

MEMORANDUM OF MISUNDERSTANDING?

Public Accountability and the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus, 2004-17

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INTRODUCTION

THIS ARTICLE ANALYZES THE 2005 establishment and subsequent evolution of the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus (UBCO) in British Columbia's Interior. Until 2005, the southern Interior was relatively underserved with regard to university provision, and its population had one of the lowest rates of participation in post-secondary education in the province. I consider the founding vision of UBCO, as represented by the original Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the BC government, and determine whether or not it has achieved its stated goals of meeting the educational needs of the local population.

My findings indicate that almost none of the original educational vision for the campus has been realized; in fact, it has evolved in a way that is fundamentally opposed to the government's expressed intention. This is largely due to the fact that, in British Columbia, universities are autonomous institutions that are largely free of political influence and, hence, may follow their own goals rather than those of the government and/or the electorate. It might also be that the government's stated vision entailed much political posturing and that it fully intended to leave the evolution of the campus up to UBC rather than worry about the MoU. That UBCO was left to UBC, a large and highly-ranked research university, to develop as a small satellite campus in Kelowna has clearly affected its subsequent development and its deviation from its original goals. I discuss issues of academic planning, accountability, and oversight in the government's provision of this local public good.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND¹

Access to higher education has been a priority for the Okanagan region since the early 1960s. In 1961, it was announced that Kelowna would get a vocational school, and in his seminal 1962 report, *Higher Education in BC and a Plan for the Future*, UBC president John Macdonald said that a community college should be immediately established in the Okanagan, with the expectation that, by 1971, it would become a four-year college.² This did not happen quickly, but an Okanagan Community College committee did form in 1962, and Okanagan College (OC) was subsequently established in 1968, enrolling its first students in 1969, and eventually building upon and replacing the existing BC Vocational School (which itself only opened in 1963) by 1974. Unlike most of the rest of Canada, British Columbia adopted the “California model” for its community colleges, incorporating robust university transfer components, providing first- and second-year courses that BC universities would count towards degree requirements. In 1969, its first year, OC also provided diploma programs in business administration and electronic engineering technology.

Full four-year baccalaureate degree-granting aspirations in the Okanagan have also been of long standing. In 1988, in its *Access for All* report, the BC government recommended that some existing community colleges, including OC (which by then had added new campuses in both Vernon [in 1982] and Penticton [1988], as well as distance education, and international education and co-op programs [1986]), add third- and fourth-year courses to their offerings. This would enable them to offer full four-year degrees in partnership with and under the auspices of existing universities, thus obviating the need for BC students to move out of region in order to complete their degrees.³ In 1989, OC became one of five institutions offering full four-year degree programs under the auspices of UBC (BA and BSc programs) and the University of Victoria (BEd and BSN programs). In 1990, it opened a new campus in Salmon Arm and, in 1993, a second campus in Kelowna for the purposes of expanding its four-year degree programs. All of its BA and BSc programs were offered as UBC degrees and all third- and fourth-year

¹ Special thanks to an anonymous reviewer who was kind enough to point me towards reliable sources for the content of this section of the article.

² J.B. Macdonald, *Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1962).

³ British Columbia and Provincial Access Committee, *Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia: Report of the Provincial Access Committee* (Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, Government of British Columbia, 1988).

courses needed for degree completion came to be based at the new North Kelowna campus. The first such degrees were conferred in 1991.

In 1994, the BC government amended the Colleges and Institutes Act to allow for the formation of a new type of institution – the university college – that had the power to grant its own degrees. OC was rebranded as Okanagan University College (OUC) in 1995, and it began to offer degrees in its own name, under its own independent curriculum and degree design. The first such degrees were awarded in 1998, with 2003 being the last year in which an OUC baccalaureate degree was conferred in affiliation with another university.

The creation of OUC did not extinguish community aspirations for a full university in the southern Interior. The named-for-the-acronym Society for Okanagan University Legislation (SOUL) formed in 1999, leading to a new community group, University 2000 (or simply U2000), which lobbied for a full-status university.⁴ By 2000, the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce had taken up the cause.⁵ There was then a very public campaign to upgrade OUC to full regional university status as Okanagan University (OU). For many years posters appeared around the campus, sporting the slogan “OU? Oh Yes!” In the spring of 2001, both OUC and the University College of the Cariboo (UCC) in Kamloops publicly proclaimed their desire to come under the University Act rather than the Colleges and Institutes Act.⁶ At that time, the university college consortium prepared a position paper calling for all university colleges to become regional comprehensive universities.⁷ In 2001, in its reply to the government’s Core Review, the consortium argued for separate legislation and the ability to grant graduate degrees.⁸ All university colleges had begun adopting a university ethos, emphasizing research and scholarship, academic rank, and a desire to join the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). The OUC joined the latter in 1997.⁹

⁴ J.R. Cowin, “Public Policy and the Structural Development of Postsecondary Education in British Columbia, Canada, 1960–2015” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2017), 180. Available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2429/60559>. See also the appendix regarding Okanagan University College in B. Cowin, “Overview. Made in BC: A History of Postsecondary Education in British Columbia” (New Westminster, BC: Douglas College, 2007). Retrieved from ERIC database (ED 501776).

⁵ R. Freaque, *OUC Memoirs* (Kelowna, BC: Okanagan University College, 2005).

⁶ D. Gaber, “Provincial Coordination and Inter-Institutional Collaboration in British Columbia’s College, University College, and Institute System” (PhD diss., Oregon State University, 2002).

⁷ R. Church, “A Brief History of the University College Mandate Issue,” Nanaimo, BC, manuscript at Malaspina University College (Vancouver Island University), 2002.

⁸ Gaber, “Provincial Coordination.”

⁹ J.S. Levin, “Organizational Paradigm Shift and the University Colleges of British Columbia,” *Higher Education* 46, 4 (2003): 447–67.

Moves towards full university status got off to a decidedly rocky start. In early 2001, the government encouraged OUC to think about how it might move in this direction; however, later that year, it dismissed the OUC board for having agreed to a university-style faculty contract that introduced faculty ranks with differentiated salary levels.¹⁰ Ministry officials communicated to other university colleges that, as budgets were tight, overtures pertaining to university status would be unwelcome for the next few years.¹¹ Despite the government's renunciation of OUC's contract, lobbying continued and the new OUC board decided to implement the contract regardless of the government's position.

In 2002, a subcommittee of the BC Progress Board, a newly formed political advisory body to the recently elected (2001) Liberal government, was chaired by the then president of UBC, Martha Piper, who recommended that the government "extend the mandate of an existing provincial university [e.g., UBC] to Kelowna" to expand university access to the Okanagan region. In January 2004, Brad Bennett, of British Columbia's Bennett dynasty and Liberal Party supporter, was appointed new chair of OUC's Board of Governors. He turned out to be, probably not coincidentally, a strong advocate of this idea, especially if it involved UBC. Things then began to move very quickly and without adequate consultation. The prospect of UBC's taking over the university program side of OUC first appeared in UBC Senate minutes in January 2004, in which the provost noted that a government announcement was expected "within several weeks."¹² The minutes note that the provost "expressed excitement ... [about] important developments" that would "address provincial access issues" but that "UBC had responded to a government request to develop a proposal, rather than advocating any particular role for the University." Another comment in the minutes expressed the view that if UBC did not step in, it was likely either that another BC university would or that OUC would become an independent university. The provost indicated that members of UBC's senior administration had met with a regional committee, presumably the U2000 group – a meeting that also included representatives of the OUC Board and of the local Chamber of Commerce – to discuss the UBC proposal.

¹⁰ R. Fleming and G. Lee. "Canada: What's in a Title"? in *Challenging Boundaries: Managing the Integration of Post-Secondary Education*, ed. N. Garrod and B. Macfarlane, 93-109 (New York: Routledge, 2009). See also the foreword by Peter Ricketts in Freake, *OUC Memoirs*, 15-20.

¹¹ Church, "Brief History."

¹² Minutes of UBC Senate meeting, 21 January 2004. <https://senate.ubc.ca/vancouver/minutes>.

