College of the Cariboo (2000-2005) "Building on Strengths and Uniqueness"

Roger H. Barnsley, President
(February 2, 2001)

It is my pleasure to welcome you here today. I am genuinely appreciative that you have chosen to attend because I am of the opinion that UCC's strategic plan, "Building on Strengths and Uniqueness" is an important document that is setting major directions for our institution.

This morning, my wife Paula, asked me how many people I thought would be in attendance today. I replied that I did not think there would be very many because the topic, although important, was not very interesting. "Well after all", she replied, "it is scheduled for 3:00pm on a Friday afternoon". "Yes", I said, "But they are getting out of work at that time". Paula looked at me incredulously and said, "You think going to listen to you is not work!" So, again, thank you for your attendance.

UCC's strategic plan was approved by the Board of Governors last spring after a year long consultation and planning activity that was undertaken by an institutional-wide strategic planning steering committee.

The process had many phases but, perhaps the most informative for the committee was the broadly based consultation that invited comments on UCC's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

This process, more generally known by its acronym as a SWOT procedure, reinforced what most knew--that UCC was an excellent institution, that had undergone dramatic growth and yet, retained a commitment to students and quality teaching while maintaining and developing a strong sense of community and institutional identity.

Therefore, the strategic plan was presented as a way to continue in the path that UCC had confidently followed--to provide for improvement, not to radically change our institution.

The purpose of my talk today is to highlight the importance of "Building on Strengths and Uniqueness" and to invite you to participate directly and indirectly in the achievement of the goals we have set for ourselves.

To do this, I will review each of the goals with a summary of accomplishments to date and activities that are planned. Given the time allotted, these points will be brief in the extreme and so, I will invite you to ask me to expand on any of these areas during the question and answer period that will follow.

Goal One: The University College Concept

In no other way have we changed more than in our evolution into a university college.

From our beginning 30 years ago, we have developed as both a college and a university.

As a college, we now have over 2000 full-time students taking one of 75 certificate or degree programs

As a university, we now have over 4500 full-time students enrolled in one of 40 different degree options in 12 different degree programs.

But, as was pointed out time and again through the consultations of the strategic planning steering committee, UCC is more than just a college and a university.

We are a university college that has developed unique programs out of the opportunities that have been presented by having college and university programs available in the same institution.

Simply, the strategic plan sees the future of The University College of the Cariboo as capitalizing on its uniqueness by developing in innovative ways that will further promote our identity as a university college

Parenthetically, I would like to mention that our Board feels that the future of UCC in large part depends upon securing a distinctive "University College Act" that will enshrine our uniqueness and our commitment to comprehensive, accessible and regional programs in legislation.

In this regard, you may find the new "President's Report" which is hot of the press and is available at the back of the room informative.

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Goal One: The University College Concept

To further define its identity and uniqueness as a university college, The University College of the Cariboo will develop Applied Bachelor's degrees in Arts, Science, and Business that will facilitate laddering for students.

Today's new knowledge based economy appears to advantage those individuals who have combined technical skills with theoretical knowledge.

As one of the few institutions in Canada, indeed the world, that offers comprehensive programming that provides for training in technical skills and the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, UCC is in a unique position.

An excellent example of how we have achieved this at UCC, is through our 2 plus 2, ladder programs, such as our Computer Systems: Operation and Management (CSOM) Diploma ladders into our Bachelor of Technology in Applied Computer Science (BTACS) degree.

The goal of developing Applied Bachelor's degrees in Arts, Science and Business is to provide generic degree programs that will facilitate laddering for many other diploma and certificate programs.

I think it was a wise choice to create new Applied degrees rather than to try to force, through laddering, the integration of certificate and diploma programs into our BA, BSc and BBA programs.

The reason for this is that the Bachelor of Arts, Science and Business Administration degrees have a tradition and a meaning that goes far beyond UCC. For the integrity of its degrees and its institutional reputation, UCC should ensure that these traditional degrees remain within the known and recognized template.

However, as the unique and innovative institution that we are, UCC should develop degree programs that facilitate laddering from our certificate and diploma programs. It is in this context, that we will develop Applied degrees in the Arts, Science and Business.

I don't know what these degrees will look like, but I think they should conform to the 2 plus 2 model that we know and with which we have had success. And, for the content of the two years of university programming, I predict that it will include generic academic skills, such as writing, thinking, research and problem solving that are found in other degree programs along with some expanded theoretical knowledge for the diploma program that is being laddered.

