



Annual 3-Year Institutional Service Plan

2006/07 – 2008/09

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1. Letter from the Board Chair and President:



April 21, 2006

Honourable Murray Coell, M.L.A.
Minister, Advanced Education
c/o Accountability Branch
B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education
P.O. Box 9882, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9T6

Dear Minister:

We are pleased to submit the three-year service plan for the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) as required by the Ministry of Advanced Education of the Province of British Columbia. We accept accountability for the plan's preparation and achieving its specific objectives.

UNBC regards itself as British Columbia's "university in the north, for the north". The University is committed to serving the needs of a vast region by providing educational opportunities for northerners, including First Nations, both on the University's principal campus in Prince George and in other centres in the University's Peace River-Liard, Northwest, and South-Central regions.

The purposes of this three-year plan are to outline the planning context within which UNBC operates; to articulate the University's sense of vision, mission, and strategic areas of academic and research focus; to identify particular goals and objectives to be achieved over the next three years; and to identify Areas of Performance Interest (APIs) and performance measures and targets, both those in keeping with Ministry Accountability measures and those additional measures and targets identified by the University to determine its own progress.

Overall, the goal of UNBC is to be Canada's premier small, research-intensive university, with internationally recognized academic and research programs that prepare its graduates in select areas of high relevance to the peoples of our region, province, and beyond.

The plan has been discussed internally within UNBC, including President's Council, Senate, and the Board of Governors and has broad support within the University. It is the third three-year plan submitted by the University in continued conformance with government requirements.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles J. Jago
President & Vice-Chancellor

Dr. Donald Rix
Chair, Board of Governors

2. Institutional Overview:

The University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts, commerce, and the sciences, including professional programs in areas such as teacher education, nursing, social work, and planning. Academic programs are distributed between two colleges – the College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences and the College of Science and Management, both of which offer bachelors, masters and doctoral programs. In addition, UNBC and UBC partner in the delivery of the Northern Medical Program, which aims to educate doctors in the North who have both the skills and attitude necessary to pursue practice opportunities in northern and rural communities. (See Appendix A for a list of the programs currently offered at UNBC.)

UNBC plays a significant role in building expertise in Aboriginal and northern health, as evidenced by its designation as the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health; its appointment of a B.C. Leadership Chair in Aboriginal Environmental Health; its 2005 introduction of a masters-level Family Nurse Practitioner program; its 2005 expansion of its bachelors degree program in Nursing to the University's Northwest Campus in Terrace; a planned introduction in 2006 of a Bachelor of Health Sciences program; its assumption of a joint leadership role with the Northern Health Authority in the Northern Cancer Strategy initiative; and its continued success in receiving grants for a wide array of health-related research projects.

UNBC is also a major centre of research with priority given to addressing issues of relevance to its region, such as the social, environmental, health, economic, and cultural issues of northern B.C. and similar regions around the world. Initiatives such as the Western Canadian Cryospheric Network, led by a UNBC researcher, exemplify UNBC's research in environmental issues. This project aims to understand the behaviour of the climate system and its effects on glacier mass balance in the mountain ranges of B.C. and Alberta. Research generated from this project will form part of a nationwide assessment of the past, present, and future response of Canadian glaciers to changing climates. The University's academic and research foci are outlined in section 2(c) below.

UNBC has approximately 4,100 students (2,900 FTE¹), the majority (approximately two-thirds) of whom are from northern B.C., with a large proportion (approximately one-quarter) from southern B.C., and the remainder from other locations across Canada and around the world. The University's international student enrolment is rising and UNBC currently maintains thirty-five bi-lateral international exchange agreements, and two multi-lateral exchange agreements, with representation in twenty different countries. International students play an important role in assisting the University to increase the number of skilled workers and professionals in northern B.C. UNBC graduates, some of them international students, are living and working in the north, thereby making the region less dependent on the recruitment of skilled immigrants and professionals from other parts of Canada and abroad. The University has a growing Continuing Studies program which offers courses in a variety of subject areas, including: business, executive training, natural resource management and environment, liberal arts and culture, general interest, professional development, and English language studies. These programs augment the skills of the labour force by providing

¹ Annualized FTEs are the Full-Time Equivalent enrolments over the course of an entire reporting year – 2005/06 in this case. FTE targets are set for each institution annually in its budget letter from the Ministry. The FTE number on this page includes fee-paying undergraduate students.

technical and professional non-credit courses, which complement the University's academic programming.

The University has a government-approved mandate to serve the entire region of northern British Columbia and to provide educational opportunities for all northerners including First Nations and Aboriginal people. To this extent, the University has established a number of regional campuses and works with many First Nations throughout the region. The University maintains four regional campuses in the Northwest (Terrace and Prince Rupert), Peace River-Liard (Fort St. John), and South-Central (Quesnel). In addition, UNBC regularly delivers courses to over a dozen communities in the North as well as via the World Wide Web. Relationships with several First Nations organizations facilitate delivery and provide additional educational options to students in smaller communities. These alliances create opportunities for certificates, diplomas and/or Bachelor of Arts degrees in First Nations Studies in various regions: Hazelton (Siwii̓x̓o'osxwim Wilnatahl Gitksan Society); South Cariboo and Chilcotin (Cariboo-Chilcotin Weekend University – serving 15 First Nations bands in the Cariboo & Chilcotin, in collaboration with TRU and the Cariboo Tribal Council); the Nass Valley (via a unique partnership with the Wilp Wil̓x̓o'oskw̓hl Nisga'a); and Haida Gwaii (Qay'lnagaay Heritage Centre Society). In Fall 2005, the University began offering an Aboriginal Teacher Education Bridging program at its Terrace campus; an initiative whose aim is to increase the number of Aboriginal school teachers. The University continues to develop arrangements with new partners in First Nations and other communities. To maximize opportunities for students while minimizing overlap of course offerings, UNBC also collaborates with northern B.C. colleges and maintains partnership agreements with Yukon College and Grande Prairie Regional College.

Through a generous donation by BMO Bank of Montreal, UNBC has added a second location to its operations in Prince George - the UNBC Downtown BMO Bank of Montreal Centre. This location will assist the University in strengthening its ties to the Prince George community and will provide a strategic downtown location for a number of researchers, the Alumni Association, the UNBC Foundation, and the University's Development Office.

With its aforementioned academic programming and research, international programs, continuing education opportunities, community and institutional partnerships, and other collaborative initiatives, UNBC is serving the needs of people in northern British Columbia while acting as a catalyst for economic and social development in the region. UNBC's combination of academic, non-credit, and international programs will assist the region in meeting projected labour demands and fuelling economic expansion by increasing the number of highly qualified personnel through provision of more education to a higher proportion of the region's own population and by attracting new people with skills and ambition into the region. Surveys of UNBC alumni consistently show that more than 50% of the University's alumni live and work in northern B.C. communities. As well, a study by the City of Prince George's marketing agency demonstrates the economic and social impact of public post-secondary institutions on that northern community alone: in ten years, the number of people living in Prince George with a college or university degree increased by 53% and, based on the 2004/05 fiscal year, the economic impact of the presence of UNBC and CNC in Prince George was \$721.4 million.

The University of Northern British Columbia is proud of its accomplishments, including the economic and social impacts on the northern part of the Province. UNBC is also proud of its national reputation with students and alumni. In 2005, UNBC achieved its best-ever standing in the

Maclean's magazine ranking of Canadian universities. UNBC placed 4th out of 21 universities across the country in the Primarily Undergraduate category. In the 2005 Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium study, which annually measures the opinions of students and alumni from 28 universities across Canada, UNBC was above the national average in rankings of satisfaction with university experience, with campus and facilities, and with faculty.

a. *Vision*²:

The University of Northern British Columbia aspires to be Canada's premier small research-intensive university, with internationally recognized academic and research programs that prepare its graduates in select areas of high relevance to the peoples of our region, province, and beyond.

b. *Mission*:

Institutional Mission Statement

The University of Northern British Columbia – founded as ‘a university in the north, for the north’ – holds as its mission to improve the quality of life in its region, the province, and beyond, by attaining the highest standards of undergraduate and graduate teaching, learning, and research. UNBC is committed to serving a vast region by building partnerships and by being innovative, resourceful, and responsive to student and community needs. In the spirit of its Carrier motto – ‘En cha huná³ – UNBC celebrates diversity and intends to reflect and to foster the rich cultural diversity of northern British Columbia and its peoples.

UNBC recognizes that the strength of the University is its people and that the most important measure of its success is the educational enrichment of its students. The University strives to offer all its people – students, staff and faculty – a healthy, safe, open, friendly, supportive, consultative and stimulating environment conducive to individual intellectual growth, personal fulfillment and career progress. UNBC embraces the principles of academic freedom, responsibility, education for its own sake, integrity, inclusion, respect for others, equity, fairness, operational efficiency, and public accountability.

*Academic Mission Statement*⁴

The mission of the University of Northern British Columbia is to provide excellent academic programs and services for its undergraduate, professional, and graduate students so that they are prepared for roles that will improve the quality of life for the peoples of Northern British Columbia, the rest of the province, Canada, and beyond. The University's core academic values of excellence, inclusiveness, curiosity and creativity, and responsiveness underpin its

² This is the academic vision statement proposed in the *Final Report: Phase I of the Academic Visioning Initiative*.

³ Translation: he/she/it has life. Meaning: A fundamental Carrier value which dictates that a person's behaviour towards his/her fellow being, animal and the environment is “respect”. Anyone or anything with life is respected.

⁴ This is the academic mission statement presented in the *Final Report: Phase I of the Academic Visioning Initiative*.

mission. To demonstrate accomplishment of its mission, the University of Northern British Columbia's graduates will exhibit the following:

- Appropriate depth and breadth of knowledge in their chosen areas of study
- Analytical, critical, and creative thinking informed by research and theory
- Liberality, inclusiveness, and an appreciation of diverse perspectives and ways of knowing, in keeping with UNBC's Carrier motto – 'En cha huná (respecting all forms of life)
- Personal growth, leadership skills and the ability to effectively communicate ideas
- Passion for pursuing life-long learning and intellectual development
- Commitment to positive citizenship from the local to global levels

Students will be provided an educational environment marked by its student-centeredness, relevance, and pedagogy that optimizes learning. To enable its mission, the University of Northern British Columbia seeks to provide its faculty and staff members with a positive, stimulating, and supportive environment in which to conduct their student-centered academic work.

c. *Academic and Research Focus*⁵:

The primary objective of Phase 1 of the academic strategic planning process was to create a coherent organizing framework for describing both the thematic focus of the University's academic programs and how those programs are delivered. Following a review of how other institutions approached this task and consultations within and external to the University, the Academic Visioning Initiative (AVI) Committee determined that three inter-related, yet distinct, types of themes would be used to create the framework: Thematic Academic Clusters, Foundational Academic Themes, and Pedagogical Academic Themes.