So clearly, by early 2004, the provincial government was to decide to either upgrade OUC to full university status (as it eventually did in all of the other cases of new universities in British Columbia that, between 2005 and 2010, evolved from existing colleges and university colleges) or split it in two, having UBC (or another BC university) take over its university functions while a new college continued its college functions. The government considered just two proposals, one from OUC, which involved upgrading that institution to full university status as Okanagan University (or, perhaps, as the University of Southern British Columbia), the other from UBC, which involved the latter taking over the university-related functions of OUC, which would be converted to a new OC and concern itself solely with college-related functions.

On 17 March 2004, the BC government acceded to both the Okanagan's and the UCC region's lobbying for a university. Rather than transforming OUC into an independent university as it did with UCC (which became Thompson Rivers University, a regional, comprehensive, teaching-oriented special purpose university),¹³ its north campus in Kelowna was to be split off and transferred to UBC on 1 July 2005. UBC's takeover of the university functions of OUC was unique in that it was hostile: faculty, students, and staff of OUC were sent an e-mail on the morning of 17 March 2004 announcing the takeover. The return e-mail address was that of OUC president Katy Bindon, but she had already been removed from office, as had the entire OUC board. The e-mail was sent from Bindon's account but was under the signature of Deputy Minister for Advanced Education Phillip Steenkamp, a government civil servant.¹⁴

For a variety of reasons, the government decided to accept UBC's proposal over OUC's. One was that UBC would be expected to provide some of its own resources (e.g., fundraised endowment and capital funds) for the building of new research space and student residences at the OUC campus in Kelowna. The primary reason, however, was that, in recent years, OUC had not met its government-set enrolment targets (it managed only 92 percent of its target in 2002-03 and 97 percent in 2003-04), while UBC had generally exceeded its enrolment targets. So it was argued that, especially given the excess demand for its programs in Vancouver, UBC would be better able to meet the ambitious enrolment targets set for the new university campus, where enrolment was targeted to grow to 7,500 by 2009-10, including 900 new student spaces set for its

¹³ J. Dennison, "From Community College to University: A Personal Commentary of the Evolution of an Institution," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 36, 2 (2006): 107-24.

¹⁴ Later to be hired by UBC in 2015 as vice-president, external relations and communications.

first year of operation (2005–06) over and above the approximately 3,000 in 2004–05 at the OUC campus in Kelowna (which was being replaced by UBCO). The remaining components of the former university college reverted to being part of OC, a comprehensive public college but now, like all public colleges, having the ability to grant applied degrees while maintaining full university transfer functions.

The UBC takeover has been described as resembling a Third World *coup d'état*, the culmination of a set of forces in the Okanagan arising from the local business community's adoption of a particular strategy of regional economic development.¹⁵ In this interpretation, UBCO came about as the result of the Okanagan business community's wanting a university presence as part of an economic development strategy, and the internal lobbying of OUC and/or UBC is downplayed. However, given the close political connections between the government, the then chair of the OUC Board of Governors, and the then UBC president – and of course the overall business community connections of the BC Liberal Party – this view is in no way inconsistent with the view that the change came about as a result of OUC and/or UBC lobbying. Nor is this view inconsistent with the fact that, as shown in UBC Senate minutes of January 2004, UBC had a strong interest in acquiring the North Kelowna campus (e.g., as a way of dealing with enrolment demand in Vancouver). Another equally valid interpretation might be that, in 2001, the BC government found itself with a renegade university college on its hands – a college that had violated the standard faculty employment contract of the university colleges – and therefore asked UBC to step in to restore order. Hence the suggestion of the BC Progress Board subcommittee, chaired by UBC president Martha Piper, referenced above. UBC might have agreed to the takeover either enthusiastically or reluctantly; either way, this may account for the initial unrealistic promises regarding what would be delivered and the government's willingness to turn a blind eye to subsequent broken understandings. With so much political maneuvering and power broking going on – and trade-offs among the interests of UBC, the local business community, and the Liberal Party – perhaps it was inevitable that the new campus would not meet the educational needs of the local population in a noticeably better way than had been done before.

¹⁵ R. Whitely, L. Aguiar, and T. Marten. "The Neoliberal Transnational University: The Case of UBC Okanagan," *Class and Capital* 96 (2008): 115–42.

FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF UBC OKANAGAN

The founding and original vision of the university campus in the Okanagan was part of a BC government initiative that began tentatively in 2004 but was not fully formed until the surprise 2008 announcement to create five additional public universities, thus expanding the number of public universities in the province (especially outside of the Lower Mainland, as the Interior and other regions had low rates of university enrolment relative to other Canadian regions and provinces). It finally involved transforming existing colleges and university colleges into new public universities to add to the province's already-existing public universities: UBC, the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, Royal Roads University, and the University of Northern British Columbia.

From 2005 to 2010, all cases of the establishment of new public universities (i.e., Vancouver Island University, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Capilano University, University of the Fraser Valley, Thompson Rivers University, and Emily Carr University of Art and Design) were the result of transforming existing college or university college institutions into comprehensive teaching-oriented regional and independent universities. In the case of UBCO, OUC was split into one new entity (UBCO) and one re-established entity (OC). The two institutions (or, rather, one reconstituted institution and one new campus of an existing institution) were to exist separately – UBCO with a research-intensive academic mandate and regional/national/international focus, OC with a comprehensive two-year university transfer, applied four-year baccalaureate degree, and vocational and trades college mandate as well as a local/regional focus. The new universities and campuses, including UBCO, were predominantly located in regions of the province underserved by university places for students.

Because the existing institution was to be replaced by two new and separate entities (UBCO and OC), the government (in the form of the Ministry of Advanced Education) and UBC signed a MoU regarding how the two new entities would interact. Strangely, OC (the reconstituted college) was not a signatory to this memorandum, presumably because it did not yet exist as a legal entity, leaving UBC as the only legal institution involved. However, as stated in its opening paragraph: “The MoU is not intended to create binding legal obligations between parties.”¹⁶ In other words, it really did not matter that OC was not yet a legal entity. And, given that the MoU made a lot of commitments on OC's

¹⁶ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2004, 2. Author's copy, available on request.

behalf, it does seem as though it should not have been excluded from being a signatory.

It is worth quoting from the MoU in some detail:

The mandate of UBC Okanagan will be to address the learning, ladder- ing and research needs of the Southern Interior. One of its principle [*sic*] missions will include the responsibility to work with colleges and other educational institutions to provide educational opportunities throughout the Southern Interior.¹⁷

Laddering refers to the ability of students to move fairly seamlessly from one- and two-year certificate and diploma programs at colleges to four-year degree programs either at a university or within a college (BC colleges do offer some four-year degrees). Listed under key principles to guide UBC's expansion to its Okanagan campus we find:

Partnerships [will be offered to] ... Okanagan College to expand university-level programming at the college's regional campuses and to ensure effective laddering of courses from college to university. Expanded offerings will be provided through face to face delivery, the use of on-line learning and video conferencing and working collaboratively on Continuing Education offerings to provide more choice for traditional students and life-long learners: [with a goal of] Cost- Effectiveness in the ... rationalization of services.¹⁸

Under programming we find:

In addition to a range of academic programs, UBC Okanagan is expected to include First Nations and continuing education programs. Initially, graduate programs will be combined with those at the [Van- couver] campus to ensure quality."¹⁹

Under key linkages to Okanagan College we find:

One of UBC's principal mandates will be working with the new Okanagan College to provide educational opportunities. Specific linkages could include: Developing a plan in partnership with OC to deliver a broad set of first and second year university-transfer courses at the main satellite campuses ... with the college delivering some of the courses and UBC delivering others; Expansion of the offerings at the satellite campuses through the use of on-line and mixed mode courses;

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

Development of new lab-based science courses at college campuses with labs scheduled in clusters at the Okanagan campus; UBC Continuing Studies will work with the college and local communities to identify learning needs and interests and develop programs to meet those needs.²⁰