I am pleased to announce that a committee has been struck that will develop academic policy and regulations for the implementation of applied degrees. The members of this committee are:

- Ron Smith (Arts)
- Val Collins (Science)
- Ben Guidici (Trades and Technology)
- Dan Thompson (Professional Schools)
- Henry Hubert
- Colin James
- Don Graham
- Dave Tywnam

We look forward to seeing the recommendations from this committee.

Goal One: The University College Concept

To further define its identity and uniqueness as a university college, The University College of the Cariboo will develop laddering opportunities for all UCC certificate, diploma and degree programs.

I would propose, and at UCC this should be neither unique, nor controversial, that one of our major strengths is that we recognize and respect all learning.

As such, we are characterized by a student-centered approach to credit transfer, prior learning recognition, program articulation and laddering.

Learning at UCC should be a seamless activity that allows the learner to move from one learning experience to another with appropriate recognition.

It is in this context, that "Building on Strengths and Uniqueness" shows that a strategic way to further our development as a university college is to provide laddering opportunities (credit transfer and recognition of learning, if you will) for all UCC certificate, diploma and degree programs.

And, I draw your attention to the inclusion of degree programs as programs from which students might like to ladder from rather than into. Indeed, many students who have completed degree programs seek out learning opportunities that are more technical or career oriented. Their prior learning should be recognized, as well.

An example of how programs might ladder both ways is illustrated by the following example. In addition, to the Bachelor of Education degree, UCC's School of Education offers an Early Childhood Certificate and Diploma program. Through this strategic plan goal, the School of Education should examine what laddering opportunities could exist between the two programs.

In proceeding with this strategic goal, a "laddering sub-committee" consisting of Colin James (Chair), Don Graham, Rob Anderson and Sandra Bruneau have compiled an inventory of current laddering opportunities at UCC. Interestingly, this group has identified 26 current laddering opportunities in such UCC programs as the Bachelor of Science, Nursing, Journalism, and Social Work.

A Committee with representation from administration, faculty and students will be formed in this Spring with the goal of recommending academic policy and regulations for laddering opportunities to Education Council in the Spring of 2002.

Goal One: The University College Concept

To further define its identity and uniqueness as a university college, The University College of the Cariboo will develop a plan for distributed learning that facilitates regional programming and provides direction for program development.

UCC faculty have developed a number of courses and programs for delivery using information and communication technologies over the past several years.

An Advisory Committee is to be assembled in the coming weeks that will assist in the development of a plan for distributed learning activities.

Also, UCC has pioneered the creation of a distance learning study centre in 100 Mile House which provides a range of learner supports for students taking technology mediated courses from UCC and other institutions.

As part of the plan for distributed learning development there will be a phased expansion of distance learning study centres into several communities in the region. Finally, the Instructor and Learner Support Group continues to provide support to faculty, students and others engaged in the use of technology mediated teaching and learning.

This month, Adrian Kershaw, VP, Community and Distributed Learning Services, will form a committee consisting of representatives from the Advisory Committee on Distributed Learning, the Computer and Web Users Committees, the Library and Regional operations.

The committee's final report with recommendations is expected to be presented to the Education Council by May 31, 2002.

NOTE: Care needs to be taken in the choice of which Programs UCC is to develop on its own. The following criteria should be used.

1. A market of sufficient size to make the program viable can be demonstrated to exist.
2. There are no competitive programs
3. An external source of funding is available and will be sufficient to support the programs full development
4. Sufficient resources are available to promote the program.

Goal One: The University College Concept

To further define its identity and uniqueness as a university college, The University College of the Cariboo will develop transition to work opportunities for all programs.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the uniqueness of UCC, as a university college, in providing students with opportunities to prepare for employment was highlighted many times. As a result, the strategic plan has identified the goal of making these opportunities, available, NOTE, not mandatory, for all students in all programs.

To date, an inventory of the transition to work opportunities that currently exist at UCC has been completed by the Cooperative and Career Education Department.

It is interesting to note that in the past 18 months new opportunities have included, implementation of Co-op in BTACS, Physics, BSc Computing Science. Also, two pilot offerings have been successfully completed with the "Graduate Internship Program".

The next step towards this strategic goal will be the formation of a committee consisting of representatives from students, faculty, alumni association, Cooperative and Career Department and the Employment Centre.

This committee will be asked to present its final report and recommendation to Education Council in Spring 2002.

Goal One: The University College Concept

Promote regional, national and international understanding and recognition of UCC as a university college.

As I pondered how to report on this strategic goal, I realized how promoting recognition of an institution is a fundamental and ongoing activity.

And so, I thought I would give a few snapshots of the activities and successes we are having at UCC in promoting ourselves as a university college.