Thematic Academic Clusters

The first type of theme, the Thematic Academic Cluster, describes a higher order area of substantive academic study that a cluster or grouping of programs and faculty members seeks to address. Thematic academic clusters are, by their nature, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary and explore complex issues and phenomena. These thematic clusters are issue, problem, population, or philosophically based.

Based on the consultation process and application of guiding review criteria, the committee identified a set of six thematic academic clusters that it believes best represents what the University should seek to address through its academic programs over the coming decade:

- Natural Resources and Environment
- Health and Human Development
- Commerce and Community Sustainability

⁵ These are the Thematic Academic Clusters, Foundational Academic Themes, and Pedagogical Academic Themes identified in the *Final Report: Phase 1 of the Academic Visioning Initiative*; details are provided in Appendix C.

- Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge
- Global Processes and Perspectives
- Artistic and Cultural Expression

Foundational Academic Themes

The second type of theme, the Foundational Academic Theme, represents more traditional groupings of discipline-based academic programs and courses. All universities aspire to offer a liberal education and the ability to do so is often a metric for determining the academic strength of an institution. Educational and research programs and courses within foundational academic themes contribute to their individual disciplines as well as provide the foundational knowledge required for the Thematic Academic Clusters. The AVI Committee identified the following foundational academic themes:

- Science and Mathematics
- Social Sciences
- Arts and Humanities

Pedagogical Academic Themes

The third theme, the Pedagogical Academic Theme, is comprised of both expected student outcomes and how those outcomes are to be achieved through the University's approach to teaching and learning. Throughout the AVI consultation process, participants stressed that the University's academic mission must be focused on the student and of how the University of Northern British Columbia delivers academic programs and supports student learning.

Expected Student-Centered Learning Outcomes

While recognizing that academic aspirations will be different for every student, the University believes that those involved in supporting the teaching and learning environment are responsible for providing students with opportunities and experiences that support a number of common outcomes. The intention of the University is that its students and graduates will exhibit:

- Appropriate depth and breadth of knowledge and skills
- Analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills
- Liberality, inclusiveness, and an appreciation of diversity
- Personal growth, leadership skills and effective communication
- Life-long learning and intellectual development
- Engaged citizenship from the local to global levels

Innovative Pedagogical Approaches

The delivery of high quality academic programs and the creation of a positive learning environment to support them matters at the University. "How we teach" and "what we teach" has a direct impact on students. The University of Northern British Columbia's

pedagogical vision is grounded in innovative approaches to enhance learning and teaching. In order to provide the University faculty, staff, and students with a stimulating and supportive environment, the following approaches were identified as critical to the University's academic mission:

- Experiential, collaborative, and active learning
- Inter-disciplinary approaches to knowledge acquisition
- A diversity of approaches and perspectives toward teaching, learning, and knowing that optimizes student outcomes
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom and at a distance
- Research enriched and enhanced instruction
- Internationalization

3. Planning Context:

UNBC faces a planning context characterized by an increasingly competitive post-secondary environment in the Province of British Columbia, a strong provincial economy, and the reality of continuing budgetary constraint.

With respect to the new, more competitive environment, UNBC forecasted that with the creation of two new institutions in the interior of B.C. an already highly competitive environment for student, faculty and staff recruitment would intensify. The forecast has proven to be accurate. One year later, for the first time in its history, UNBC's total actual annualized FTEs are lower than the target prescribed by the Ministry of Advanced Education. The strong provincial economy and strong labour market in northern B.C. are also contributing factors to the modest decline in enrolment experienced by UNBC this year.

With respect to UNBC's budgetary situation, there has been a welcomed increase to the University's base operational funding from the province as a result of a detailed review of university funding this past year. The increased funding has assisted UNBC to cushion the impact of reduced tuition revenue resulting from the 2005/06 drop in enrolment. The upward adjustment to the University base operating grant for 2006/07 will also help the University to address very strong cost pressures for the coming year. So too will the commitment of Government to fund future PSEC approved salary agreements.

Adequate funding support from Government remains crucial to enable UNBC to sustain its academic and research programs and to address emerging needs. In this regard, we encourage Government to assist the University in addressing escalating capital costs, in working to increase graduate enrolment and graduate student support, and in coping with the space pressures generated by the vigorous growth of externally funded research. UNBC also encourages the Ministry of Advanced Education to consider its request to permit UNBC to continue to count all international students in its funded FTE figures until such time as UNBC achieves greater economies of scale and/or provide a subsidy to grow its international student recruitment and service program.

Despite enhanced Government funding, in 2006/07, UNBC faces the prospect of budgetary cuts resulting largely from ongoing inflationary pressures.

Given both the rapidly changing context for post-secondary education in B.C. and the prospect of significant and ongoing fiscal challenges, UNBC's current planning approach is to identify planning priorities annually, to assign planning activities to sub-committees of President's Council, and to submit annual planning reports to its Board and Senate. A short summary of the outcomes of the planning activities identified in 2004/05 and the new planning activities identified in 2005/06 is listed below. The major foci of planning over the past two years have been enrolment management and academic visioning. The two are intimately connected and are intended to position UNBC to enjoy continuing enrolment growth and robust academic development for the remainder of this decade and beyond.

Planning Activities Identified in 2004/05 – Final Report Submitted in November 2005

Student Recruitment

UNBC has undertaken a number of activities to address its recent modest decrease in enrolment specifically and the issue of increased competition generally. Within the constraints of its operating budget, resources were reallocated to enhance recruitment, advisement, and retention activities across the institution. The University has implemented improvements to its admission procedures, online registration procedures, and scheduling.

This is a major area of activity that will continue to receive significant attention in 2006/07 at the operational level. Several activities to further enhance recruitment are in progress (e.g. international and First Nations recruitment, web site accessibility, and a review of the fees structure). A number of marketing and data collection activities and improvements are also underway.

Capital Expansion / Capital Planning

The University has a number of capital projects underway. These activities are outlined in Section 7 of this report.

The University recently completed a new 5-Year Capital Plan in order to project its capital requirements over a longer term as requested by Government. The identification of major capital project priorities for all UNBC campuses was done via a review of the outstanding recommendations from the 2003-2008 5-Year Capital Plan and the Campus Master Plan, as well as identification of UNBC's current and projected space and facilities needs.

Implementation of the Wireless Campus

Wireless technology has been installed and is now supported on UNBC's Prince George Campus. This service provides students with increased access to network services, online admission and registration processes and electronic library resources. (See Goal/Objective 16 in Section 4.) The University is also working towards using this technology to further promote the application of e-learning at UNBC. *Appropriate use of technology in the classroom and at a distance* is one of the pedagogical academic themes identified in the academic visioning initiative.

Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention Strategies

In anticipation of heightened competition for faculty and staff, UNBC undertook a review of its recruitment and retention strategies. As a result of that exercise, a new planning initiative to address the issue of quality of faculty and staff work-life (described below) was identified and will continue into 2006/07.

Promoting Cultural Diversity

The enrolment growth for both international and Aboriginal students at UNBC underlined the need to address the question of promoting cultural diversity on campus. This initiative resulted in: a commitment to extend UNBC exchange programs and to encourage more students to participate; the setting of long-term, internal targets for enrolment growth in both of these areas; the commitment to encourage further implementation of international and First Nations perspectives into the UNBC curricula; plans for cultural exchange events; and an increase in International Operations staff for the purposes of recruiting and counseling international students. The academic visioning initiative identified *Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge* as a thematic academic cluster and *Internationalization* as a pedagogical academic theme.

Planning Activities Identified in 2004/05 – Ongoing Items

Academic Program Review & Development

A special task force was struck to lead an “academic visioning initiative”, a process which included a series of consultations with the university community and the public. The goal of the academic visioning initiative was to identify broad academic themes in order to create a coherent organizing framework for: examining the success of current programs in attracting and retaining students; considering areas of potential new programming that would build upon the university’s existing academic strengths and broaden program options available to students in areas of potential enrolment growth; and identifying new program areas that will serve the health, social, and economic human resource needs of northern B.C.

Phase 1 of this initiative (completed in March 2006) will be followed by Phase 2 – Implementation in 2006/07. The goal is to link academic programs to research priorities and strategic planning, within the context of the need to grow UNBC and to reinforce its regional mandate and its vision.

Research Planning

UNBC continued to be a strong research university, as evidenced by achievements such as: input into the provincial Research and Innovation Strategy and the B.C. Forestry Cluster; recruitment of 6 Canada Research Chairs (bringing the institutional total to 8) and 1 B.C. Leadership Chair; establishment of a Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Institute; designation as a National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health; and a number of initiatives related to the Mountain Pine Beetle issue.

The academic visioning exercise described above will inform a re-evaluation of the UNBC Strategic Research Plan in 2006/07, to promote congruence and synergy between the academic and research activities of UNBC.

Business Development

The University has engaged in a number of activities to foster business development, in order to generate new sources of revenue and assist in the achievement of goals in other areas. The Business Development Committee is developing an evaluation framework and is reviewing a number of business proposals. Work in this area will carry on into 2006/07.

New Planning Activities Identified in 2005/06

Quality of Student Life

The Quality of Student Life Committee was struck to provide a visionary and comprehensive strategic plan for achieving excellence in quality of student life. In 2006/07, this planning initiative will focus on the development, delivery, assessment and evaluation of services for students in all areas that impact the student experience. The committee will recommend enhancements to current programs, propose new programs, and recommend priorities to enhance the quality of student life for all students, paying particular attention to the needs of the growing diverse student population.

Quality of Faculty and Staff Work-life

Building on the work of the *Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention Strategies* initiative, this activity will establish priorities for improving the quality of the work-life experience at UNBC within the constraints of the University's budget and PSEC restrictions.

The Multi-Campus University

In 2006/07, the goal of this strategy is to develop the vision of UNBC as a multi-campus university including areas for regional academic program and services development and growth, evolving organizational structures, and projected regional capital facilities, all within a 10 to 20 year timeframe for development. Assessing partnership opportunities and the University's role in e-learning and mixed mode delivery will also be addressed.

Comprehensive Campaign Development

The primary role of this 2006/07 initiative is to determine the priorities and financial target for the University's fundraising over the next five years and to identify the infrastructure needed to support these activities. This exercise will assist the University in achieving a number of its other priorities, and will be important within the context of budgetary constraints.