What is envisioned is the full laddering of certificate (one-year), diploma (two-year), and degree (four-year) undergraduate programs across the two institutions. For example, one Computer Science 100 course offered in partnership across the two institutions could have students following any of the one-year certificate programs in computer science-related subjects at the college, the college's two-year diploma in computer information systems, the college's four-year bachelor of computer information systems degree, or the university's BSc and BA programs (including its BA and BSc majors in computer science) in an efficient, cost-effective, and innovative use of scarce resources across the two institutions. At the time, Jim Hamilton, the interim transition team leader and college administrator (and later president) of the recreated college, was quoted as stating with regard to these promising new OC and UBCO linkages: "We could be doing some pioneering work, leading the way in post-secondary education in Canada."²¹

Further, in October 2004, UBC announced the creation of a \$15 million endowment (\$10 million of which came from private donor and BC forestry industry magnate Irving K. Barber, and \$5 million of which came from UBC's internal funds) to create the eponymous Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences within UBCO. This institution was to have "a level of academic excellence and an undergraduate learning environment that [would be] unique in British Columbia," an "exceptional undergraduate learning environment [such as those] that private universities like Princeton and the University of Chicago have been able to create," and a "Learning Centre Interface Program" that would "provide the means for the innovative programs, creative people, and new teaching approaches developed at the School of Arts and Sciences to be accessible throughout the Province." It would also "make it possible for innovations in learning from the ... I.K. Barber Learning Centre [on the Vancouver campus] to be transferred into the classrooms of the School of Arts and Sciences."²² In other words: "The School of Arts and Sciences at UBC Okanagan [would] provide a Princeton-quality under-

²⁰ Ibid., 4-5.

²¹ *Kelowna Capital News*, 27 June 2004.

²² UBC promotional brochure, October 2004. Author's copy, available on request.

graduate education whose innovations in learning, exceptional learning resources, and enriched programming [would] be shared through the Learning Centre Interface program and accessed by people in BC and around the world.”²³

The I.K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences at UBCO would seek to “be a liberal arts and sciences school in the finest tradition, producing leaders with the insight for tomorrow” and “achiev[ing] national recognition as an exemplary learning environment.”²⁴ Envisaged, among other things, were small classes taught by exceptional professors through tutorials, experiential learning, and innovative teaching methods. It was thought that, given its small scale relative to its Vancouver counterpart, the School of Arts and Sciences at UBCO could be used as a site for pilot projects in liberal arts and sciences learning, the most successful of which could then be transferred both nationally and internationally. The UBCO campus seemed to provide a winning combination of brand (i.e., the world-class UBC) and place (i.e., the beautiful Okanagan Valley) for such a venture. Private American Ivy League institutions such as Princeton and Dartmouth College are, of course, liberal arts institutions whose students and faculty are both of exceptionally high quality and that have very low student-to-faculty ratios (e.g., Dartmouth College has six thousand students and one thousand faculty members).²⁵

In October 2004 it was further announced that a part-time MBA program, similar to that offered at the Vancouver campus’s School of Business, would be offered at UBCO.²⁶ At the same time, it was announced that an undergraduate business program would be launched at UBCO. Originally, this program was not in the UBCO plan because it would have been in direct competition with the new OC’s two-year diploma program and four-year bachelor program in business administration. Also, it was announced that a substantial portion of the UBC (Vancouver) Faculty of Agricultural Science would relocate to UBCO. Later in February 2005 it was announced that UBC would offer full engineering programs through the UBC (Vancouver) Faculty

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Founding Principles, I.K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences. Remarkably, no strategic academic plan for this school appeared until 2017, and then it was a hastily put together, rather vacuous, document that was only produced because, on taking office in late 2016, the new UBC president asked to see the various faculties’ strategic plans.

²⁵ “David Blanchflower on Degree Trends That Follow the Money,” *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 28 August 2014.

²⁶ *Daily Courier* (Kelowna), “MBA Program Coming to UBC-Okanagan,” 1 October 2004. Apparently the UBC School of Business in Vancouver had not been consulted on this and, in fact, was opposed as it might have diluted the UBC brand. Hence, there was subsequently an agreement that UBCO would not introduce an MBA program.

of Applied Science. A proposal then under discussion involved the idea that graduates of the OC's two-year diploma programs in engineering technology would be able to ladder into the third year of the engineering programs at either of UBC's campuses.

In 2005, in the promotional material for the inaugural class, the interim principal and deputy vice-chancellor of UBCO, Barry McBride, succinctly expressed the goals of the new campus: "Welcome to UBC Okanagan, one of the most exciting educational innovations in Canadian academic history. UBC Okanagan will offer a liberal arts undergraduate experience unlike that of any other institution in Canada."²⁷

ENROLMENT OF LOCAL STUDENTS

A fundamental premise of opening the new UBC campus in Kelowna and of re-establishing OC was to expand university and college opportunities for local students who lived in a region in which the transition from school to post-secondary education was one of the lowest in the province. As a government press release stated: "The new UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College will improve access to post-secondary education for local students."²⁸ Brad Bennett, who was the chair of the Board of Governors of OUC at the time of the takeover (and was immediately appointed to the UBCO advisory committee before being appointed chair of the UBC Board of Governors), stated: "The new UBC Okanagan campus will be developed by the people in this region, for the people in this region."²⁹ At the same time, however, an OUC student leader remarked that she "fear[ed] that the new spaces [would] be filled by Lower Mainland students not accepted to the Vancouver campus."³⁰ There were certainly many mixed signals regarding whether the new UBCO would cater more to local students or to out-of-region students, the latter comprising UBC applicants who could not be accommodated by the Vancouver campus.³¹

Given UBC's track record, the enrolment targets that the government set for the new UBCO were ambitious. They included 900 new student spaces set for 2005-06 over the existing approximately 3,000 in 2004-05. These targets were set to grow by approximately 900 additional students

²⁷ *UBC Okanagan FYI 2005*, 1. Author's copy, available on request.

²⁸ Press release, 21 March 2004.

²⁹ Government of British Columbia, news release, 17 March 2004.

³⁰ *Kelowna Capital News*, 18 March 2004.

³¹ In order to avoid confusion with the new Okanagan College, the new UBC campus might have been better named UBC Kelowna as that city is its only location of operation.

per year, to reach a final target of 7,500 by 2009-10, with about 7,000 undergraduate and 500 graduate students, half of the latter being PhD students.³² Once at that level, and, as stated in UBC's 2011 promotional material: "The planners of UBC's Okanagan campus made a key decision; the student body will never exceed 7,500."³³ In order to help meet these targets, competitive admissions standards for UBCO were set much lower (a secondary school grade point average of about 65 to 70 percent) than were those for the main campus in Vancouver (about 80 to 90 percent) but higher than were those of the prior OUC (about 60 percent).

There was a major enrolment shortfall in the first year, enrolment reaching only approximately three thousand full-time equivalent (FTE) domestic students (about the same as the number enrolled in the university programs of the previous university college campus in 2004-05), approximately 25 percent below the targeted and funded amount of thirty-nine hundred. In 2004-05, UBCO had been unable to get its publicity machine working. The campus only finally caught up to the targets in the 2012-13 academic year.³⁴ Regarding the geographical origin of the students at the new UBCO campus, data may be gleaned from the geographical point of origin of the application of admitted new-to-UBC direct-entry students (which, of course, is not necessarily their initial point of origin). Over the years the university has published these data, albeit in various abbreviated and changing formats, a summary of which is provided in Figure 1.

As mentioned above, government press releases indicate that, in 2004, a primary goal of the UBCO campus was to provide new places for local students and to increase the number of the local school-leaving population transitioning to university education. However, for the most part, the government's goal has been at odds with UBC's goal of attracting out-of-region and out-of-province domestic students (some of whom are unable to gain admittance at the Vancouver campus due to excess demand and high admissions standards) as well as high-fee-paying international students, both to increase its reputation and to increase its revenues. The campus was developed out of the previous university-college campus, which, since 1989, had been providing four-year baccalaureate degree programming to largely local students (over

³² MoU 2004, 6.