First, let me say that the strategic plan itself has had a significant impact. To date, more 2500 copies have been distributed provincially, nationally and internationally. Feedback that I have received indicates that document has been effective in promoting understanding of the university college concept.

In fact, the distribution of publications is a very big part of how we present ourselves to others. In addition to the strategic plan, we have widely distributed a number of other publications. These would include the Board's "Issues" document and UCC's Annual Reports. It is also important to note that we are uniquely profiled in the annual Maclean's Guides to both Colleges and Universities.

Another important aspect of profiling ourselves as a university college has been the lobbying and advocacy activities of our Board of Governors in promoting the need for distinctive legislation. I can assure you that our provincial colleagues are becoming increasingly aware of our distinctiveness.

This is quite apparent in our interaction with such provincial bodies as:

- Advanced Education Council of British Columbia (AECBC)
- Post-secondary Employers Association (PSEA)
- British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)

Another important development has been the creation of the consortium of university colleges of British Columbia or, UCBC. This group has been very effective in working at the provincial and national levels to promote university colleges as a distinct form of post-secondary education institution. You can learn more about UCBC in the "President's Report" which is at the back of the room. Further, I think you will find it interesting to know that UCBC is now having regular discussions with The University President's Council of BC.

At the national level, UCC continues to gain recognition. As you will know, in addition to our membership in the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), UCC is a full and participating member in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the organization which essentially credentials our university programs.

Our growing national and international reputation can be attributed in large part to the participation and success that our staff is enjoying in professional activities. At the risk of leaving out deserving colleagues, I would like to name a few people as examples of the type of excellence that is being achieved and recognized.

For example, our research is being profiled at a national level by such people as Louis Gosselin, Karl Larsen, Don Lawrence, and Will Garrett-Petts. And our continued success through SSHRC and NSERC research grants, faculty publications, Canada Research Chairs (CRC) and Community University Research Alliance (CURA) demonstrate without a doubt that we are achieving and being recognized at a national standard.

I also note the leadership roles that such persons as Bryan Daly and Kathleen Biagoni are playing with their national professional organizations. And, I hope you know that one of our students, Lori Lalonde, a student member of UCC's Board, has been a Director of ACCC for the past two years.

And on the international level, UCC is being recognized by such organizations as the World Bank, The Gorbachev Institute and the Canadian International Development Agency. And through these agencies, staff such as Doug Baleshta, Howard Mayer, Cindy MacLeod, Henry Reiser, and David Scheffel, to name a very few, are contributing to our growing reputation.

And when I think about our growing reputation, I am reminded about the time I gave my business card to a young woman in Changchun, China and, teasingly asked her, if she new about The University College of the Cariboo. Oh yes, she replied, I talk to Baihua Chadwick regularly because I want to study tourism there.

And that I guess says it all because, ultimately, our reputation as a university college will depend on the quality and the reputation of our programs, our graduates and our alumni.

As we continue advancing this strategic goal, your ideas would be most welcome on how we might proceed in a more formal, structured and planful way.

Goal Two: Learning, Teaching, Scholarship and Research

In our thirty-year history, UCC has always been committed to learning and teaching.

And, with the change to a university college with degree granting status, UCC assumed responsibilities for research and scholarship as these activities are fundamentally linked to quality teaching.

In fact, the identification of research and scholarship as an institutional and faculty responsibility is an important component in the drive to secure independent university-college legislation as our current mandate, under the "Colleges and Institute" Act does not include this.

This strategic goal, then, is meant to speak to how we can improve in our primary, institutional directions of learning, teaching, research and scholarship.

Goal Two: Learning, Teaching, Scholarship and Research

Develop a comprehensive and coordinated program of instructional development.

I am pleased to report that a great deal of work has been completed on this strategic goal by a committee consisting of Judy Wilbee, Chinnama Baines and Nancy Levesque.

This committee has now submitted a "Progress Report" which includes a completed faculty survey, an inventory of teaching resources and a set of recommendations which include.

- Establish a Centre for Teaching, Learning and Research
- Provide a designated space and location for the Centre
- Appoint a Professional Development Advisory Committee
 - Establish a network of peer consultants

A final report will be forthcoming which will then influence budget, staffing and organizational decisions.

Goal Two: Learning, Teaching, Scholarship and Research

Develop a policy and plan that will expand the availability of educational technology for teaching and learning.

UCC has been expanding its use of educational technology in recent years. As part of this effort, significant capital resources have been put into the purchase of hardware for use by faculty and students.

Of note in the past year has been the conversion of three classrooms to full multi-media teaching facilities. More classrooms are scheduled for this kind of conversion in the coming academic year.

In addition, our Instructor and Learner Support Group has been providing support and training for faculty and students using education technology.

