



The University of Northern  
British Columbia

Five Year Capital  
Plan  
2003 - 2008

Five Year Capital Plan  
July, 2003

1. *The Planning Committee:*

The President established the Five Year Capital Plan Committee in January, 2003 to review and revise the 2001-2006 UNBC Five Year Capital Plan.

The Committee, chaired by the President, consisted of 17 members representing the Senior Administration of the University, faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students. (See Appendix 1) The Director of Regional Operations represented the interests of the regions.

The Committee met on three occasions beginning February, 2003.

What follows is the Committee's final report and recommendations to the UNBC Board of Governors.

2. *Planning Context:*

a) *The 2001 Plan;*

The current UNBC Five Year Capital Plan was approved in 2001 and represented a fundamental revision of the Five Year Capital Plan, approved in 1997 as part of the university strategic plan, *Planning for Growth*. The Plan provides the basis for the annual Major Capital submissions prepared for the Ministry of Advanced Education. The Plan identifies the top priorities for building expansion at the UNBC Prince George Campus. It also significantly affects the requests for minor capital projects (those requiring less than \$1M.)

The 2001 approved Five Year Capital Plan established two priority categories.

Priority 1 was a Teaching & Learning Centre (including attendant Library renovations and Power Plant expansion).

Priority 2 included:

- Sportsplex
- Student Union Building
- Library Expansion
- Laboratory Building
- Expansion of new Teaching Laboratory Building

The report also noted other capital projects, including the on-going development of the David Douglas Botanical Gardens, and the need for additional multi-purpose space and storage. Among the capital projects that the report indicated the university would pursue on the basis of private funding were the Research & Development Park, Parking Lot Expansion, Skating Rink, and Student Residences.

*b) The New Planning Context;*

Circumstances have required the need for an early review and revision of the 2001 Five Year Capital Plan.

Since the drafting of the plan, UNBC has received approval and funding for the Northern Health Sciences Centre to house the Northern Medical Program and for the expansion of the new Teaching Laboratory building to accommodate the growth of Computer Science enrolment and staffing at the university (the so-called Double the Opportunity – DTO - initiative). The university is also proceeding with Phase 1 of the Research & Development Park in conjunction with the DTO initiative, and is in the process of expanding the campus parking area.

In the regions, the university is cooperating with the College of New Caledonia in the planning and construction of the North Cariboo Community Campus in Quesnel. The proposed campus, which has planning approval from the Ministry of Advanced Education, will meet the university's space requirements in Quesnel for the foreseeable future. Likewise, the new campus proposed for the University College of the Cariboo in Williams Lake will provide the space required for UNBC programs there, in particular the Cariboo Chilcotin Weekend University in partnership with UCC and the Cariboo Tribal Council. In the Northwest, the proposed construction of a new Northwest Community College campus in Prince Rupert will meet UNBC space requirements there.

*c) The Planning Process;*

To establish an understanding of the context for a new Five Year Capital Plan the committee examined the following documents:

- The revised UNBC Campus Master Plan (Appendix 2)
- The most recent B.C. University Space Standards Report (Appendix 3)
- The UNBC Five Year Enrolment Projection (as contained in the Space Standards Report)
- Reports on academic programming and related space needs within the regions (Appendix 4)
- Scenario projections for UNBC, Prince George, core area campus requirements based on future enrolment growth (Appendix 5)
- The 2002 revised Campus Master Plan (Appendix 6)
- The proposed 2003 revised Campus Master Plan (Appendix 7).

The B.C. University Space Standards Report and the three Regional Reports enabled the committee to identify the areas where the university has the greatest projected space deficiencies over the next five years.

The Campus Master Plan led members to engage in discussions about the possible location of future buildings and about the quality of the campus environment. The UNBC architect, Russ Chernoff, reviewed the current Master Plan at a committee meeting to assist members to understand the governing principles behind the plan. He also submitted options for the location of future buildings in response to discussions that occurred within the committee.