³³ *UBC Viewbook* 2011, 20. Author's copy, available on request.

³⁴ *UBC Report of Enrolment*, various years. Author's copies, available on request. Note: in 2004-05, OUC enrolled 2,969 FTE students in its degree programs at the campus taken over by UBCO, about the same as UBCO enrolled in 2005-06. See Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), *OUC 2004-05 Audited FTEs by Campus*, May 2005. Author's copy, available on request.

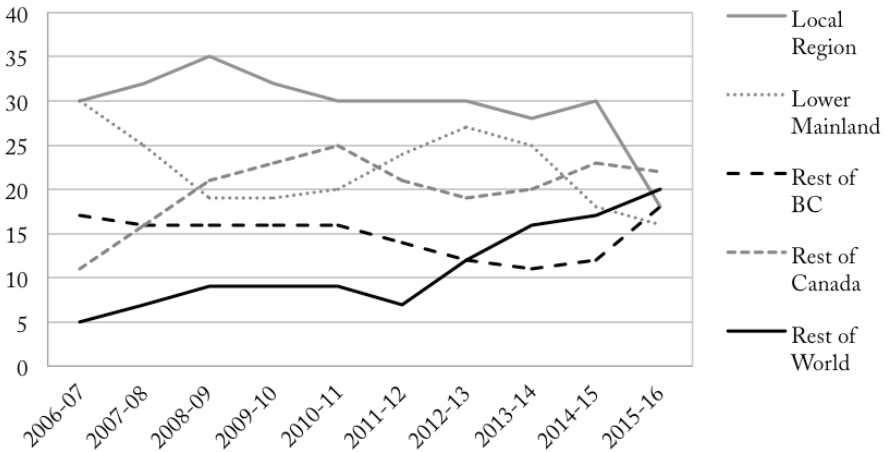


Figure 1. Geographic origin of direct-entry new students to UBCO, percent, 2006-07 to 2015-16. Source: *UBC Report of Enrolment*, various years.

Note: From 2010 to 2011 “Lower Mainland” should be relabelled “Metro Vancouver.”

80 percent of its total enrolment). As it has turned out, an analysis of the data reveals that, by 2015-16, UBCO was admitting fewer local students into baccalaureate degree programs than the former university-college OUC had admitted in its last year of operation (2004-05). For example, in 2015-16, more UBCO students came from the rest of Canada than from the local region. Moreover, more students came from outside of Canada than from the local region, and about the same number came from Metro Vancouver as from the local region.

The mixed motives are clear in many statements from university officials and publications that reveal that UBC was more interested in out-of-region students than in local students. In a newspaper story on the poor enrolment figures for 2005-06, the first year of operation, a university official pointed out that, although the overall figures were poor, that fact that 40 percent of newly admitted students were from outside of the Okanagan region was a positive sign.³⁵ UBC’s 2008 *Enrolment Report* praised the university for being “successful in diversifying new student enrolment, with significant gains in the number of out-of-province and out-of-country students entering UBC Okanagan.”³⁶ The Okanagan campus’s 2009 *Viewbook* notes with some satisfaction: “About 70 percent of UBC Okanagan students come from outside the central Okanagan.”³⁷

³⁵ *Kelowna Capital News*, 14 October 2005.

³⁶ *Enrolment Report 2008*, 4.

³⁷ *Okanagan Viewbook 2008*, 8.

In 2010, promotional material for the School of Arts and Sciences at UBCO notes: “With 70 percent of our students arriving from outside the central Okanagan ... [we are] a place to meet interesting people.”³⁸ The 2012 UBC *Viewbook* states proudly “11.9 percent of Vancouver students and 21.9 percent of Okanagan students are from other Canadian provinces and territories”³⁹ A document produced by UBCO in 2013, a review of the campus undertaken for an AUCC accreditation process, notes that the campus’s student recruitment and advising goal, provided by UBC, was to “grow annual new student intake of out-of-province domestic students [e.g., from Alberta] to 30 percent of total enrolment.”⁴⁰ This would be much greater than new student intake from the local region, which, in 2015-16, was about 18 percent of total new-intake enrolment.

So, essentially, all forty-five hundred of the new university spaces provided by UBCO since 2005, over and above the three thousand that already existed at the original university-college institution, 80 percent or so of which were held by local students, have gone to students from outside the local region. Furthermore, contrary to the government’s stated intention, UBCO has probably reduced rather than increased the transition to university-level education for local students. Two fundamental reasons for this are: (1) UBCO admissions standards are much higher than they were for OUC (the previous university-college); and (2) UBC’s primary interest is its international reputation and reach, not servicing local students (something that is often taken as indicative of not being a “world-class” university). Add to this the fact that UBC also had an interest in meeting the overflow demand for admission to programs on its Vancouver campus. The Okanagan needed, and would have been better served by, an independent and comprehensive regional university (such as those created in the province between 2005 and 2010) rather than by the small overflow campus of a large, primarily research-oriented and internationally focused university.

The MoU had no provision for UBCO to adequately fund faculties and departments, and no targets for faculty hiring and class sizes: its only target was student enrolment. Hence, in contrast to its founding vision, which was to offer high-quality undergraduate education through ensuring small class sizes and an intimate learning environment, its class

³⁸ Promotional brochure, 2010: *What Is Your Next Step?* Author’s copy, available on request.

³⁹ *UBC Viewbook*, 2012, 7. An out-of-province market that, due to its closer proximity to the border, the UBCO campus taps into more than does the Vancouver campus is Alberta, from where about 19 percent of UBCO students now originate.

⁴⁰ *UBC’s Okanagan Campus*, 2013, 39. http://dvc.ok.ubc.ca/___shared/assets/Campus_overview_2013_electronic_format4373.pdf.

sizes and student-to-faculty ratios ended up being very large. Consider the following expectations for UBCO as expressed in its *Viewbook* and strategic plan. The 2008 *Viewbook* notes: “Class sizes are kept deliberately small and taught by highly-skilled professors.”⁴¹ The 2011 *Viewbook* states: “UBCO promises at least two enriched educational experiences to every undergraduate student.” And, for its part, the UBCO Strategic Research Plan 2009-14 states: “UBC Okanagan will be a centre for research, teaching and learning that is distinct in Canada and of sufficient quality to attract the best faculty and students from around the world.”

None of the above has in fact occurred. There are not two enriched educational experiences per undergraduate student; faculty and students are not the best in the world; class sizes are large (UBCO is now building a new four hundred-seat lecture theatre to accommodate them, to add to the two existing three-hundred-seat theatres plus other large classrooms); and many classes are taught by relatively less-skilled, non-permanent, and non-research faculty. This increasing average class size, along with the increasing use of less-skilled, lower-paid term and non-permanent faculty to teach the undergraduate curriculum, amounts to a failure of academic governance. As we know, the best students and faculty tend to be at high-quality institutions such as Oxford, Cambridge, and the American Ivy League universities, where undergraduate class sizes are small and enriched educational experiences are plentiful. However, at UBCO, the class sizes of first-year, many second-year, and even some third-year undergraduate courses are at the two- to three hundred-student level, often with no tutorial support.⁴² And, in each of her first and second terms, the average first-year student faces five courses whose class size is over two hundred.

Data published by the Research Universities’ Council of British Columbia show that, compared to all of British Columbia’s university campuses, UBCO has the largest average class sizes at the first- and second-year levels; the second largest (behind the main UBC campus in Vancouver) at the third- and fourth-year levels; and, between 2010 and 2016, is the only university campus to have had a significant increase in average class size at the third- and fourth-year levels.⁴³ Moreover, these larger than provincial average classes at UBCO are increasingly taught by

⁴¹ *UBC Okanagan Viewbook*, 2008, 2. Author’s copy, available on request.

⁴² In many instances, the same course taught at the Vancouver campus has an additional one-hour tutorial per week, so, in many subjects, more resources are put into undergraduate instruction at the large Vancouver campus than at the Okanagan campus.