As a result of these efforts, UCC is now one of the largest users of WebCT in the Province with over 200 faculty and 2500 students using the software in their teaching and learning activities.

Shortly, an Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives from the Advisory Committee on Information Technology, the Computer and Web Users Committee, and the Library will be struck to help UCC plan the future growth and development of its educational technology initiatives.

It is expected that this committee will complete a draft planning report in the fall, 2001.

NOTE ILSG (Instructor and Learner Support Group) Doug Baleshta, Jeff McLaughlin, Lois Rugg, Bob Clarke, Murray Doubt

Goal Two: Learning, Teaching, Scholarship and Research

Develop a policy infrastructure, and a facilities and equipment plan that will facilitate and support scholarship and research.

In order to support the research and scholarship of staff and students, a policy infrastructure and a facilities and equipment plan will be developed.

These tasks will fall within the responsibilities of the Vice-President (Instruction) and the Vice-President (Administration).

Some of the activities that are being undertaken are:

Complete an equipment acquisition plan and space study that relates to UCC's changed mandate as a University College. UCBC, the Consortium, is now conducting this study and hopes to report this Fall.

Establish a policy framework and administrative structure that supports research and development. This will be required before we are able to access the monies from our recently approved Canada Research Chairs.

Construct a research and development building on the Kamloops campus. The timeline for this construction is three to five years. However, it could be built sooner if funding opportunities were available.

Goal Two: Learning, Teaching, Scholarship and Research

Establish a task force to review and recommend ways in which students may become more involved in research.

Many times, the strategic planning steering committee heard about the need to involve more students in research activities.

This month, a broadly based, institutional-wide task force, consisting of staff, students, and administration will be established.

The Task Force will hold meetings and carry out consultations in March of this year for the purpose of identifying strategies and making recommendations to facilitate student involvement in research.

Following this, in May, consultation with divisions and departments takes place on the draft plan.

It is expected that the Task Force will finalize its plan and submit its final report to Education Council and the UCC Executive in the Fall of 2001.

Goal Three: Institutional Effectiveness

Simply put, this goal directs all of us at UCC to continuously strive for improvement in what we do by being more effective.

This Goal relies on planning, reporting, communication and accountability as ways of achieving greater institutional effectiveness.

Goal Three: Institutional Effectiveness

Develop web-based applications to improve student services and administrative practices throughout the institution.

UCC has made great gains in responding to this goal.

In the fall, UCC's web site was redesigned with a new look and a new functionality.

UCC Online, which was recently implemented, allows students and faculty to access registration and course status via the Internet.

If you haven't surfed around our web site for a while, I invite you to do so. It is not only very efficient and functional, it is also, very handsome.

Other accomplishments are also noteworthy.

The Print Shop now has online services.

Bookies has implemented online ordering and the Financial Aid and Awards Office processed student loans over the internet for the first time this semester. Both of these online services have reduced, if not almost eliminated lineups.

At a broader institutional level, there was a "Project Coordination Team" appointed last fall for the purpose of leading the UCC's "Web-based Process Project". The team will examine opportunities for implementing further web-based administrative and academic processes at UCC.

This will be an ongoing activity from which we can anticipate many further successes.

Goal Three: Institutional Effectiveness

Develop and annually report on departmental, unit and divisional goals with a view to improvement of service.

This strategic goal is now complete and implemented.

If you haven't seen this publication, "UCC Planning Reports", I invite you to spend some time browsing through it. Each department has been provided with a copy.

"UCC Planning Reports" contains a summary of no more than five new initiatives that each administrative and academic department will try to achieve this year.

As I made my rounds of Departments during my first year at UCC, I learned that many departments were unaware of the developments that were occurring in other parts of the institution. This document was meant to address that situation.

So, we are now on a regular annual cycle where each department will propose new initiatives for the coming year and report on the past year's initiatives. These will be published annually in "Planning Reports".

I imagine that many of you will consider such planning initiatives when you participate in the forthcoming "Inservice Day".

Goal Three: Institutional Effectiveness

Co-ordinate Alumni, Foundation and Public Relations strategies to facilitate institutional advancement.

All of these organizations are working in the best interests of UCC and its students.

Nevertheless, the Alumni and Foundation are independent associations that have Boards and their own employees. And, they have not routinely been included in the regular activities and planning of UCC. Hence, the need to find ways to coordinate emerged from the strategic planning exercise.

We, the Alumni, the Foundation and UCC, are working hard to try remedy this by coordinating our activities when it is appropriate.

Two events in the past year are noteworthy.