The enrolment projections, based on future enrolment scenarios of 5,000 and 15,000 *fte*, helped the committee to determine the capacity of the core area of the Prince George campus (the area within the ring road) to accommodate the future academic expansion of the university.

### *3. Recommendations re: The Prince George Campus:*

The Committee began by reviewing the items in the 2001 Five Year Capital Plan. Of the capital projects listed on that plan for the Prince George campus, the Committee agreed to retain the following:

- Library Renovation and Expansion
- Classroom, Laboratory, and Office Expansion
- Sportsplex (renamed the Northern Sports Centre)
- Power Plant Renovation
- Campus Residences
- Botanical Gardens
- Student Union Building
- Research & Development Park, Phase 2
- Skating Rink

The committee then categorized the list of capital projects into those that would be funded primarily or entirely by the provincial government, and those that would be funded primarily by private funds or on a commercial basis.

The list of projects that would be funded primarily by private funds or on a commercial basis is:

- The Research and Development Park, Phase 2
- Skating Rink
- Residences
- Student Union Building
- Botanical Gardens

The major capital projects that would require total or substantial government funding are:

- Classroom, Laboratory and Office Expansion
- Northern Sports Centre
- Central Power Plant

#### *4. Prince George Campus: Priorities for Major Capital Funding:*

##### *Recommendation 1:*

*That the university give highest priority to the construction of additional classroom, laboratory, office, and related administrative space of approximately 7,000 Net Assignable Square Metres (NASM) for the purposes of bringing UNBC up to the B.C. University Space Standard requirement projected for 2007/08.*

The Committee was unanimous about the need for additional office, classroom and laboratory space to meet the needs of a growing university. UNBC is currently at 65.5% of the B.C. University Space Standard (henceforth BCUSS) for academic office space despite the additional offices included in the new Laboratory building completed in August, 2002. Based on current projections, by 2007/08 the university will have fallen to 60.5% of the standard. The current situation makes it extremely difficult to house new faculty, to provide offices for graduate students, particularly those serving as TAs who require space to fulfill their advisory responsibilities to undergraduate students, and to accommodate the staff required to provide the range of student services required to support student learning. To cope with the space shortage, the university has had to convert meeting rooms to offices, put offices in windowless areas, and lease space off-campus. Even with all these efforts, we are currently facing an absolute shortage of office space for new faculty and research personnel.

With respect to classrooms and teaching laboratories, current projections indicate a significant problem by 2007/08 with the university at 83.4% of the BCUSS.

The problem is even more severe with administrative offices where the university will soon fall below 50% of the BCUSS. UNBC is currently facing severe difficulty in accommodating support staff.

Total estimated project cost would be in the range of \$29M.

##### *Recommendation 2:*

*That the university give highest priority to the construction of an athletic centre the Northern Sports Centre of approximately 5,000 to 6,000 NASM to bring the university up to or just over the BC University Space Standard requirement projected for 2007/08 for recreational and athletic facilities.*

The planning committee unanimously agrees that UNBC is in desperate need for an athletic centre. In this area of campus facilities, the university is currently at 18.6% of the BCUSS – clearly an unacceptable situation if the university intends to offer comparable recreational services to those provided by other universities and post-secondary institutions. The absence of appropriate athletic facilities also jeopardizes student recruitment to UNBC, particularly of northern students who often enjoy far better athletic facilities in their high schools (including predominantly First Nations' schools) than is available at the university.

To move this project ahead, the university is revising the 1999 plans for a proposed Sportsplex – a large gymnasium and field house facility - in order to focus on the opportunity for Olympic 2010 legacy funding.

The planning for a proposed Northern Sports Centre involves representatives from the City of Prince George, the College of New Caledonia, the School District, the university, local community leaders, and representative sports groups, in particular those involved in Nordic sports. The intent is to develop a detailed plan for a Northern Sports Centre that will, in addition to providing a range of recreational facilities for UNBC students and the general public, focus on the training of elite athletes for Nordic sports. Prince George would be a natural provincial or national training centre for Nordic sports with its post-secondary educational opportunities, its world class ski trails adjacent to the university, with the numerous other facilities for winter sports readily available in the immediate region, and with the high interest in outdoor sports among youth in northern BC. Such a facility would reinforce the reputation of the university and college as centres of excellence, improve their ability to recruit top students and serious athletes, and create opportunities for northern youth to receive outstanding coaching and to compete in a first-class athletic facility in their region.