Alumni Relations

Recognizing the importance of alumni to expanding the profile of the University, the goals of this 2006/07 initiative are to strengthen the relationship between UNBC and its alumni and to improve the process through which we maintain data about our alumni. A solid relationship with alumni is expected to assist the University in a number of its other strategies.

4. Goals & Objectives:

a. Goals Related to Mandate:

#	Goal	Objective
1.	Enrolment growth to the level of Ministry approved FTE targets, over the course of this 3-Year Service Plan.	- See Section 6 (Ministry Performance Measures) and Appendix B.
2.	Continuing success in increasing enrolment levels among First Nations and Aboriginal students in all academic program areas.	- See Section 6 (Ministry Performance Measures).
3.	Continuation of successful student outcomes as indicated by graduating class surveys.	- See Section 6 (Ministry Performance Measures).
4.	Further capital expansion in Prince George and on regional campuses to better meet the space requirements of UNBC students, faculty and staff.	- Completion of the Teaching & Learning Centre by 2006/07. - Completion of renovations to the Geoffrey R. Weller Library by 2006/07. - Acquisition and renovations of a building in Terrace to serve as the Northwest Campus of UNBC.
5.	Progress towards the development of appropriate athletic and recreational facilities on the UNBC Prince George campus.	- Completion of the Northern Sport Centre by 2007/08.

b. Goals Related to Academic Development:

#	Goal	Objective
6.	Develop, evaluate and promulgate educational practices for active learning ⁶ .	- Maintain or increase (from one in 2003/04) the number of workshops delivered that promulgate educational practices for active learning. - Develop measurement tools to effectively evaluate attempts at applying active learning techniques.
7.	Increase student retention by bridging math and literacy deficits through specialized instruction.	- Improve the retention rates for students who participate in specialized instruction when compared to matched students who do not.

⁶ In active learning situations, students read, write, reflect on, and engage each other as they approach the content of a course through problem-solving exercises, research opportunities, small groups or team activities, simulations, case studies or role-playing applications.

8.	Introduce new degree programs, specifically a Bachelor of Health Sciences, a Master of Arts in English and a Bachelor of Fine Arts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce the Bachelor of Health Sciences by September 2006. - Introduce the Master of Arts in English by 2006. - Introduce the Bachelor of Fine Arts (in collaboration with the Emily Carr Institute) by September 2007. - Continue to work on the implementation of other Health Sciences programs in conjunction with the University of British Columbia.
9.	Progress in measuring and increasing the number of active co-op students.	- Increase the number of active co-op students from the 2003/04 base of 152 to 202 by 2006/07.
10.	Increase the number of international students.	- Increase the number of undergraduate differential fee-paying international students from the 2005/06 base of 119 to 250 by 2008/09, while continuing steady growth in the numbers of international graduate students and international exchange students.

c. Goals Related to Research:

#	Goal	Objective
11.	Maintain a high level of excellence in overall research intensity, as indicated by a nationally recognized ranking system.	- Remain in the top one-half of “universities with mainly undergraduate programs”, as categorized by Research Infosource Inc. in its annual published ranking of research intensity among Canadian universities.
12.	Expand office space and provide suitable office space for graduate students.	- Have appropriate office space for each thesis-based graduate student by 2006/07.

d. Goals Related to the Region and Access:

#	Goal	Objective
13.	Progress towards increasing the number of professional programs delivered outside of the Prince George campus in the regions, notably the B.Ed. in Terrace and additional cohorts of the M.Ed as demand warrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare students in the Northwest Region for entry to the B.Ed. program to be implemented in Terrace in September 2007. - Introduce new Master of Education cohorts (as demand warrants).
14.	Increase the number of Web courses delivered annually and the number of active Web courses. ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of delivered Web courses by at least 2/year from the 2003/04 base of 14. - Increase the number of active web courses from the 2003/04 base of 40.
15.	Expand the number of courses, certificate and diploma programs offered through Continuing Education and further grow Continuing Education as an earnings centre for the University.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase Continuing Education courses from the 2003/04 base of 110. - Increase Continuing Education enrolments from the 2003/04 base of 1,460.
16.	Increase student access to online admission and registration processes and electronic library resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand the wireless network infrastructure to achieve 100% coverage of the Prince George Campus by the end of 2008/09. - Convert the entire admission and registration process for the University to e-business technologies by the end of 2007/08. - Implement a system to generate a UNBC email address for every prospective student by the end of 2007/08. - Maintain or increase the number of academically required databases subscribed to by the Library from the 2005/06 base of 134.

⁷ A “delivered web course” is a web course that will be offered in the period covered by this Service Plan. An “active web course” is a web course that will be developed and may or may not be offered during the period covered by this Service Plan. “Web course” denotes a course that is fully delivered via the World Wide Web.

5. Accountability Framework Performance Measures:

The Accountability Framework Performance Measures reported on are in accordance with the “Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures, 2006/07 For the British Columbia Public Post-Secondary System”. The only Performance Measures reported on are those for which the Framework proposes the implementation or development of institutional performance measures relevant to UNBC as a university. The following table links the Ministry of Advanced Education’s goals and objectives to the Accountability Framework Performance Measures and UNBC’s institutional goals set out in Section 4.

Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Accountability Framework Performance Measures	Institutional Goals
Excellent public and private post secondary education that meets the needs and aspirations of British Columbians.	Capacity	Student spaces in public institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total spaces • Student spaces in computer science, electrical and computer engineering • Student spaces in nursing and other allied health programs • Student spaces in medical school programs 	Enrolment growth to the level of Ministry approved FTE targets, over the course of this 3-Year Service Plan.
		Total credentials awarded	
		Percent of annual educational activity occurring between May and August	
		University admissions GPA cut-off	
			Further capital expansion in Prince George and on regional campuses to better meet the space requirements of UNBC students, faculty and staff.
			Progress towards the development of appropriate athletic and recreational facilities on the UNBC Prince George campus.
	Access	Number and percent of public post-secondary students that are Aboriginal	Continuing success in increasing enrolment levels among First Nations and Aboriginal students in all academic program areas
		Student spaces in developmental programs	Increase student retention by bridging math and literacy deficits through specialized instruction.
			Introduce new degree programs, specifically a Bachelor of Health Sciences, a Master of Arts in English and a Bachelor of Fine Arts.

Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Accountability Framework Performance Measures	Institutional Goals
Excellent public and private post secondary education that meets the needs and aspirations of British Columbians (cont'd).	Access (cont'd)		Progress towards increasing the number of professional programs delivered outside of the Prince George campus in the regions, notably the B.Ed. in Terrace and additional cohorts of the M.Ed as demand warrants.
			Expand the number of courses, certificate and diploma programs offered through Continuing Education and further grow Continuing Education as an earnings centre for the University.
			Progress in measuring and increasing the number of active co-op students.
			Increase the number of international students.
			Increase the number of Web courses delivered annually and the number of active Web courses.
			Increase student access to online admission and registration processes and electronic library resources.
	Efficiency	Degree completion rate	
		Student satisfaction with transfer	Continuation of successful student outcomes as indicated by graduating class surveys.
	Quality	Student assessment of quality of education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction with education Skill development 	Continuation of successful student outcomes as indicated by graduating class surveys.
		Student assessment of quality of instruction	Continuation of successful student outcomes as indicated by graduating class surveys.
			Develop, evaluate and promulgate educational practices for active learning.
	Relevance	Student outcomes – unemployment rate	Continuation of successful student outcomes as indicated by graduating class surveys.
		Student assessment of usefulness of knowledge and skills in performing job	Continuation of successful student outcomes as indicated by graduating class surveys.
Excellent research and innovation that supports	Capacity	Research capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsored research funding from all sources Number of highly qualified personnel 	Maintain a high level of excellence in overall research intensity, as indicated by a nationally recognized ranking system.

Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Accountability Framework Performance Measures	Institutional Goals
			Expand office space and provide suitable office space for graduate students.
	Relevance	Number of licences, patents, start-up companies	

6. Accountability Framework Performance Targets – 2006/07 to 2008/09

Performance Measure	Baseline Data for 2006/07 Service Plan	Performance Targets		
		2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Student spaces in public institutions	Data from 2004/05 Fiscal Year:			
<i>Total Student Spaces</i>	2,973 (2004/05 Actual)	3,174	3,253	3,332
	3,114 (2005/06 Target)			
<i>Student spaces in computer science, electrical and computer engineering programs</i>	138 (2004/05 Actual)	246	246	246
	246 (2005/06 Target)			
<i>Student spaces in nursing and other allied health programs</i>	173 (2004/05 Actual)	222	282	347
	157 (2005/06 Target)			
Total credentials awarded	708 (2004/05 3-yr avg.)	693	731	764
Number and percent of public post-secondary students that are Aboriginal	Data from 2004/05 Academic Year:			
<i>Total number (#)</i>	531	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase
<i>Percent (%)</i>	12.9%			
Degree completion rate	Data from 2004/05 Academic Year:			
<i>Direct Entry Students (%)</i>	37.7%	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase
<i>Transfer Students (%)</i>	70.4%			
Skill development	2004 Survey Data:			
<i>Skill development (avg. %)</i>	88.2%	Meet or exceed benchmark (85%)		
<i>Written Communication</i>	87.7%	Individual skills should contribute toward meeting skill development average benchmark target of 85%		
<i>Oral Communication</i>	87.8%			
<i>Group Collaboration</i>	87.1%			
<i>Critical Analysis</i>	92.7%			
<i>Problem Resolution</i>	82.0%			
<i>Reading and Comprehension</i>	88.5%			
<i>Learn on your own</i>	91.9%			

Performance Measure	Baseline Data for 2006/07 Service Plan	Performance Targets		
		2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Student assessment of quality of education	97.6% (2004 survey)	Meet or exceed benchmark (90%)		
Student assessment of quality of instruction	95.5% (2004 survey)	Meet or exceed benchmark (90%)		
Student satisfaction with transfer	2005 CISO Survey Data:			
<i>Receiving %</i>	85.3%	Contribute toward achievement of system level benchmark (90%)		
Student assessment of usefulness of knowledge and skills in performing job	91.5% (2004 survey)	Meet or exceed benchmark (90%)		
Student outcomes – unemployment rate	4.5% (2004 survey)	Maintain unemployment rate of former UNBC students below rate for persons with high school credentials or less		
Research Capacity	Data from 2003/04 Fiscal Year :			
<i>Sponsored research funding from all sources (Total \$)</i>	\$6,786,000	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase
<i>Number of highly qualified personnel (#)</i>	Data from 04/05 Fiscal Year: 588	Maintain or increase		
Number of licences, patents, start up companies	Data from 2003/04 Fiscal Year:			
<i>Number of Licence/Option agreements</i>	0	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase
<i>ratio (total #/\$million)</i>	0			
<i>Total US patents issued</i>	1			
<i>ratio (total #/\$million)</i>	0.1474			
<i>Total start up companies</i>	0			
<i>ratio (total #/\$million)</i>	0			
<i>Total licence income received</i>	0			
<i>ratio (total #/\$million)</i>	\$0			
Percent of annual education activity occurring between May and August	9.1% (2004/05 FY)	Contribute toward achievement of system level target of 21%		

Performance Measure	Baseline Data for 2006/07 Service Plan	Performance Targets		
		2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
University admissions GPA cut-off	Data from 2005/06 Academic Year:			
<i>Direct Entry Admission</i>	65.0%	Contribute toward achievement of system level target of 75% by 2010		
<i>Transfer Student Admissions</i>	2.0 pt.	Contribute toward achievement of system level target of 2.0 by 2010		

7. Financial Outlook:

UNBC receives revenue from a number of sources such as: provincial operating grants, tuition revenues, grants for research, investment income, and revenues from ancillary operations such as the bookstore and housing. The table below summarizes the anticipated revenues and expenditures for all University operations over the course of this service plan (based on information as at March 15, 2006.)