⁴³ See <http://www.bcheadset.ca>, a data website that “has been created to demonstrate accountability on the part of British Columbia’s higher education institutions, and contains data on key measures of public interest.” See also Table 5 in this article.

relatively inexpensive (to the university) non-research and non-permanent faculty. For example, in 2016-17, in the UBCO bachelor of management program, almost 70 percent of all courses (more than two-thirds) were taught by non-research, non-permanent, non-tenured and non-tenure-track, temporary, and sessional faculty. Not exactly Princeton, Chicago, or Dartmouth on the Okanagan.

ACADEMIC PLANNING AND PROGRAM MIX

Now it is time to consider UBCO's program enrolment and academic planning (or, rather, the lack of the latter, at least before 2012-13). After failing to meet its initial enrolment target in 2005-06, UBCO was in a race to catch up to the growing enrolment targets, to a final target of seventy-five hundred students by 2009-10, and was happy to admit students from anywhere into any program that could be expanded fast enough to accommodate them. This turned academic planning into a free-for-all, with those programs most focused on expansion being the ones to most expand. For example, domestic student new-to-UBC admissions reached very high levels in 2011-12, focused mainly on the bachelor of arts program, which was the easiest to expand quickly and which, by 2011-12, was twice as large as any other program. Figure 2 depicts growth in undergraduate enrolment by program.

Before describing what has actually occurred as far as program development is concerned, it is useful to point out what was expected to occur (i.e., at least according to what is documented in the MoU signed by UBC and the provincial government). The MoU states: “[Research] opportunities will be created through the relocation of a portion of the UBC Faculty of Agriculture to the Okanagan.”⁴⁴ This was considered doable as the Okanagan is a primary agricultural and wine-growing region. However, at UBCO the planned bachelor of science in agriculture was stillborn.⁴⁵ Furthermore, neither continuing education nor distance education developed at UBCO. The MoU mentions continuing education as a primary goal of UBCO three times, and it mentions distance education (online courses) twice. It states that, in order to ensure quality, UBCO's graduate programs would initially be combined with those at the Vancouver campus.⁴⁶ This did not occur: none of the graduate programs that developed at UBCO had any link to UBC whatsoever. No part-time

⁴⁴ MoU 2004, 5.

⁴⁵ I presume this was because none of the members of the Faculty of Agriculture or viticulture programs in Vancouver wished to move to the BC Interior.

⁴⁶ MoU 2004, 4.

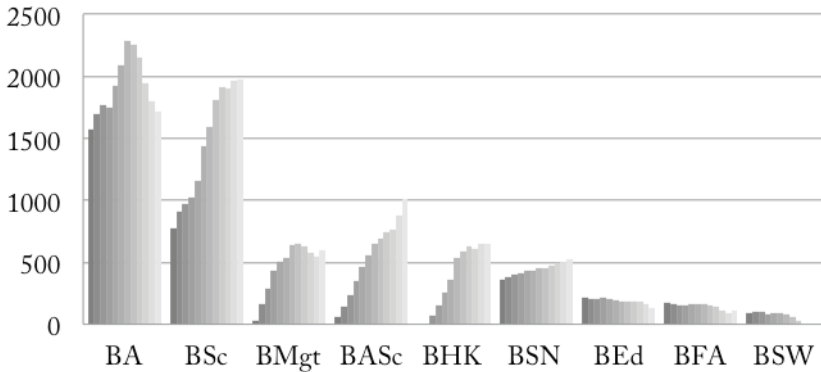


Figure 2. Total undergraduate student enrolment growth by program, UBCO, 2005-06 to 2016-17.* *Source:* UBC Report of Enrolment, various years.

Note: In 2004-05, at the campus taken over by UBC, OUC enrolled 1,691 FTE students in its BA program, 475 in its BSc, 356 in its BSN, 167 in its BEd, 221 in its BFA, and 91 in its BSW, for a total of 2,969 FTE students. See KPMG, OUC 2004-05 Audited FTEs by Campus, May 2005.

* Degree abbreviations are BA (bachelor of arts), BSc (bachelor of science), BMgt (bachelor of management), BASc (bachelor of applied science [Engineering]), BHK (bachelor of human kinetics), BSN (bachelor of science in nursing), BEd (bachelor of education), BFA (bachelor of fine arts), BSW (bachelor of social work).

MBA program developed,⁴⁷ as was announced in 2004, and there has been no evidence that the School of Arts and Sciences has taken part in transferring and making new and innovative teaching approaches accessible throughout the province, nor have learning innovations from the Learning Centre on the Vancouver campus been transferred to the classrooms of the School of Arts and Sciences.⁴⁸ And there is no sign that the School of Arts and Sciences at UBCO has had an impact on undergraduate liberal arts teaching either across the province, Canada, or the world. In fact, the school did not produce a strategic academic plan until 2017, and even then it was a hastily arranged, poorly consulted, and vacuous document.

Moreover, contrary to the MoU, there have been virtually no linkages or partnerships between OC and UBCO. Courses and programs at the two institutions have developed in almost total isolation from each

⁴⁷ Rumour has it that the founding dean of the Faculty of Management at UBCO resigned six months into a five-year term as a result of her learning of an agreement, made prior to her appointment, between the School of Business on the Vancouver campus and the UBCO campus that the latter would not compete with the former in introducing an MBA program.

⁴⁸ UBC promotional brochure, October 2004, referred to earlier in this article.

other, with virtually no explicit laddering of programs or coordination of course offerings. On UBCO's establishment, in keeping with the BC post-secondary student transfer system, OC did, of course, preserve its first- and second-year arts and science courses for university transfer, but that is about as far as any informal cooperation between OC and UBCO has gone (and these transfers apply to any university, not just UBCO). None of the specific UBCO-OC initiatives outlined in the MoU have come to pass. There is no relatively seamless laddering, for example, for engineering or computer science courses and programs. The formal agreement between OC and UBCO to allow some nursing students to take the first year of the four-year UBCO bachelor of science in nursing at OC is the exception that proves the rule. In another area in which laddering was promising, the UBCO bachelor of social work program, with entry at year three, opportunities were lost in 2012, when UBCO closed down its BSW program to focus solely on its MSW program. Thus, in the area of social work, opportunities have been reduced, not enhanced. There has been no attention to innovation and cost-effectiveness in the sharing of courses and programs; rather, there has been large-scale cost-ineffectiveness and duplication of first- and second-year courses (and multiple sections of courses) across the two institutions. In the first strategic academic plan for UBCO, published in January 2006, partnership with OC is mentioned in four places; in the second plan, published in 2010, it is not mentioned at all; and in the current strategic academic plan, the *Aspire* final report of August 2014, OC is listed once in an appendix, along with a hundred or so other organizations, as an external stakeholder "key partner."⁴⁹

An ideal opportunity for UBCO and the new college to cooperate cost-effectively on ladder courses was lost within weeks of the announcement that UBC would take over the university functions of OUC. It was decided that UBCO would include some creative arts programming, and the existing programming at OUC consisted of a two-year diploma of fine arts and a four-year bachelor of fine arts, with the diploma by far the largest program. However, in April 2004, OUC moved quickly to discontinue the two-year diploma program. This was a regressive step, and left the region with no creative arts programming – unusual for a regional college in British Columbia. With the Okanagan largely stripped of accessible and ladder-friendly public post-secondary programming in

⁴⁹ *UBC Okanagan: A Community of Excellence*, Academic Plan, January 2006. https://ok.ubc.ca/__shared/assets/academic-plan37192.pdf; *UBC's Okanagan Campus: Strategic Action Plan*, 2010. http://dvc.ok.ubc.ca/__shared/assets/ok-sap39579.pdf; *Aspire Final Report*, August 2014. http://universityrelations.ok.ubc.ca/adminnews/files/2014-08-19_Aspire_Final_Report.pdf.

the creative and visual arts, local students were out of luck. UBCO had higher entrance standards for the bachelor of fine arts program, than had OUC. In the last twelve years or so, fine arts enrolment has continuously declined at UBCO and is now about half of what it was in 2005-06 (see Figure 6).