The estimated project cost is \$16-20M

Recommendation 3:

*That the university seek capital funding to expand the capacity of the central Power Plant.*

Plant capacity will be increased in a phased approach within the existing building. This expansion will meet the immediate requirements of the 5 Year Capital Plan for expansion within the Ring Road. The capital cost of Phase 1 to install 400 tons of cooling and 20 million BTU of heating capacity will be \$885,000.

*5. The Prince George Campus: Priorities for Renovations Funding:*

Recommendation 4:

*That the university seek funding to renovate the library to accommodate the expansion of library functions.*

With the completion of the Teaching Laboratory building expansion and of Phase 1 of the UNBC Research & Development Park, in which UNBC will occupy two floors, there will be a relocation of office and classroom space from the Geoffrey Weller Library to the Teaching Laboratory Building and the R&D Park. As a consequence, space will be available in the Library to expand library functions. Funding of approximately \$2,262,985 will be required to complete the renovations required to the library building.

*6. Prince George Campus: Other Capital Projects (Privately Funded):*

*Recommendation 5:*

*That the university continue to work with the Northern Undergraduate Student Society to achieve the goal of constructing a UNBC Student Union Building to house student offices, social facilities, and retail services and provide a progress report to the Board of Governors by January, 2004.*

It has been the position of the Northern Undergraduate Student Society that a student centre is essential in order to foster a high quality of student life and participation on campus. NUGSS charges a per semester student levy and has accumulated a fund of approximately \$800,000 toward the cost of such a facility. The Society is working with senior university administrators, led by the Vice-President Administration and Finance, to explore all possible options relating to the financing, construction and operation of a student centre. It is recommended that a report be prepared for the consideration of NUGSS and the University Board of Governors in early 2004.

*Recommendation 6:*

*That the university develop a business plan relating to the expansion of housing on campus, giving particular attention to the building of town houses for mature students and married couples and their families, and report to the Board of Governors in July, 2004.*

With the recent introduction of the B.Ed. program on campus and the commencement of the Northern Medical Program in 2004, it is timely to explore options relating to the expansion of housing on campus, particularly for mature students and married couples and their families. The university needs to explore all options, including the acquisition of existing housing stock in Prince George as well as the construction of housing on campus. A committee, consisting of the Housing Manager, the Director of Student Services and the Vice-President Administration and Finance, among others to be appointed, will examine the available options, develop a business case, and make recommendations to the University Board of Governors by July, 2004.

Recommendation 7:

*That the university continue to work with the Axor Group of Montreal, the developer in Phase 1 of the UNBC Research & Development Park, to plan for the construction of the Phase 2 building and provide a progress report to the Board of Governors by January, 2005.*

Phase 1 of the UNBC Research & Development Park has been architecturally designed in such a manner as to accommodate a linked Phase 2 building. Phase 1 has evolved as a mixed-use facility accommodating UNBC academic units as well as both public and private sector entities which have a desire to locate on campus and whose activities invite university participation in research and development. The major university tenants in the Phase 1 building include Computer Science, Physics and Mathematics. The building is directly linked to the Teaching Laboratory Building that houses the other major Science Programs at UNBC. It is expected that the Phase 1 R&D Park building will become a major centre of scientific research and innovation: hence it might appropriately be named the “Innovation Centre”.

The university through President’s Council has recently endorsed in principle a planned fundraising campaign to support the Business Program on campus. Among the ambitions of the Program is to have a centre for Business Studies on campus that is distinctive and raises the profile of the Program, the most heavily enrolled on campus. In this regard, the university should explore the possibility of Phase 2 of the R&D Park as a mixed use facility, accommodating the Business Program as the principal university tenant, and other tenants to include early phase businesses that can benefit from the interaction on campus with Business faculty and students. Such a building, potentially to be called the “Enterprise Centre”, would also help to alleviate the shortage of offices and classroom space on campus.