	Actual		Forecast 2005/06 (\$'000)	Projections		
	2003/04 (\$'000)	2004/05 (\$'000)		2006/07 (\$'000)	2007/08 (\$'000)	2008/09 (\$'000)
Consolidated Revenues						
Operating contributions:						
Provincial	37,018	38,651	41,966	43,101	44,021	44,960
Federal	3,040	2,514	3,308	3,352	3,431	3,534
Other	2,205	4,436	2,706	2,742	2,807	2,806
Recognition of deferred contributions	6,302	6,264	6,840	6,922	7,075	7,214
Sales of goods & services	5,790	6,273	6,089	6,393	6,713	7,049
Tuition & other fees	12,420	14,281	15,370	16,280	17,409	18,725
Investment earnings	2,090	1,934	2,255	2,100	2,000	2,000
Other revenue	535	510	376	381	385	389
Total revenues	69,400	74,863	78,910	81,271	83,841	86,677
Consolidated Expenditures						
Salaries & benefits	38,023	41,554	42,220	44,215	46,485	49,035
Cost of goods sold	2,024	2,242	2,131	2,238	2,350	2,467
Other operating costs	17,301	18,899	21,713	22,659	23,564	24,565
Capital asset amortization	8,667	8,673	8,709	8,730	8,751	8,795
Debt service costs	1,426	1,333	1,338	1,338	1,338	1,338
Total Expenditures	67,441	72,701	76,111	79,180	82,488	86,200
Surplus/(Deficit)	1,959	2,162	2,799	2,092	1,353	477

The above information represents the results for the University as a whole. General operating funds comprise approximately 70% of the revenues and expenditures of the University. In establishing the projection information for the general operating portion of the University's activities, tuition fee levels were assumed to increase by 2% per year in keeping with the provincial directive and the enrolment targets set by the Province were used to establish the planned FTE levels included in the estimates. Other developments in the fiscal relationship between the universities and the Province were also included in the development of the portion of the projections relating to the general operating fund.

The consolidated results above reflect a decline in the level of the projected surplus from 2006/07 through 2008/09. This decline results from several factors including a shift in the expected pattern of growth in FTE levels over that period of time (lower levels in the earlier years and higher from

2008/09 forward) and utilization of reserves over that period to fund planned capital and other projects. As part of the University's planning process for 2006/07, a review of projected expenditure levels is also underway which may also impact the level of the surplus covered in the period of the plan.

To achieve the growth described in this plan, it is essential that the Government fully fund targeted enrolment growth and help universities cope with core inflationary pressures.

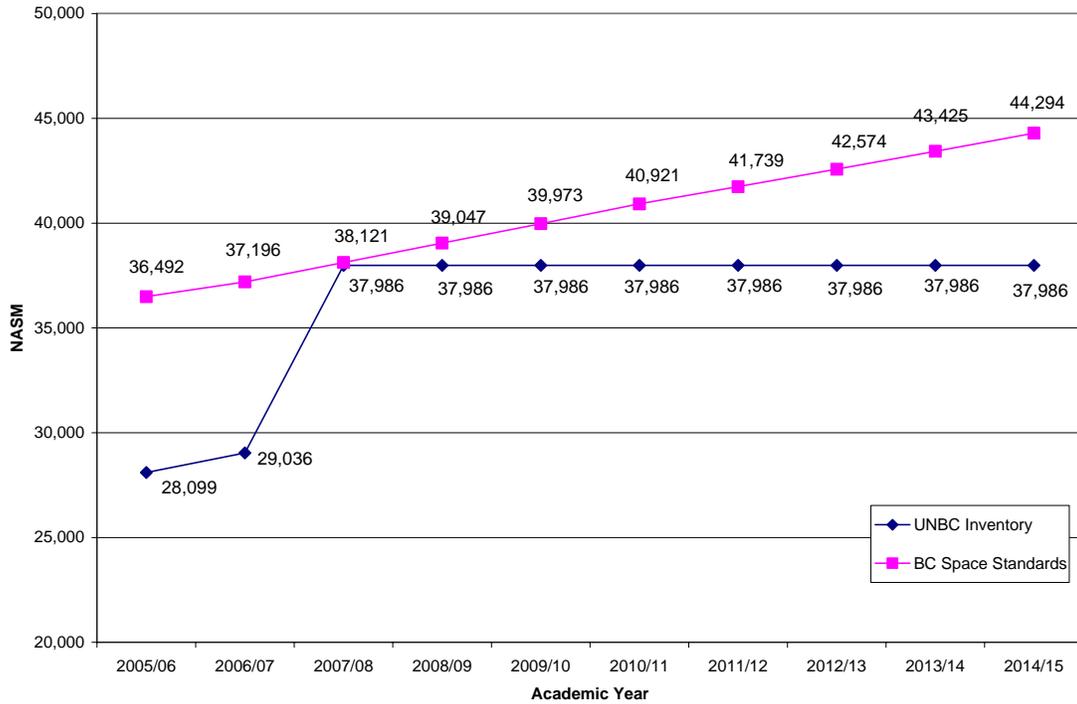
Capital Planning

The need to grow also underlines the importance of capital expansion. Within the framework of its 2003-2008 5-Year Capital Plan, the University is engaged in a number of capital projects. Construction of the Teaching & Learning Centre, approved by Government in 2005, began in the Fall and is planned for completion in 2006/07. This building will assist the University in increasing its space inventory in areas such as teaching laboratories, academic offices, and administrative offices. UNBC will also realize an increase in its inventory of library space as a result of the combination of the Teaching & Learning Centre and renovations to the Geoffrey R. Weller Library, also slated for completion in 2006/07. These expansions will assuage the University's current space deficits in the above-mentioned areas, as well as provide capacity in which to accommodate enrolment growth. The funding provided for these projects, and the resultant expansion of the Prince George Campus' Central Power Plant, are most welcome investments by Government.

A number of other capital projects are in various stages of the planning process. The Northern Sport Centre, planned for completion in 2007/08, will provide much-needed Recreation / Athletics space. As this will significantly enhance student life at UNBC, Government funding provided to support this project is also highly valued. UNBC is currently working with its partners on the fundraising for and construction of this project. Another enhancement to student life at UNBC is the Northern University Student Centre. The University is working closely with the Northern Undergraduate Student Society executive in the planning of this initiative. In addition to the recently opened North Cariboo Community Campus in Quesnel, the University will further expand its regional campus facilities (through a building acquisition) to provide additional space for its Northwest Campus in Terrace. This expansion will enable the University to meet its current and projected future space requirements in Terrace. The University was pleased to learn of Ministry approval of this project in March 2006.

In 2005/06, the University's space inventory at the Prince George Campus is only 77% of the entitlement set out by the BC Space Standards. Without capital expansion, the University had projected a further decline, by 2014/15, to 63.4% of the entitlement for space at the Prince George Campus. The addition of the Teaching & Learning Centre and the Northern Sport Centre will raise the University's space inventory at the Prince George Campus, in 2007/08, to 99.6% of the entitlement set out by the BC Space Standards. The following graph illustrates the effects of capital expansion on the University's space inventory at the Prince George Campus; included in the graph are the UNBC Downtown BMO Bank of Montreal Centre, the Northern Sport Centre, phase 2 of the Geoffrey R. Weller Library renovations, and the Teaching & Learning Centre.

UNBC Space Projections Compared to BC Standards (NASM)
 for Prince George campus (excluding undergraduate international fee-paying students)
 based on Fall 2005 FTE actuals
 Including Teaching & Learning Centre and Northern Sport Centre



Upon completion of its 2006-2011 5-Year Capital Plan in March 2006, the University remains concerned about a continuing need for academic teaching, research, and office space. The University is also concerned about the escalating cost of capital projects in relation to the funding formulae used by Government and the funding of increased operating costs resulting from capital expansion. It is hoped that both of these issues will be addressed shortly.