A 2011 review of UBCO's development was undertaken to inform UBC's president about how things had gone in the institution's first five years, what its next challenges might be, and what might be required of the next principal and deputy vice-chancellor. It notes:

The profile of the emerging institution is now quite markedly different from the initial vision of UBC Okanagan as a largely undergraduate liberal arts campus. UBC Okanagan has taken on a shape and identity that is substantially different from the founding vision ... Rapid growth, campus ambitions and the province's involvement has resulted in the presence of professional faculties/programs and graduate expansion which has led to an inevitable, and one has to assume one-way, move away from the liberal arts campus concept to a more comprehensive campus.⁵⁰

As can be seen from Figure 2 above, new professional and vocation programs have been developed and expanded in engineering (bachelor of applied science [BASc]), bachelor of human kinetics (BHK), and bachelor of management (BMgt), to add to the existing bachelor of education (BEd) and bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) programs, and have moved the focus of the campus away from the liberal arts.⁵¹ Minimal attention has been paid to developing the liberal arts, humanities, and social sciences disciplines, and admissions to the bachelor of arts program have dramatically declined in recent years. In a recent Senate meeting, the current principal and deputy vice-chancellor of the campus is quoted as referring to "a Government direction to stop teaching BAs," presumably to increase focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and applied vocation fields such as business, health, and engineering rather than on the liberal arts, humanities, and social sciences (which make up the focus of the best undergraduate liberal arts colleges and universities in North America). UBCO has increasingly evolved into a vocational, professional, and polytechnic applied science

⁵⁰ *Development Review of UBC Okanagan Campus*, 15 June 2011, 7 and 11. Author's copy, available on request. Overall, the review was largely a superficial cheerleading document rather than a serious external review and was never subsequently referred to.

⁵¹ The bachelor of social work degree was discontinued in 2012-13.

university campus rather than into an undergraduate liberal arts campus “in the finest tradition.”

It was only after domestic student enrolment targets were reached in 2012-13 that any attention was paid to optimal program mix, and, since then, the trend has been to downsize what are deemed over-expanded programs (e.g., the BA program) to allow room for continued growth in science and professional programs (e.g., the BSc, BASc, BHK, and BMgt programs). Part of the reason for this was to accommodate the overflow demand on the Vancouver campus’s science, engineering, and commerce programs. In December 2012, the UBCO registrar was quoted as stating: “Because UBCO is now at its target enrolment, any increase to enrolment in one program requires a decrease in enrolment in another program.”⁵² So, given that the overall domestic student enrolment target had been met in 2012-13, the only way that the combined domestic student enrolment in the BSc, BASc, BHK, BSN, and BMgt programs could keep expanding after that year was if domestic student enrolment in the BA program kept declining (which it duly did). The BMgt at UBCO has also been developed and expanded to almost entirely duplicate the competing bachelor of business administration program at Okanagan College. No proven viable MBA or master of management program has yet been developed.⁵³

Since 2012-13, then, the downsizing of the liberal arts and the continued growth of the science and professional programs has been a conscious plan, expressed by the campus administration to reflect the interests of not just UBC but also of the students and of the region. A recent one-page article in UBC’s alumni magazine summarizing UBCO’s first ten years quotes the current principal and deputy vice-chancellor:

Program offerings in the Okanagan reflect the needs of the rapidly developing communities in our region. We are excited about opportunities for growth in high demand areas such as management, engineering and health-related professional programs, which will ensure we are best able to serve the needs of Okanagan communities while providing a world-class education for our students.⁵⁴

⁵² Minutes of Faculty of Arts and Sciences Council Meeting, 3 December 2012. Author’s copy, available on request.

⁵³ A master of management program modelled on the one at UBC’s School of Business in Vancouver was offered for two years – 2010-11 and 2011-12 – but then abandoned; a new MM program was developed in 2014 but failed to attract enough students to be offered until 2017-18, and then only with a substantial 50 percent tuition subsidy for each registered student. That no MBA has been allowed at UBCO has been a major failure of UBC in meeting the educational and professional development needs of the local region.

⁵⁴ “Ten Years in the Okanagan,” *Trek: Alumni UBC*, 2015.

In the entire article there is no mention of the liberal arts, humanities, or social sciences, or of OC and its relationship to UBCO. The initial goals for UBCO – as a liberal arts campus in the finest tradition, along with the MoU between UBC and the provincial government concerning close and synergistic linkages between UBC’s Okanagan campus and OC – were by now a distant memory.

In more recent years, statements suggest that UBCO’s goals have shifted once more, away from liberal arts or polytechnic and research or educating students per se, towards “encouraging rapid economic development and health” so that the institution can become “a driver of innovation and economic development in the region.” In 2014, the *Aspire* report emphasized goals such as encouraging “faster innovation and entrepreneurial approaches to sustainable social and economic development that have local relevance and global impact.” UBCO was to be:

an exemplar of well-being for healthy people and environments. As we contribute to the economic, social and cultural well-being and health of our region, we can be extending those contributions far beyond, and vice versa. [The campus can have a] transformational impact in the region and should be a catalyst for cultural, economic and social development [and a] living lab for health and well-being [as] UBCO is growing and diversifying the regional economy.⁵⁵

This is a long way from the campus’s original goal of being a liberal arts and sciences school in the tradition of the American Ivy League schools. The primary mission of the latter institutions is to attract the most outstanding students and faculty by focusing on the finest teaching and research in the liberal arts and sciences, not on the economic development, health, and well-being of their local regions, towns, or cities.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT STRATEGY

I now offer an analysis of the implications of UBCO’s drive to increase the number of its international students, who pay seven times as much for tuition as do domestic students. And they, along with those at UBC Vancouver, pay by far the highest international tuition rates in the province and are, hence, a main source of profit for the university. The 2004 MoU between UBC and the provincial government did not mention the issue of international students on the UBCO campus, nor was this

⁵⁵ *UBC Okanagan Aspire Final Report*, August 2014.

issue mentioned in any subsequent press releases or government or university statements. UBCO has failed to meet its provincially mandated domestic enrolment targets in all but one of the last twelve years since its founding, but the number of international students has expanded at a fairly constant rate. Of course, Canada's and British Columbia's international education strategies have given colleges and universities a green light to admit as many international students as possible, making them important instruments not only of higher education policy but also of Canadian and BC immigration policy.⁵⁶

In using the internationally recognized brand of UBC and the attractive city of Kelowna in order to attract international students, the official university line is that these students do not take places away from domestic students. A more careful analysis, one UBCO has not undertaken, reveals that, in fact, international students entering programs and courses that are especially popular with them, cut into places for domestic students. There is no displacement of domestic students at UBCO in total, but there is certainly displacement of domestic students between and within programs and within courses within programs at UBCO.

On November 2012, UBCO's principal and deputy vice-chancellor was quoted as follows: "Foreign students do not reduce the number of spaces available for Canadians at UBCO ... in fact, the opposite is true, International students help fund positions for Canadians that wouldn't otherwise exist."⁵⁷ This, of course, is not true: international students do not increase the number of seats open to domestic students at UBCO as these seats are set according to government targets. Theoretically, UBCO could of course use international student fees to cover the costs of admitting additional domestic students above the government targets; however, in 2012 the UBCO registrar stated: "[UBCO] need[s] to manage domestic students to ministry levels, any more than that [and] we are losing money."⁵⁸

The UBCO Enrolment Report 2014 states: "International students do not displace domestic students."⁵⁹ The constant repetition of this mantra is as far as the university takes its analysis of the effect of international students on domestic students, and it appears to have no interest in taking

⁵⁶ See British Columbia, *British Columbia's International Education Strategy* (Victoria: Government of BC, 2012); and Canada, *Canada's International Education Strategy* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2014).

⁵⁷ *Kelowna Daily Courier*, 15 November 2012.

⁵⁸ Minutes of Faculty of Arts and Sciences Council Meeting, 3 December 2012. Author's copy, available on request.