Working with the Business Program, the President, supported by the Director of Development, the Dean of the College of Science and Management, representatives of the Business Program, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Vice-President Research, and the Vice-President Administration of Finance will work to develop a plan for the so-called “Enterprise Centre” to be reviewed by the Board of Governors by January, 2005.

Recommendation 8:

*That the university continue to cooperate with the David Douglas Botanical Garden Society to develop a northern botanical garden on campus to be integrated into the detention ponds in the centre of the major parking area.*

Over the past years, the university and the David Douglas Botanical Garden Society have worked together to develop a landscaping plan for the campus and to highlight the area around the detention ponds to create a unique northern botanical garden. The university has assisted the society in fundraising, in the supply of materials, and in the use of

campus facilities and has recently signed a formal agreement of cooperation with the Society. The proposed northern botanical garden will beautify the campus; it will also support research into northern plant species and support both research and teaching programs at the university.

Recommendation 9:

*That the university remain open to P3 (Private/Public Partnerships) opportunities for the construction of an ice rink on campus.*

In 2002, the university was approached by a Prince George consortium interested in building an ice rink facility on campus. The proposed business plan for this initiative was unacceptable to the university, but UNBC remains interested in the possibility of an ice rink on campus. Such a facility would complement the proposed UNBC Northern Sports Centre and might even be integrated into it.

*7. Campus Expansion in the Regions:*

Recommendation 10:

*That the university explore options for campus expansion in both Terrace and Fort St. John in order to accommodate the expansion in both programming and staffing projected over the next five years and report to the Board of Governors by September, 2004.*

Capital to support the university's regional services has traditionally come through the Colleges. In keeping with this tradition, UNBC has been involved in planning for the Prince Rupert Campus of Northwest Community College and in the planning for the North Cariboo Community Campus in Quesnel. With the eventual completion of these two projects, it would appear that the university's space needs will be met for the foreseeable future in both Prince Rupert and Quesnel. Likewise, it is hoped that the construction of a new University College of the Cariboo Campus in Williams Lake will satisfy UNBC space needs there, particularly for the Cariboo Chilcotin Weekend University.

Notwithstanding these positive developments for regional operations, pressure exists for capital expansion in Terrace and Fort St. John, both major regional centres for the University.

In Terrace, the university leases space in a privately owned building downtown on Park St. The university has invested \$180,000 in tenant improvements and furnishings for its portion of the building. Currently the building has other tenants: it also has vacant premises adjacent to the area leased by the university. Through the involvement of the Director of Regional Operations, the Program Chair for the Northwest, the Vice-President Administration and Finance, and the Director of Development and others as

appointed, the university will explore options for increasing the amount of UNBC space in Terrace including expanding the current lease within the Park St. building, arranging for the purchase of the building as a UNBC owned and partially rented facility, or using other space that might be available over time through Northwest Community College. A report will be presented to the Board of Governors by September, 2004.

In Fort St. John, the university occupies space within the campus of Northern Lights College. The space is inadequate to meet current needs and there is no opportunity to expand university operations within the NLC campus. There have also been recurrent problems within the current space occupied by UNBC relating to fumes from the adjacent auto mechanics garage on campus. Consequently, it is recommended that the Director of Regional Operations and the Northeast Regional Chair explore the available options for UNBC campus expansion in Fort St. John, including the leasing of downtown space, and report back to the Board of Governors by September 2004.