Appendix A – List of UNBC Degree Programs Currently Offered (as at January 20, 2006)

Undergraduate Degrees

Bachelor of Arts (BA)	
Majors	Joint Majors
Anthropology*	Economics & Political Science
Economics	English & History
English	English & Political Science
Environmental Studies	English & Women's Studies
First Nations Studies	First Nations Studies & Women's Studies
General Arts	History & Political Science
Geography	History & Women's Studies
History*	International Studies & Political Science
International Studies*	Political Science & Women's Studies
Northern Studies	
Political Science	
Resource-Based Tourism	
Women's Studies	

Bachelor of Science (BSc)	
Majors	Joint Majors
Biology	Chemistry & Computer Science
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology	Chemistry & Mathematics
Chemistry	Chemistry & Physics
Computer Science	Computer Science & Mathematics
Environmental Science*	Computer Science & Physics
General Science	Economics & Mathematics
Geography	Mathematics & Physics
Mathematics	
Natural Resource Management	
Forestry*	
Resource Recreation	
Wildlife & Fisheries	
Physics	
Psychology*	

Bachelor of Applied Science (BASc)

Environmental Engineering**

Bachelor of Planning (BPl)

Environmental Planning

Bachelor of Commerce (BComm)

Majors

Accounting

Finance

General Business

International Business

Marketing

Bachelor of Education (BEd)

Elementary (K-7)

Secondary (8-12)

Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN)

Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing

Post-Diploma Baccalaureate Nursing

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)

Northern Medical Program (MD)***

* Honours offered

** A joint UBC/UNBC degree

*** A UBC degree offered in partnership with UNBC

Appendix A – List of UNBC Degree Programs Currently Offered (as at January 20, 2006)

Diplomas

Aboriginal Health Sciences
First Nations Language

Certificates

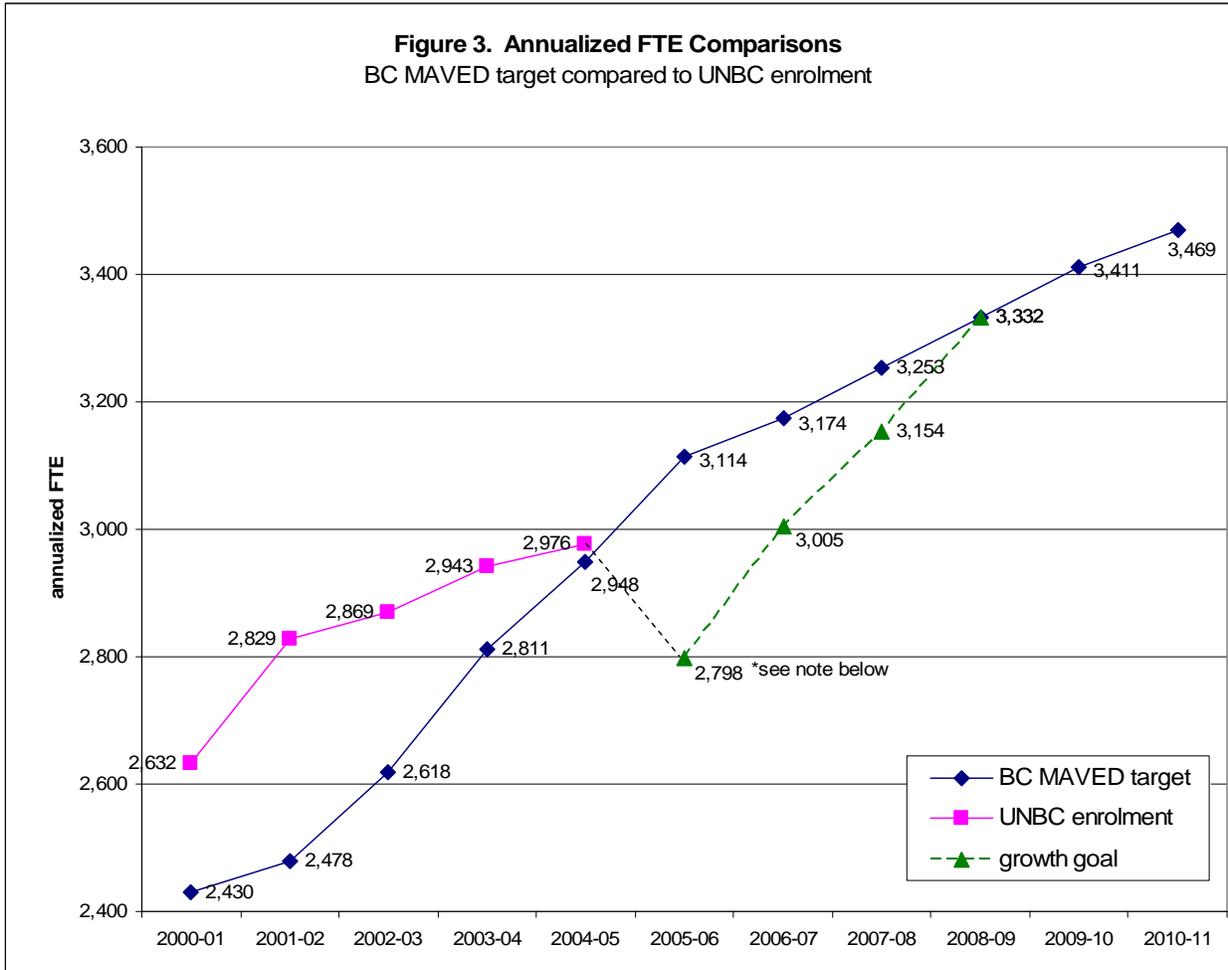
Aboriginal Health Sciences
Aboriginal Community Resource Planning
First Nations Language
First Nations Public Administration
General First Nations Studies
Métis Studies
Nisga'a Studies
Public Administration
Rural and Northern Nursing
Traditional Environmental Knowledge

Graduate Degrees

Business Administration (MBA, Dip. BA)
Community Health (MSc)
Disability Management (MA)
Education (MEd)
 Counselling Specialization
 Multidisciplinary Leadership Specialization
First Nations Studies (MA)
Gender Studies (MA)
History (MA)
Interdisciplinary Studies (MA & MSc)
International Studies (MA)
 Regional Relations
 International Development
 Global Environmental Policy
Mathematical, Computer & Physical Science (MSc)
 Mathematics
 Computer Science
 Chemistry
 Physics

Natural Resources & Environmental Studies (MA)
 Geography
 Environmental Studies
 Tourism
Natural Resources & Environmental Studies (MSc)
 Biology
 Environmental Science
 Forestry
 Geography
 Recreational Resource Management
Natural Resources & Environmental Studies (MNRES)
Natural Resources & Environmental Studies (PhD)
Nursing (MScN, MScN: FNP)
 Academic Masters Program
 Family Nurse Practitioner
Political Science (MA)
Psychology (MSc & PhD)
Social Work (MSW)

Appendix B – University of Northern British Columbia’s Enrolment Growth Targets



**Note: this is the unaudited, annualized actual FTE for 2005-06, with International, fee-paying undergraduate students removed.*

**Final Report:
Phase 1 of the Academic Visioning Initiative**

April 20, 2006

Prepared by the Academic Visioning Steering Committee:

Max Blouw, Howard Brunt (Chair), Bill McGill, Paul Michel, Jim Randall, Peter Rans, Carolyn Russell, Heather Smith, Bob Tait, Diana Thomson, Eleanor Wint

This final report is based on comments from the community received by the Committee on its penultimate report during January and February, 2006. The Committee would like to express its deep appreciation to those who provided input. This report was approved by Senate on April 19, 2006 to direct academic planning for the University over the next five years.

Purpose and Background

Over the course of its first decade as an independent post-secondary institution, the University of Northern British Columbia has responsively developed over sixty undergraduate, professional, and graduate degree programs. In doing so, the University has become regarded as one of Canada's leading small universities. In addition to engaging in ongoing curricular and administrative changes during this relatively short time period, the University has conducted two major strategic academic planning initiatives (Appendix 1). While the earlier strategic plans varied in both focus and content appropriate to the University's stage of development at the time, they did not specifically identify what the University of Northern British Columbia's programmatic and pedagogical areas of academic strength were. Without such an organizing vision, it is difficult to direct investments strategically toward strengthening the academic programs and services of the University in ways that best meet the needs of students.

It is within this historical strategic planning context that the Academic Visioning Initiative (AVI) was established in early 2005 by the Academic Planning and Services Committee of President's Council. The purpose of the AVI was described to the Board of Governors in the following way:

It is now timely to review the basic philosophical and pedagogical foundations for academic programming at the University of Northern British Columbia, to examine the success of current programs in attracting and retaining students, and to consider areas of potential new programming that would build upon the University's existing academic strengths and broaden the program options available to students in areas of potential enrolment growth. Plans for academic development will consider teaching and research programming in an integrated way.¹

The importance of undertaking this planning initiative at this juncture is underscored by the fast changing post-secondary environment the University finds itself in, one marked by ever-increasing levels of public accountability, sharp competition for the best students and faculty, and significant underlying demographic and economic changes in the region and province. The recent overall decline in undergraduate enrolments at the University provides ample evidence of the need to take stock of our academic strengths and to use these strengths strategically in the coming decade for planning purposes. General enrolment declines and/or lack of growth in many undergraduate programs, when coupled with increasing interest in professional and graduate education, points to underlying changes in student preferences that must be considered when planning for the future. If the University is to meet the challenges these changes engender, the strategic academic plan must provide a clear vision of what the University of Northern British Columbia wishes to be, become, and be known for.

This document is intended to provide the university community with the results of the work of the AVI Committee in the first phase of its two-part mandate. The purpose of this Phase 1 Report is to present a strategic academic vision supported by an organizing academic framework that will be used to guide the University's future investments in its programs and pedagogy. The second phase of the AVI will direct the implementation of the strategic academic plan.

¹ Responding to British Columbia's Changing Post-Secondary Environment: Report to the Board of Governors, November 20, 2004.

The Work of the AVI Steering Committee

Overview

Following the appointment of its members in February 2005, the steering committee² made the decision to approach the development of the strategic academic plan in two phases, both of which would be conducted through broad consultation with faculty, students, staff, and community members. In the first phase, the committee's focus was on the development of an organizing framework to describe the University's academic vision and its thematic areas of strength in both program areas and pedagogy. This framework will be used to inform and direct academic development over the coming five to ten years in the following operational areas:

- Academic program development and planning
- Student, staff, and faculty recruitment and marketing
- Resource allocation for programs and services
- Accountability reporting to government
- Evolution of the University's strategic research plan

Beginning in the spring semester of 2006, the second phase of the AVI will focus on the more detailed operational implementation of the strategic academic plan.

Process

In March 2005, faculty members were invited to participate in an assessment of how well their teaching and research interests aligned with the University of Northern British Columbia's Strategic Research Plan³ and to suggest other academic thematic areas they believed either existed, or should be developed. In the absence of a plan that described the University's thematic areas of academic strength, the Strategic Research Plan provided a springboard from which to work. The results of the March review were released in April and formed the basis for further consultations that took place between May and November, 2005. Of great interest to the committee was the finding that two-thirds of the respondents indicated they were engaged in academic and research activities that were not represented by the Strategic Research Plan. This gap demonstrated that a more detailed and intensive period of investigation and consultation was warranted if the committee was to develop a meaningful academic planning document.

Informed by eight facilitated forums conducted at the Prince George campus and six held in the regions⁴ and written submissions from individuals, groups, and programs, the committee worked

² Committee members include Max Blouw, Howard Brunt (Chair), Bill McGill, Paul Michel, Jim Randall, Peter Rans, Carolyn Russell, Heather Smith, Bob Tait, Diana Thomson, Eleanor Wint.

³ The Strategic Research Plan for UNBC was developed in response to the requirements of the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Canada Research Chair programs. While this plan was never intended to serve as a broader academic plan, it did provide the committee with a starting point for its work.