⁵⁹ *UBCO Enrolment Report 2014*. Author's copy, available on request.

it any further, at least in public. However, it is clear that this analysis is insufficient. While it is obviously true that, no matter how many international students the campus takes in, its domestic student targets and domestic student enrolment at the aggregate macro level are unaffected, it is not true that domestic students are not displaced from courses and programs that are especially popular with international students. And this is the case both with aggregate targets and at the micro level.

Figure 3 depicts international student enrolment at UBCO from 2005-06 to 2016-17. The enrolment of international students is significant in four programs: the BA, BSc, BMgt, and (to a lesser extent) the BASc (Engineering), although the latter has significantly increased its international student intake in the last two years. As international student numbers have grown in the BA, BSc, and BMgt in most recent years, the number of domestic students in these programs has declined or been static. Figure 4 depicts total enrolment of undergraduate international and domestic students from 2005-06 to 2016-17. Since 2013-14, UBCO has continued to increase international student enrolment despite the fact that targets for domestic student enrolment were not being met. So seats at UBCO that might have been given to domestic students (e.g., via adjusting admissions GPA averages so that domestic student intake equates to supply of seats) have in fact been given to international students.

Within the BA and BSc, international students tend to focus on certain majors and programs (see Table 1) and on certain courses within these programs. Programs with more than twenty major students and a large percentage (greater than 10 percent) of international students among the total number of students declared as majors are: for the BA, economics (38 percent), international relations (15 percent), politics, philosophy, and economics (14 percent), and philosophy (11 percent); for the BSc, economics (25 percent), mathematics (11 percent), and computer science (11 percent). At UBCO, programs such as international relations, political science, and philosophy have had no net new teaching faculty hiring since 2007, and, over the past few years, the number of courses, sections, and student seats offered have declined (even the economics program has had relatively little increase), despite the growing number of international students. Many courses are full to capacity (especially in international relations and political science and in certain economics courses), so it would be entirely reasonable to acknowledge that some domestic students have been displaced due to the growing number of international students: the total number of seats and courses in these

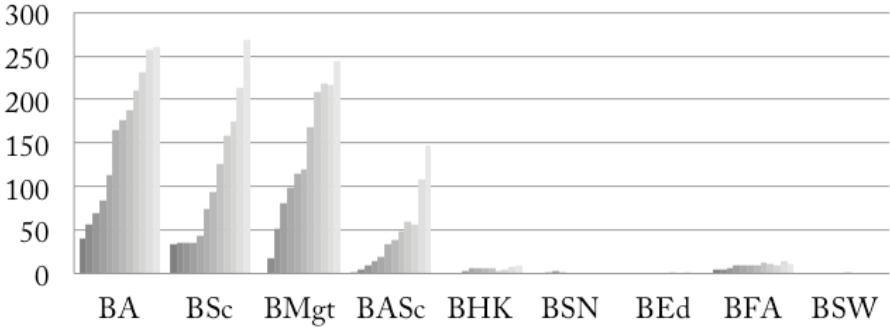


Figure 3. Undergraduate degree programs for international students, UBCO, 2005-06 to 2016-17.

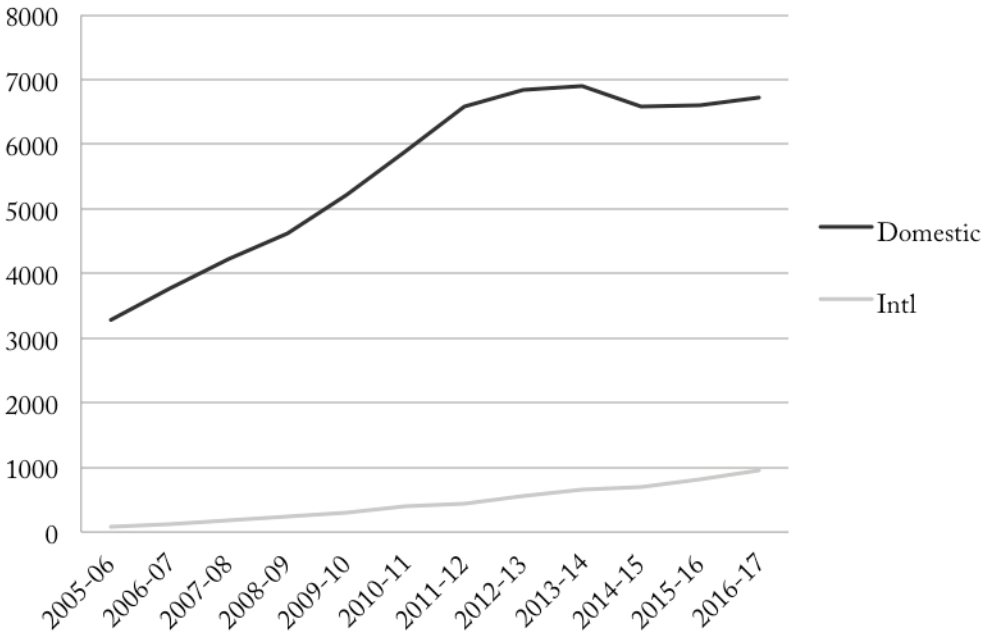


Figure 4. Undergraduate students, domestic and international, UBCO, 2005-06 to 2016-17. Source: UBC Report of Enrolment, various years.

TABLE 1
Declared BA and BSc major students, UBCO, 2013-14

	TOTAL	INTL	% INTL		TOTAL	INTL	% INTL
Bachelor of Arts				Bachelor of Science			
Psychology	648	27	4	Biology	441	18	4
English	109	3	3	Biochemistry	281	14	5
Economics	108	41	38	Earth and Environ- mental Science	144	4	3
Anthropology	98	4	4	Psychology	139	6	4
History	94	0	0	Chemistry	104	3	3
Geography	72	2	3	Mathematics & Statistics	95	10	11
International Relations	65	10	15	Computer Science	84	9	11
General Arts	48	3	6	Physics	82	7	9
Sociology	44	3	7	Zoology	67	1	2
Political Science	40	2	5	General Science	66	1	2
Philosophy	27	3	11	Economics	48	12	25
Philosophy-Poli- tics-Economics	21	3	14	Environmental Chemistry	19	1	5
French	20	1	5	Freshwater Science	13	0	0
Creative Writing	20	1	5	TOTAL	1583	86	5
Computer Science	18	1	6				
Cultural Studies	16	1	6				
Art History	14	2	14				
Indigenous Stud- ies	13	0	0				
Mathematics	12	5	42				
Spanish	10	0	0				
French and Span- ish	10	0	0				
Latin American Studies	4	1	25				
Gender and Women Studies	3	0	0				
Earth and Envi- ronmental Science	2	0	0				
TOTAL	1470	113	8				

Source: UBC Student Information System (SISC)

programs has not increased, but the number of international students has increased considerably.

UBC claims that the high fees paid by international students (seven times the fees of domestic students) allow it to hire more faculty and to offer a greater selection and number of courses to all students, presumably with class size going down and class choice and diversity going up, to the benefit of domestic students. So have average undergraduate class sizes at UBCO gone down? And have more faculty been hired as the enrolment of international students (as a percent of total enrolment in direct-entry undergraduate programs) has gone from an average of 6 percent in 2010-11 to an average of 14 percent in 2016-17, generating about \$20 million more in additional university revenue? According to data released by the Research Universities' Council of BC and published as the British Columbia Higher Education Accountability Dataset (bcheadset.ca), the answer is, emphatically, no.

Table 2 shows the head count of undergraduate international students at UBC Okanagan; the number of full-time, permanent faculty; and the average undergraduate class sizes at the lower level (first- and second-year courses) and upper level (third- and fourth-year courses) in 2010, 2013, and 2016, respectively. International undergraduate students have more than doubled between 2010 and 2016, but the number of faculty has increased little while average class sizes have increased quite dramatically. In fact, at the lower level, UBCO now has the largest average class sizes of any BC post-secondary campus, including UBC Vancouver, and it has the second largest (after UBC Vancouver) at the upper level.