#### *8. The Prince George Master Campus Plan:*

##### *Recommendation 11:*

*That the Board of Governors approve revisions to the official Prince George Campus Plan for the purpose of reserving available lands within the core campus area for future academic buildings, excepting the proposed sites of the Student Union Building and Phase 2 of the R&D Park (See Appendix 7).*

##### *Recommendation 12:*

*That the University report to the Board of Governors on the suitability of the site recommended for the Northern Sports Centre by January, 2004.*

##### *Recommendation 13:*

*That the University investigate the acquisition of privately owned lands adjacent to the core campus area and report back to the Board of Governors by January, 2004.*

In the course of its deliberations, the committee reviewed the Prince George Campus Master Plan. Discussions focused on establishing priority uses for lands available within the core campus area (the area within the ring road), on identifying possible locations for the proposed Northern Sports Centre, and on estimating future building capacity within the core campus area. The UNBC campus architect, Russ Chernoff, assisted these discussions by proposing revisions to the Campus Master Plan to reflect the thinking of committee members.

With the recent expansion of the core campus to the north with the completed or planned construction of the Bentley Centre, the Teaching Laboratory Building and DTO expansion, Phase 1 of the R&D Park, and the Northern Health Sciences Centre, UNBC will have increased its core campus buildings by approximately 36% percent between 2002-05. With this expansion, it is becoming readily apparent that available land within the core campus area is becoming a scarce commodity (See Appendix 6). Should the university proceed over the next several years with Phase 2 of the R&D Park and the expansion of the Northern Health Sciences Centre as provided for in the 2002 revised Campus Master Plan, the only land available for future academic and administrative buildings will be the lands to the south of the existing Conference Centre and Administration Building. However, the land immediately to the south of the Conference Centre is precisely the land identified in the 2002 Campus Master Plan as the preferred site for an athletic facility.

Recognizing the scarcity of land within the core campus area for the future academic and administrative buildings, and recognizing the desirability of retaining the intimacy of a small campus and the physical integration of academic and administrative buildings, the committee arrived at the conclusion that the core campus area should be reserved for future academic and administrative expansion. Exceptions to this policy would be the site identified for the Student Union Building to the west of the Winter Garden as well as for the site identified for Phase 2 of the R&D Park. If these restrictions on future building expansion within the core campus area are approved, this area should be able to accommodate the growth of the university to approximately 6,000-7,000 *fte* students based on current UNBC building guidelines, and assuming increased efficiency in the use of space.

As a consequence of a decision to reserve the core campus area primarily to academic and administrative buildings, the proposed Northern Sports Centre would have to be located outside of the campus ring road. Several sites were considered. The site selected for further consideration is to the east of the main entrance to the university off University Way.

The site has a number of advantages: it has good public access for Prince George community users; it is within easy walking distance of core campus buildings and the residences; it provides space for the future expansion of athletic facilities and adjacent housing; it provides reasonable space for public parking; and because it is not part of the core campus and integrated into other buildings, UNBC building requirements could be modified. The disadvantages include the fact that a building in this area would not be connected to the utilidor and would have its own HVAC system. There would also be infrastructure requirements to service the land. As with other sites on campus, soil conditions that would have to be explored. Nevertheless, the site merits further study.

The campus architect also recommended that the University investigate the acquisition of privately owned lands adjacent to the campus, particularly those to the southeast of Parking Lot 1. These lands would provide the opportunity for the future expansion of sports facilities, adjacent parking, or campus housing in accordance with the revised Master Plan.

### *9. Outstanding Issues for Future Consideration:*

During its deliberations, the committee identified and discussed a number of issues that time did not permit it to address in detail. Nevertheless, the issues warrant further discussion and debate, particularly those relating to the physical organization of the Prince George campus, the optimum size of that campus, and the possibility of shifting UNBC growth to regional campuses.

#### *a) The Physical Organization of the Prince George Campus;*

One issue relates to the organization of buildings on UNBC's Prince George campus within the context of the university's commitment to fostering interdisciplinary interaction. Increasingly, the campus is assuming a form of physical organization along disciplinary lines. As a consequence of the reassignment of offices that occurred in the summer of 2002, the College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences now 'owns' the faculty offices in the Administration building while the College of Science and Management 'owns' those in the Teaching Laboratory building and, soon, in the attached R&D Park. This disciplinary division between the Arts and Sciences was neither contemplated nor intended by the initial placement of faculty offices on the UNBC Prince George campus.