⁴ UNBC's campuses are in Terrace, Prince Rupert, Ft. St. John, Quesnel, and Prince George and there is a federation agreement with Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a in New Aiyansh

in an iterative way over a six month period on an evolving document to describe the academic themes at the University. The committee took a ‘living document’ approach as the consultation process unfolded, revising the key findings based on re-analysis in light of new information and then sharing those results with the university community through email updates and a dedicated website. In addition, the committee reviewed documents from other universities to understand how academic themes were organized and used elsewhere.

Based on input from the consultations and external reviews of other institutions, the committee decided to work on the development of an organizing academic framework with two main thematic branches: academic program themes (“what we do”) that capture both the educational and research activities of the University, and pedagogical themes (“how we do it”). The academic program themes were further sub-divided into thematic academic clusters and foundational academic themes. The committee also deemed it important to revisit the University’s vision and mission statements, as they are critical to the development of a coherent strategic academic planning document. The results of these consultations and deliberations are detailed below.

Academic Vision and Mission Statements

Academic Vision Statement

A vision statement provides an institution with a way to communicate succinctly what it wishes to be and become; put another way, it says “where we are going.”⁵ For a vision statement to provide meaningful direction for an institution it must be both aspirational and, to the extent it communicates the heart-felt hopes of its constituents, inspirational. At the same time, a vision statement must be realistic and have the potential for being achievable. The AVI Steering Committee proposes the following academic vision statement:

The University of Northern British Columbia aspires to be Canada’s premier small research-intensive university, with internationally recognized academic and research programs that prepare its graduates in select areas of high relevance to the peoples of our region, province, and beyond.

This vision statement is aspirational; the AVI Committee believes it provides a demonstrable and realistic goal that the University can strive for and achieve, while at the same time celebrating what makes the University of Northern British Columbia unique. This statement signals that, while the University remains firmly rooted in and committed to the region it serves, it aspires to be more than a regional institution. The statement also highlights that the University views the preparation of graduate and undergraduate students as central to what it does. Given its accomplishments in just eleven years, it is time to signal clearly to potential students, faculty and staff, that the University has a national and international presence. It should be understood that incorporation of the modifier “small” is not meant to classify the University within any particular

⁵ Sir Graeme Davies, Association of Commonwealth Universities benchmarking conference report, August, 2005.

Appendix C – Final Report: Phase 1 of the Academic Visioning Initiative

group of universities (i.e. rankings in Maclean’s magazine); rather, it is both factually accurate and used to celebrate the fact that the University of Northern British Columbia’s small size is highly relevant to what shapes the academic vision and mission of the University. The use of the phrase, “select areas,” is deliberate as the committee believes that it is time to firmly plant the University’s flag in the ground with respect to those thematic academic clusters for which it wishes to be known. The Northern regional context of the University, with its rural, remote, and small communities, resource-based economy, and high concentration of indigenous peoples, has much in common with other regions in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Academic Mission Statement

A mission statement not only identifies what the organization does, but also specifies whose needs and expectations are being served.⁶ Consistent with its mission, the University of Northern British Columbia’s academic mandate is *to bring the world to Northern British Columbia and Northern British Columbia to the world*. The committee developed an academic mission statement that places the University’s students front and center:

The mission of the University of Northern British Columbia is to provide excellent academic programs and services for its undergraduate, professional, and graduate students so that they are prepared for roles that will improve the quality of life for the peoples of Northern British Columbia, the rest of the province, Canada, and beyond. The University’s core academic values of excellence, inclusiveness, curiosity and creativity, and responsiveness underpin its mission. To demonstrate accomplishment of its mission, the University of Northern British Columbia’s graduates will exhibit the following:

- *Appropriate depth and breadth of knowledge in their chosen areas of study*
- *Analytical, critical, and creative thinking informed by research and theory*
- *Liberality, inclusiveness, and an appreciation of diverse perspectives and ways of knowing, in keeping with UNBC’s Carrier motto – ‘En cha huná (respecting all forms of life)*
- *Personal growth, leadership skills and the ability to effectively communicate ideas*
- *Passion for pursuing life-long learning and intellectual development*
- *Commitment to positive citizenship from the local to global levels*

Students will be provided an educational environment marked by its student-centeredness, relevance, and pedagogy that optimizes learning. To enable its mission, The University of Northern British Columbia seeks to provide its faculty and staff members with a positive, stimulating, and supportive environment in which to conduct their student-centered academic work.

⁶ It is by attending to the needs of students for high quality academic preparation that the University’s social mission is accomplished, and, importantly, the mission statement outlines some key student outcomes that the AVI Committee believes should be made explicit. Without providing faculty and staff with the environment and tools they need to do their jobs, it would be impossible to serve students or accomplish UNBC’s mission as a university.

This mission statement clearly identifies what students should expect from their educational experience at the University and these student outcomes are discussed in more detail later in this report. The mission statement demonstrates that the University is deeply committed to imparting a life-long appreciation of knowledge for knowledge's sake as well as supporting the application of that knowledge for the greater good of society.

Thematic Academic Clusters, Foundational Academic Themes, and Pedagogical Academic Themes

Overview

As noted above, the primary objective of Phase I of the academic strategic planning process was to create a coherent organizing framework for describing both the thematic focus of the University's academic programs and how those programs are delivered. Following a review of how other institutions approached this task and consultations within and external to the University, the AVI Committee determined that three inter-related, yet distinct, types of themes would be used to create the framework: Thematic Academic Clusters, Foundational Academic Themes, and Pedagogical Academic Themes. Each will be described in more detail below.

Thematic Academic Clusters

The first type of theme, the Thematic Academic Cluster, describes a higher order area of substantive academic study that a cluster or grouping of programs and faculty members seeks to address. Thematic academic clusters are, by their nature, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary and explore complex issues and phenomena. These thematic clusters are issue, problem, population, and philosophically based.

In order to assess potential thematic academic clusters, the committee used a guiding set of principles that were developed through consultation with the University and the broader community. The following criteria for the identification of the clusters were adhered to:

The thematic academic clusters will

- authentically represent the University's academic strengths and aspirations
- exhibit a reasonable balance between breadth and depth (i.e. neither too specific nor too broad)
- be maximally inclusive of current programs as well as directive of new programs

Although the AVI Committee was not set on a particular number of clusters as it began its work, reviews of other institutions' frameworks and the committee's own internal consultations suggested that the optimal number would be between four and eight. The names of the thematic academic clusters were informed, but not determined, by those used at other academic institutions.

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Based on the consultation process and application of the above guiding review criteria, the committee identified a set of six thematic academic clusters that it believes best represents what the University should seek to address through its academic programs over the coming decade:

- Natural Resources and Environment
- Health and Human Development
- Commerce and Community Sustainability
- Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge
- Global Processes and Perspectives
- Artistic and Cultural Expression

What follows is a brief discussion of the six thematic academic clusters in terms of what each addresses, its relevance, and the related academic programming at the University. The programs that have been identified as being related to a particular Thematic Academic Cluster are not meant to be exclusive, but only to demonstrate those most obviously related to each theme.

Natural Resources and Environment

The Natural Resources and Environment thematic academic cluster encompasses the scientific, socio-cultural, and humanistic examination of renewable and non-renewable natural resources and the physical, cultural, and social environments in which we live. As such, this cluster is inclusive of all forms of life and ecosystems, and its primary purpose is the development and sharing of knowledge that will be used for responsible stewardship of natural resources and the environment, particularly in the North and other rural and remote regions. The topics covered in the Natural Resources and Environment cluster are inherently interdisciplinary with the diverse inter-relationships among humans, resources, and ecosystems at their core.

The environment of British Columbia has many unique attributes, including its diversity and multiple, sometimes competing, opportunities for human enterprise and renewal. At the same time, most, if not all, of the environmental and natural resource challenges that are addressed by the University of Northern British Columbia's academic programs are global in nature and go well beyond our immediate region. Responsibilities in the University's academic mandate range equally from survival of resource based communities to maintenance of global ecosystem services. The challenges of responsibly managing the natural resources and related industries in the University's immediate region and in similar regions internationally are considerable given the implications for the physical (i.e. air, land, and water), cultural, and social environments. The Natural Resources and Environment cluster is favored by UNBC's central location within an environmentally diverse region with established traditions of land stewardship among First Nations interacting with industrial land management ethics, an economy based on extraction of natural resources, and a societal expectation of local and global sustainability.

The University has a wide range of academic programs engaged in education and research related to Natural Resources and Environment: Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, Education, Environmental Engineering (jointly with UBC), Environmental Planning, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, Forestry, Geography, GIS, Health Sciences, International Studies, Mathematics, Physics, Political Science, Resource Recreation and Tourism, and Wildlife and Fisheries. The University of Northern British Columbia's Natural

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Resources and Environmental Studies Institute provides a forum to promote integrative research to address natural resource systems and human uses of the environment, including issues pertinent to northern regions.

Health and Human Development

The Health and Human Development cluster provides academic preparation associated with improving the well-being of the whole person. The multifaceted concepts present in Health and Human Development link physiological, emotional, intellectual, and behavioural elements of the individual to the economic, social, cultural, spiritual, political, and environmental dimensions of the family, group, and the wider community.

Topics encompassed in the Health and Human Development cluster are critical to maximizing the quality of life and potential of individuals, families, and communities and, as such, are universally considered relevant and important to post-secondary study. The emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical health of individuals and the collective human development of all communities, from the local to the global, are vitally important to the mandate of the University. This academic cluster's particular focus is on meeting the health and human development needs of rural, remote, and indigenous peoples and communities, though its applications are universal.

As the contributors to and determinants of health and human development are wide ranging, it is not surprising that many academic programs at the University are associated with Health and Human Development. At the program level, the primary contributors include the following: Anthropology, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Biology, Community Health Sciences, Disability Management, Education, Environmental Planning, First Nations Studies, Geography, Health Sciences, Mathematics, the Northern Medical Program, Nursing, Psychology, and Social Work. The new Northern Sports Centre will provide opportunities for the University to consider expanding its programming into new areas such as fitness, kinesiology, sports management, and health professions such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy. The University houses a number of major research initiatives and institutes, such as the British Columbia Rural and Remote Health Research Institute that focus on remote, rural, and aboriginal health and human development.

Commerce and Community Sustainability

The Commerce and Community Sustainability cluster provides an understanding of the exchanges of things of value in ways that sustain and vitalize the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of communities. Things of value include natural resources, goods, culture, services, knowledge, and information. In the context of Commerce and Community Sustainability, communities are broadly defined, not only on the basis of geography, but also on ideas, history, culture and traditions, interest, enterprise, or other shared characteristics.