First of all, the combined work of the Foundation, the Alumni and the Board of Governors has brought the very successful "Library Campaign" to a fitting conclusion. A public report will be forthcoming shortly and an important announcement will be made at that time.

Secondly, a UCC Advancement Council has been established with membership including, Pat Lee, Kathleen Biagoni, Tracey Bilsky, Josh Keller and Myself.

This group has established terms of reference that will guide it in future activities.

In the past year, the Advancement Council has looked at how fund raising should be coordinated on campus. At this time, this is the focus of this Advancement Council.

Goal Four: A Place to Learn and Work

UCC has a tradition of being a good, if not a great, place to learn and work. With our significant growth and development, it is important to try to maintain this atmosphere.

It is my intention that UCC will always be focussed on developing a better working and learning environment.

I am hopeful that though such social events as the fall barbecue, Christmas reception, staff awards ceremony, retirement dinner, President's Breakfasts and Convocation Awards dinners we are providing opportunities for staff and students to get to know one another and to develop a better sense of UCC as a community.

Further, I am hopeful that the recently adopted Staff Recognition Policy and the dedication of UCC's Pioneer Wall, speaks to the staff about their importance to this institution.

Nevertheless, there is more that can be done to make UCC a better place to learn and to work. These strategic goals will give us direction for the coming years.

Goal Four: A Place to Learn and Work

Develop a plan to promote a greater sense of community through the establishment of a communications strategy and increased cultural, recreational and athletic opportunities for students and employees.

The Public Relations Department is developing a communications strategy that will respond to both internal and external audiences and, in particular, how they relate to the communication needs of the alumni and foundation. Your suggestions are welcomed.

In the past 10 years, UCC has changed from basically a two-year institution to a four-year institution. Further, with the possibility of new student residences on the Kamloops campus, we are moving from a commuter to a residential campus.

It is largely in this context, that the challenge of this strategic goal is to develop a "sense of community" through increased cultural, recreational and athletic opportunities for students and employee.

At this time, no formal approach is set to recommend ways to address this goal as there are a number of imminent initiatives that will significantly impact the situation. These include Facility changes such as:

- New residences
- Addition to the CAC
- Construction of the Black Box theatre in Old Main.

Further, there are a number of events that should be completed before formal planning begins.

- UCBC study on space standards
- Institutional Research is carrying out climate survey on satisfaction levels about non-instructional aspects of UCC. Student survey this year, staff survey next year.
- Strategic visioning with the City of Kamloops--what should happen to the lands around UCC. Reference to Housing, Service amenities for students and faculty, campus neighborhood, research and development focus.

The point is that we need more certainty about these new developments and studies before a more formal approach is taken.

Goal Four: A Place to Learn and Work

Increase global awareness by providing international exchange opportunities for students and employees.

The context for this strategic goal is the now accepted practice that in today's world of the global village, post-secondary institutions should have international opportunities for students and staff.

UCC has an enviable record in international activities that are matched by only a few Canadian Universities and Colleges and the envy of many others.

As you all most probably know, this year we have over 550 international students from over 35 different countries on campus.

And, we have offshore programs in 20 different countries that are supported by agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency and the Gorbachev Institute.

And, we do have exchange opportunities for staff and students. The School of Business's exchange with the University of Salford is well established and very successful.

Our new partnerships with Cologne University and Erfurt University in Germany, with Turku Polytechnic in Finland and, the North American Mobility Project, in which we are partnered with institutions in Mexico and in Texas show great promise.

Nevertheless, through the development of the strategic plan, the importance of providing UCC's staff and students with more opportunities for international exchanges was evident.

To move this strategic goal forward, two initiatives are taking place.

One, UCC International, has produced a three year strategic plan titled "Millenium Plan" in which developing new exchanges is highlighted.

Secondly, this month, a "Study Abroad Program Advisory Committee" will be established for the purpose of promoting this initiative.

Through these efforts, I am confident that UCC will significantly expand exchange opportunities for staff and students in the coming years.

"Building on Strengths and Uniqueness"

Conclusion

To conclude, let me return to the beginning. In its 30-year history, The University College of the Cariboo has undergone a tremendous transformation in terms of student and staff numbers, facilities and programs.

And, throughout these years of significant growth and development, the core values of a commitment to teaching, students, comprehensive programming, and to the region we serve have been maintained.

And so, it was in this context that the strategic planning steering committee established institutional goals.

Simply, the goals in the strategic plan have been crafted to maintain the direction of UCC in relation to its core values.

The hope, of course, is that the strategic plan will allow us to continue to grow, develop and improve in a manner that is consistent with our traditions.

I encourage you to be a part of this process.

Thank you.