The University is also moving inexorably toward an even greater degree of disciplinary separation. The medical faculty at UNBC will have their own building, albeit the building is connected by the Bentley Centre to the adjacent Science building. The design of the Northern Health Sciences Centre was planned for future expansion with a view to consolidating all of the health sciences disciplines within one area of the campus. The purpose of this organization was to achieve greater efficiencies and also to foster interdisciplinary interactions within the health sciences. The result, however, will be to have a distinctive and separate health sciences section of the campus.

Likewise, this report suggests that the Business faculty might in time occupy a portion of Phase 2 of the R&D Park and that this building, the putative "Enterprise Centre", would become the home of the Business Program interacting with private sector co-habitants. Thus, Business would be located in a distinctive and separate part of the campus.

Within the committee, there was also the suggestion that an Education building, to house the Education Program, would be of great value and would be able to provide the facilities, such as practice-teaching classrooms, that would enhance the undergraduate Education Program.

For these reasons, when addressing the need for classroom, laboratory, office and related administrative space on campus, the committee refrained from repeating the recommendation of the 2001 Five Year Capital Plan that there be a single multi-disciplinary Teaching & Learning Centre on campus that would house a wide range of academic programs and faculty.

But the die is not cast. There is time to reconsider the future direction of the campus with respect to its physical organization and we would encourage discussion within the College Councils, within Senate, and eventually at the Board. There also needs to be a related discussion as to how to continue to promote interdisciplinary interactions as the campus grows and as academic program units become more physically separated and distanced from one another.

*b) The Prince George and the Regional Campuses;*

As stated above, the recent development of the core area of the UNBC Prince George campus has highlighted the relative scarcity of land for further development within the ring road. This observation has led the committee to recommend that the land within the ring road be reserved for future academic and administrative buildings. The observation has also led to the conclusion that, within current university building guidelines, the optimum size of the campus, based on the concept of low level and inter-connected academic and administrative buildings within the ring road, is approximately 6,000-7,000 *fte*, about twice the size of the university today.

Two questions logically arise: if the university is to expand beyond the ring road, where should that expansion occur; and is there an optimal size for the Prince George campus?

There is, for example, the suggestion that expansion should occur in the areas of the current parking lots along the eastern edge of the core campus. Expansion in this direction would obviously require a different approach to on-campus parking.

Another suggestion is that a limit should be prescribed for the Prince George campus and future expansion should be directed to one or more of the regional campuses thereby fulfilling the recommendation of the Dhaloff Report – the original feasibility study for a university in northern BC – that UNBC should be distributed across a number of campuses spread across the region.

*10. Conclusion:*

With respect to the identification of priorities for future capital development on the UNBC Prince George campus, this report recommends that highest priority be given to adding to the classrooms, laboratories, offices and related administrative areas required to support continuing enrolment growth, and to the construction of a Northern Sports Centre. Among the capital projects that would be funded predominantly from non-public sources of revenue, high priority should be given to the construction of a Student Union Centre, to residences for mature and adult students, and to Phase 2 of the Research & Development Park. Attention must also be given to the expansion of regional teaching facilities, particularly in Terrace and Fort St. John.

The growing pressure of development on the core area of the Prince George campus leads the committee to recommend that the lands within the ring road be reserved for future academic and administrative buildings, excepting the proposed Student Union building and Phase 2 of the R&D Park. As a consequence of this recommendation, the committee recommends that the proposed Northern Sports Centre be located outside of the ring road, in the southeastern area of the campus adjacent to the University Way entrance into the core campus. In addition, the committee recommends that the university investigate the acquisition of privately-owned lands on the edge of the campus.

The committee has also raised a number of other issues relating to the physical organization of the Prince George campus, the optimum size of that campus, possible directions for future campus development outside of the core campus area, and the prospect of directing future development to regional campuses outside of Prince George. There is no immediate need to decide these issues, but if UNBC continues to grow at the rate of growth it has experienced since the Prince George campus opened nine years ago, these questions must be addressed in future Five Year Capital Plans.

Approved by the BOG: July 26, 2003