Communities without adequate commerce within and among themselves are unsustainable. If it does not enrich and sustain communities, commerce lacks purpose. The Commerce and Community Sustainability thematic cluster provides insights into ways to enhance commerce and community vitality. The University of Northern British Columbia is in a region with historically

significant cultural diversity, recent immigration, marked by primarily small and rural communities, and a resource-based industrial economy coupled to a global economy. Under such circumstances, sustaining and enriching all forms of communities presents challenges with global implications. The University aims to contribute to meeting these challenges.

Commerce and Community Sustainability is flavored with the unique geographic, cultural and economic environment in which the University of Northern British Columbia is situated, but has implications for other rural and remote regions internationally. In support of this thematic cluster, the University has programs, schools and research dedicated to Business, Computer Science, Economics, Education, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Planning, Environmental Science, First Nations Studies, Forestry, Geography, International Studies, Mathematics, Northern Studies, Nursing, Political Science, Resource Recreation and Tourism, and Social Work. In addition, research centres and institutes such as the Community Development Institute and the BC Rural and Remote Health Research Institute become vital partners to communities by helping them make informed decisions about their futures.

Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge

Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge promotes both the development and understanding of indigenous peoples and the unique ways they know and understand the world. This thematic academic cluster embraces the diverse, dynamic, and traditional perspectives of indigenous peoples to find balance within physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual realms. Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge provides the supportive environment where leadership development, traditional knowledge exchange and enhancement, and academic excellence are fostered. Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge provides students with educational opportunities to understand a wide range of indigenous knowledge, including comparative perspectives to contemporary global indigenous issues, research methods, traditional ways of living and knowing, languages, philosophies, governance, and arts and culture. While this academic theme contributes to the celebration of diversity, it also aims to build partnerships and improve the quality of life for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and communities

From its inception the University has had a special mandate for assisting indigenous peoples to attain their post-secondary goals, supporting indigenous communities in their self-governance initiatives, and creating meaningful opportunities for knowledge exchanges between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Thus, Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge is vitally important for the University's continued success in providing effective and relevant academic programming, research, and community partnerships.

The Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge thematic academic cluster enhances and supports the continued development of programs related to First Nations Studies in the following areas: Community Resource Planning, First Nations Languages, First Nations Public Administration, Metis Studies, Nisga'a Studies, and Traditional Environmental Knowledge. As a multi-disciplinary theme Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge also relates to many academic programs, including Anthropology, Arts, Disability Management, English, Environmental Planning, Forestry, Geography, Health Sciences, History, Medicine, Natural Resources & Tourism,

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Northern Studies, Nursing, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, and Women's Studies. In addition, there are many research initiatives that have been established to help in the revitalization and growth in the areas of indigenous health, education, and governance.

Global Processes and Perspectives

The Global Processes and Perspectives academic theme is a reflection of the multi-layered nature of the world in which we live. It is a cluster that captures the social, political, cultural, and natural linkages between the local and the global in virtually all areas of academic study. This theme is also supported by an appreciation and understanding of languages. Interdisciplinary and holistic, Global Processes and Perspectives promotes understanding of the host of connections between the University of Northern British Columbia, its region, and the world at large and embraces competing perspectives on the nature of those connections.

If the University is to contribute to the well being of Northern British Columbia and other rural, remote, and resource-based regions across the world, it is imperative students understand the global processes in which such regions are embedded. The natural environment is influenced by global environmental systems and changes (e.g. climate change), the local economy is subject to the vagaries of the world economic system, and the composition of the region's population is affected by migration trends. In turn, Northern British Columbia and similar regions have an impact on global ecosystems, economic trends, and demographics. In order to respond to this reality, the topics covered in the Global Processes and Perspectives cluster address global issues of the day through a host of lenses that compliment the University of Northern British Columbia's commitment to diversity, indigenous perspectives, and interdisciplinarity.

Programs throughout the university contribute to this cluster: Anthropology, Business, Economics, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, First Nations Studies, Forestry, Geography, History, International Studies, Northern Studies, Political Science, Resource Recreation and Tourism, Social Work, and Women's Studies. In addition, The International Centre, the First Nations Centre, and the University's research institutes also contribute to this cluster in the areas of human health, quality of life, and social change.

Artistic Cultural Expression

The Artistic Cultural Expression theme spans a variety of forms of aesthetic expression that illuminate and celebrate human cultures and human experience. The vehicles for artistic cultural expression range from more traditional forms such as writing, painting, music, theatre, and dance to the more contemporary emergence of electronic and digital media. In comparison to the other thematic academic clusters, Artistic Cultural Expression is relatively undeveloped and, as such, demonstrates the University's aspirations to expand its programs into new areas.

The importance of the Artistic Cultural Expression theme to our immediate region is evident in the vibrant and robust fine arts and visual and performing artistic communities in Northern British Columbia. The enormous resurgence and international interest in indigenous artistic expression is well represented in Northern British Columbia. Beyond providing entertainment, enjoyment, cultural cohesion, and contributing to the economic activity of our communities, artistic cultural expression provides a way to understand, share, and demonstrate human beauty,

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spirituality, aspirations, and experiences. Many people involved in Arts organizations within Prince George and the regions, such as the Prince George Symphony and the Two Rivers Gallery, and similar organizations throughout our region have expressed an interest in forming a closer relationship with the University and would be an excellent source of teachers, researchers, and mentors. Numerous studies have considered the relationship between a vibrant ‘Arts’ culture and retaining human capital and human creativity within a community.

Academic programming related to Artistic Cultural Expression is currently limited at the University, but there is a significant demand both within the university community and the wider community for its development. Artistic Cultural Expression enriches the academic offerings in the following related program areas: Education, English, First Nations Studies, History, Political Science, Resource Recreation and Tourism, Social Work, and Women’s Studies. It also draws to the University visual and performing artists who enhance the ‘life’ of the campus outside the classroom. Beyond the campus, visual and performing artists and their activities become economic generators, providing employment to individuals who would otherwise move to larger urban centres. Recent initiatives in developing a Fine Arts joint degree between the University of Northern British Columbia and Emily Carr Institute provide one model for future activity. The English program is exploring the greater development of a Media Studies concentration based on faculty teaching and research interests. The First Nations Studies program has combined such diverse arts as story telling, carving, sculpture, and clothing and adornment as part of its existing program

The University is poised to consider the further development of courses, concentrations, and activities in such diverse visual and performing arts as Art History, Carving, Computer Graphics, Dance, Film, Music, Painting, Photography, Sculpture, and Theatre. The speed and scope of these developments will depend on resources, future partnerships, capital acquisition, and the collective will of people within the University and its communities to collaborate around this new thematic area.

Foundational Academic Themes

The second type of theme, the Foundational Academic Theme, represents more traditional groupings of discipline-based academic programs and courses. All universities aspire to offer a liberal education and the ability to do so is often a metric for determining the academic strength of an institution. Educational and research programs and courses within foundational academic themes contribute to their individual disciplines as well as provide the foundational knowledge required for the Thematic Academic Clusters. The AVI Committee identified the following foundational academic themes:

- Science and Mathematics
- Social Sciences
- Arts and Humanities

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What follows is a brief discussion of the foundational academic themes, their particular relevance, and the University's related academic programs.

Science and Mathematics

Science and Mathematics are key foundations for professions and applied science disciplines. Scholarship within this theme generates new fundamental knowledge about how the world works; when combined with human ingenuity, scientific and mathematical knowledge results ideally in technologies that help students work with the world. This theme can be intellectually liberating and can lead to opportunities and life-long learning in a wide variety of careers.

The range of sciences, Natural, Physical, and Life Sciences, is demonstrated in the University's course offerings. As the foundation to technological development and as the reservoir of basic scientific knowledge and understanding, this theme, Science and Mathematics, is essential to the University's contributions in the full range of thematic academic clusters.

The University supports this theme with a number of academic programs including Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Science, Geography, GIS, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology.

Social Sciences

The Social Sciences are comprised of a group of disciplines that study virtually all facets of human society. As we strive to understand ourselves and our realities, and how we shape our identities and destinies, the Social Sciences employ a broad range of methodologies and approaches, which help us to better understand human phenomena and social relationships.

The Social Sciences make critical contributions to an understanding of many aspects of human and social experience from the way we think to the way we interact with others. For example, the disciplines of social science may offer solutions to the myriad of complex challenges facing individuals, groups, and communities.

Foundational Social Science is practiced across many programs, including Anthropology, Economics, First Nations Studies, Geography, International Studies, Northern Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Resource Recreation and Tourism, and Women's Studies. It also constitutes a critical component within professional programs such as Business Administration, Education, Environmental Planning, Medicine, Nursing, and Social Work.

Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities include those branches of knowledge that are concerned with human thought, expression, and culture. A number of academic disciplines in the Arts and Humanities have developed in response to our desire to better understand what it means to be fully human and how we interact with others and the world around us.

Collectively, the academic disciplines comprising Arts and Humanities make significant contributions to our understanding of our human and social experience and help us to express, celebrate, and appreciate our humanity. These disciplines assist us in expressing and experiencing the full range of what it is to be human,

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The University currently provides programs of study primarily related to Arts and Humanities in Anthropology, English, First Nations Studies, History, International Studies, Northern Studies, and Women's Studies. In addition, a wider range of programs contributes to, and utilizes, humanistic perspectives.

Pedagogical Academic Themes

The third type of theme, the Pedagogical Academic Theme, is comprised of both expected student outcomes and how those outcomes are to be achieved through the University's approach to teaching and learning. Throughout the AVI consultation process, participants stressed that the University's academic mission must be focused on the student and of how the University of Northern British Columbia delivers academic programs and supports student learning.

Expected Student-Centered Learning Outcomes

Although the student-learning outcomes described below have already been outlined in the academic mission statement, their reiteration here is in keeping with the University's commitment to a student-centered and research-intensive learning environment. While recognizing that academic aspirations will be different for every student, the University believes that those involved in supporting the teaching and learning environment are responsible for providing students with opportunities and experiences that support a number of common outcomes. The intention of the University is that its students and graduates will exhibit:

- Appropriate depth and breadth of knowledge and skills
- Analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills
- Liberality, inclusiveness, and an appreciation of diversity
- Personal growth, leadership skills and effective communication
- Life-long learning and intellectual development
- Engaged citizenship from the local to global levels

Knowledge and Skills. Appropriate depth and breadth of knowledge and skills includes both specific disciplinary knowledge as well as core numeracy, literacy, computing, and oral and written communication skills. While the knowledge and skills students develop will to a significant degree be discipline-specific, students must have an opportunity to gain a solid grounding in more broadly defined knowledge and skills that are required to succeed.

Thinking Skills. Developing analytical, critical, and creative thinking is central to the future success of the graduate. Beyond basic knowledge and skill sets required within disciplines, the University also values higher order learning across disciplines and strives to produce students who can think analytically, critically and creatively. These thinking skills have broad application and provide the basis for life-long learning.

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Inclusiveness. Students will learn in an environment imbued with the values of liberality, inclusiveness, and an appreciation of diversity. The University of Northern British Columbia is an institution that holds diversity and equality as some of its most important defining values. As such, an understanding and appreciation of diverse points of view and competing visions of the world, experiences of working with a wide-ranging group of people and cultures, and exposure to diverse ways of knowing and learning, are all essential elements of the educational experience at our University.

Personal Growth. University life is not only about intellectual growth, it is also about personal growth, the development of social networks, and having fun. The University must provide an environment where students are able to develop leadership skills, skills associated with effective communication, and the skills that they themselves identify as integral to their personal growth and empowerment. In this regard, the roles of sports, clubs, societies, international exchanges, and recreational activities in fulfilling the mandate of the University are as important as its academic programs.

Life-long Learning. The University of Northern British Columbia is both a teaching and vibrant curiosity-driven research institution that promotes creative learning opportunities across a broad range of programs. By virtue of their experience in an environment rooted in a culture of knowledge-creation, our graduates will embrace a passion for life-long learning, creativity, and intellectual development.

Engaged Citizenship. Finally, the University envisions its graduates as engaged citizens and this engagement may be at the local, regional, and/or international level. Just as the University has a mission to serve its region, it aspires to foster in its students a sense of connection and responsibility to others – a personal vision of connection to the greater world that provides graduates with the passion to engage in and with their communities.

Innovative Pedagogical Approaches

The delivery of high quality academic programs and the creation of a positive learning environment to support them matters at the University. “How we teach” and “what we teach” has a direct impact on students. The University of Northern British Columbia’s pedagogical vision is grounded in innovative approaches to enhance learning and teaching. In order to provide the University faculty, staff, and students with a stimulating and supportive environment, the following approaches were identified as critical to the University’s academic mission:

- Experiential, collaborative, and active learning
- Inter-disciplinary approaches to knowledge acquisition
- A diversity of approaches and perspectives toward teaching, learning, and knowing that optimizes student outcomes
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom and at a distance
- Research enriched and enhanced instruction
- Internationalization

Experiential, Collaborative, and Active Learning. The University must continue to provide students with opportunities for applied and experiential, collaborative, and active learning. Applied and experiential learning is at the core of initiatives undertaken through Co-op and the international exchange program. Teachers across the University engage in creative lab design to ensure students have experiential learning, and through internships students receive a sense of how their studies fit in to the world outside the University. Active learning should be, and is, central to the delivery of many courses as faculty members understand that students learn better by doing than by simply being told what to do. Faculty members throughout the University promote active learning through activities as simple as debates and as complex as intensive simulations. In these learning environments students will achieve both basic skills sets and the higher order skill sets related to creative and critical thinking.

Inter-disciplinary Approaches to Knowledge Acquisition. Inter-disciplinary educational experiences assist students in gaining understanding of complex phenomena that span academic disciplines, cultures, and programs. Inter-disciplinary educational opportunities provide students with exposure to disciplinary approaches to complex issues, problems, and phenomena that require the application of multiple perspectives. As demonstrated by the University's use of Thematic Academic Clusters, some of the most rapidly growing fields in post-secondary education are modeled on inter-disciplinarity. Thus, inter-disciplinarity is highly relevant to the academic preparation of students and how the University of Northern British Columbia organizes programs.

Diversity in Teaching, Learning, and Knowing. Central to the University's pedagogical vision is liberality, diversity, and inclusiveness, and these values are evident in the way teaching and learning is conducted. The University is committed to providing different pedagogical approaches to assist student with acquiring the knowledge within a particular discipline. These approaches to teaching and learning may be based in scientific, humanistic, socio-political, and spiritual traditions. Lectures, seminars, tutorials, group projects, self-directed course work, and field trips are representative of some of the ways we support student learning. The University also recognizes that communities and community members are important sources of specialized and traditional knowledge that enhance the learning opportunities for our students.

Appropriate Use of Technology in the Classroom and at a Distance. The role of technology in the academic setting in pedagogy and student engagement in learning is increasingly important for university education. As the University of Northern British Columbia evolves as a multi-campus university, understanding the appropriate role of technology is critical. In order to provide students with the best possible learning environment, the University must appropriately integrate technology into its classrooms and its courses. The opportunity to deliver interactive education directly into a student's home will help transform the availability of our programs in ways that are not dependent on classroom location and availability. Technology has a wide range of applications and that technology must be merged with an understanding of what it is to learn and teach. Appropriate use of technology enhances access and opportunity for students and

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provides them with basic tools required in order to effectively function in the 21st century.

Research Enriched and Enhanced Instruction. The University of Northern British Columbia is a research-intensive university where knowledge creation is highly valued. Faculty members are both teachers and scholars and they are able to enrich their classrooms with their research and their insights. The University is committed to providing students with opportunities to engage in research with faculty and staff, where appropriate. By engaging students in research and exposing them to research-enhanced instruction, the University lays the groundwork for the growth of curiosity, essential to the life-long learner.

Internationalization. As the final component of the University's pedagogical vision, internationalization is consistent with many of the other student-centered learning outcomes. It supports good citizenship at the global level, broadens perspectives, supports diversity, and broadens opportunities for learning. The University of Northern British Columbia promotes internationalization through student exchanges, through the adoption of diverse perspectives in the classroom, and through creative, globally-informed curricula.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The AVI Committee would like to express its deep appreciation for the extraordinary level and quality of participation in the AVI consultations by the faculty, staff, and students at the University, and by the wider community in the region we serve. This final report will be brought to both Senate and the Board of Governors for approval. The implications of Phase 1 of the AVI for the future development of academic programs at the University are significant and to implement this strategic academic plan will require the engagement of the entire university community. While the AVI Committee will coordinate the second phase of the initiative, the real work of implementation will take place within the programs, colleges, academic administrative units, and various Senate committees.

Appendix 1

Brief Overview of Previous Academic Planning Initiatives at UNBC

The AVI is the latest in a cycle of academic strategic planning initiatives at the University of Northern British Columbia. As such, this report builds upon what has come before, and the committee is indebted to those who contributed to the earlier documents. Barely a decade old, the University has produced two major academic planning documents that built upon the original concept of the institution that was presented to government. Some of the core elements of those planning documents related to academic programming are summarized below.

- In 1989, one of UNBC’s seminal academic visioning documents⁷ was produced for the founding Interior University Society. This early visioning document contains many elements that are as current today as they were when they were written. For example, this document envisioned a university that
 - is northern in character and serves the needs of the region it serves
 - provides a range of undergraduate and graduate academic and professional programs, including offerings in aboriginal studies (Dene-Athabaskan), applied computing, business, education, fine and performing arts, health sciences, natural resource management, northern development, transportation and distribution, and social services.
 - has a special mandate to serve aboriginal communities
 - embraces inter-disciplinarity
 - is readily accessible to college transfer students and has regional offerings
 - would likely have an enrolment of 4,000-6,000 students

The eventual submission to government from the Implementation Planning Group for the creation of UNBC proposed a more modest thematic grouping of academic programs in aboriginal studies, applied computing, business studies, education, and natural resource management.⁸ Subsequent to the founding of UNBC, academic programming was broadly guided by five “mandated” areas, including Environmental Studies, First Nations Studies, International Studies, Northern Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies.⁹ While these five areas were never sanctioned or formalized by Senate or the Board of Governors, they did inform the academic plan and, arguably, served as the University’s initial thematic framework.

- In January, 1997, the University’s first formal strategic plan, *Planning for Growth: Final Report of the University Planning Committee*, was released in. This strategic planning document spoke to the needs of a maturing institution for better administrative and organizational structures to support academic growth. Of note, this document articulated for the first time a clear mission statement and set of values to guide the University¹⁰. The document also raised concerns about the sustainability of UNBC’s current array of programs and hinted at the need to consider reducing the number of undergraduate degrees. As its title suggests, the document set enrolment

⁷ *Building a Future of Excellence: A University for Northern British Columbia* was presented on October 10, 1989 to the Implementation Planning Group for the Interior University Society. This group was formed to champion the development of a university in the north.

⁸ Submitted to the Hon. Bruce Strachan, December 29, 1989, by the Implementation Planning Group.

⁹ This is referenced in the 1997 document *Planning for Growth* (p. 1)

¹⁰ Learning, Interdisciplinarity, Innovation, Excellence, Responsiveness, Leadership, Diversity and Equity.

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growth targets (3500 FTEs by 2002) and identified a number of enabling factors that would assist with this growth:

- The importance of student services and student life
 - A commitment to comprehensive academic programming (but no specific thematic areas are identified)
 - The importance of co-op and other community-engaging programs
 - A renewed commitment to regional operations and links to colleges
 - A commitment to research excellence
 - A restructuring of 5 Faculties into 2 Colleges
- In 2002, the most ambitious academic planning document to date, ACTION (Answering the Challenge Through Innovation, Opportunities and Networks), was developed after an extended period of consultation and covered the planning period 2002-2007. This document identified areas for strategic development¹¹ and, for many of them, set out objectives, strategies, and measurable outcomes. Like the 1997 strategic plan, ACTION was largely an enabling framework for academic growth, but extended those strategies to include applied learning, technology, and internationalization. While this document set out a plan that was more comprehensive than earlier academic plans, its breadth led to challenges with its implementation and follow-through. While ACTION did not address any specific or thematic programmatic areas for academic growth, it did set the stage for more explicit emphasis on internationalization and the use of technology for teaching and learning. Similar to the 1997 document, but in more explicit language, ACTION identified the need to consolidate current academic offerings as a way to improve the quality of UNBC's programs. ACTION also identified one new value to underpin UNBC's academic programming: research.

While this walk through UNBC's academic planning history is necessarily brief, it is included to convey the importance the University has always placed on strategic academic planning. Earlier plans varied in emphasis and content, though what is remarkable is that, other than in the submission to the government at the very beginning, subsequent official academic plans did not place much emphasis on the types of academic programs UNBC should pursue. This is perhaps understandable given the heady days of relatively rapid growth and the wealth of opportunities for adding programs earlier in the University's development. In such an atmosphere there was perhaps less pressure to focus strategically on what to offer for the future; nonetheless, and as early as 1997, the University's academic leaders were concerned about the need to consider consolidation in light of lower than expected enrolments and variable uptake of programs.

¹¹ Teaching and Learning, Student Quality of Life, Applied Learning, The Wired University, First Nations, The Regional Mandate, Research, Internationalization of UNBC.