The UBCO campus is planning to continue to increase the number of international undergraduate students from the current one thousand or so (13 percent of total undergraduate students) to around 1,750 (20 percent of total undergraduate students). Until there is some change regarding expenditures on faculty and courses, this will displace more domestic students from those programs and courses in the arts and sciences popular with international students. Either revenue from the increased enrolment of international students will lead to additional seats being opened up and additional courses being offered (in which case new seats and courses will be offered to domestic students as well) or it will not (in which case domestic students will continue to be displaced). Of course, attracting more international students to UBCO has large financial, cultural, and intellectual payoffs both for the university and for the region.⁶⁰ However,

⁶⁰ In *UBC Reports*, February 2013, the then provost of UBCO is quoted as saying: "In Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley, it is widely acknowledged that the presence of people from around

TABLE 2

Undergraduate international students, number of faculty, and average class sizes, UBCO, 2010–16

UBC OKANAGAN	2010	2013	2016
International undergraduates	415	659	1002
Number of faculty	304	353	355
Average size lower-level	79	83	86
Average size upper-level	33	38	40

Note: Between 2010 and 2013, UBCO was increasing its faculty due to increasing numbers of domestic students. See Figure 2 above.

Source: BCHeadset.ca

UBCO needs to do a better job of identifying which classes international students are taking and adjusting their number accordingly so as to ensure that no domestic students will be disadvantaged.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

I now offer a limited socio-economic analysis of the regional population. Since 2005, has the UBCO campus increased the percentage of the regional population that holds university degrees and/or expanded that population's skills level? Has it increased the number of local high school graduates transitioning to post-secondary education?

Figure 5 depicts the percentage of the regional population, aged twenty-five to fifty-four, that comprises post-secondary graduates in each of every five-year census for the years 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011, respectively, in relation to the figure for all of British Columbia.⁶¹

The southern Interior regions are still below the BC average, and the gap has not significantly closed since 2006, nor has the increase in the trend for the region been any faster for 2006–11 than it was for 1996–2006, before UBCO existed. *2012 Economic Profile: Regional District of the Central Okanagan* notes that, in 2006, 13 percent of the total population over the age of fifteen (16,980 persons) had a university certificate, diploma, or degree (the corresponding figure for British Columbia overall was 19 percent), while *Okanagan Valley Economic Profile 2015* notes that, in

the world is a good thing for the culture and economy of the region.”

⁶¹ Census data for 2016 on education will be released by Statistics Canada in November 2017.

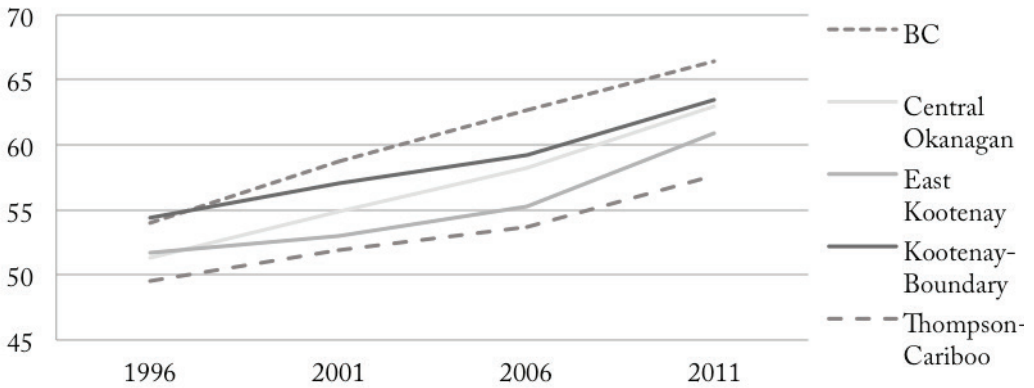


Figure 5. Post-secondary graduates as a percentage of population aged twenty-five to fifty-four.
 Source: Statistics Canada.

2011, 14.3 percent of the total population over twenty-five (19,019 persons) had a university certificate, diploma, or degree (the corresponding figure for British Columbia overall was 22.2 percent).⁶²

A 2014 report from the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, which got its information from the BC Student Transitions Project, notes that “the region has a low level of transition from Grade 12 [secondary school graduation] to BC post-secondary education. 66 percent of 2009–10 graduates in the Central Okanagan have gone on to post-secondary education, relative to 76 percent province wide.”⁶³ Figure 6 shows the percentage of high school graduates in each region of British Columbia that has entered post-secondary education either in the year of graduation or no more than a year later. The rate of transition did take a jump in the Okanagan region for the classes of 2005–06 and 2006–07, and this may have been because of UBCO. However, since then, the rate has stayed fairly stable for high school graduates. The rates for the

⁶² Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, *2012 Economic Profile: Regional District of the Central Okanagan*, 18. http://www.investkelowna.com/application/files/9714/7795/5660/2012_regional_economic_profile_final_2012-05-10.pdf and Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society, *Okanagan Valley Economic Profile 2015*, 78. https://www.vernon.ca/sites/default/files/docs/business/oveds-eco-profile_2015r1.pdf.

⁶³ Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, *Human Resource Strategy and Implementation Plan; Central Okanagan Workforce Development Project* December 2014, 1. http://www.investkelowna.com/application/files/4514/7795/6191/workforce_development_malatest.pdf and <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/data-research/student-transitions-project>.

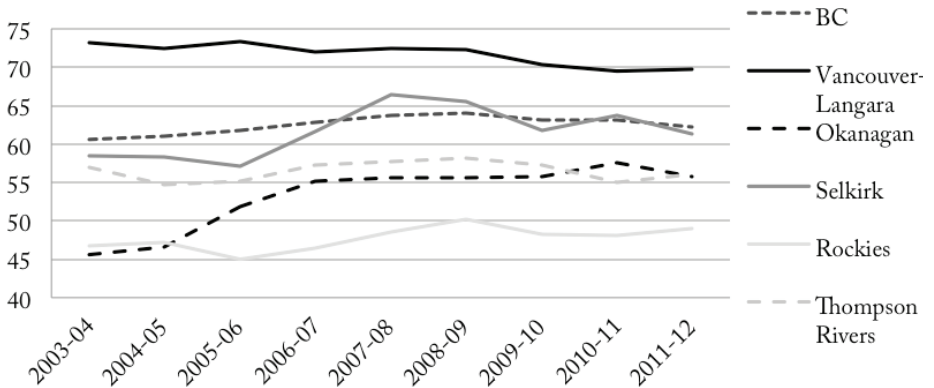


Figure 6. Transition rates to post-secondary education of high school graduates within one year of graduation, by year of graduation, 2003-04 to 2011-12. *Source:* BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Student Transitions Project, Regional Student Transition Matrices.

southern Interior regions remain well below those for Metro Vancouver and other more urbanized regions of the province.

A recent publication of the Okanagan Economic Development Commission notes: “While the region is successful in enticing young people to study in the area, students tend to move away once they have graduated.”⁶⁴ However, in direct contradiction to this, we have a rather remarkable statement given by the then UBC president Arvind Gupta at a Kelowna Chamber of Commerce event in late 2014: “while 28 percent of UBCO’s students are from the Okanagan, 25 percent are from Metro Vancouver, 20 percent are from other parts of Canada, [16 percent are from other parts of British Columbia,] and 11 percent are international students, a whopping 70 percent of its graduates choose to stay in Kelowna or the surrounding communities after they finish their studies.”⁶⁵ And, in a September 2016 speech given at UBCO, the then premier of British Columbia Christy Clark noted that “60 percent of UBCO graduates stay in the Okanagan.” These figures are surprising to say the least, given that less than 30 percent of UBCO students are from the Okanagan (and

⁶⁴ Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, *Human Resource Strategy and Implementation Plan; Central Okanagan Workforce Development Project* December 2014, 11. http://www.investkelowna.com/application/files/4514/7795/6191/workforce_development_malatest.pdf.

⁶⁵ *Kelowna Capital News*, “UBC President Praises Connection between Kelowna and University,” 14 November 2014.

the 2015-16 figure for new undergraduate direct-entry students indicates that only 18 percent were from the Okanagan region).⁶⁶

The source of the 60 percent number (I can find no reliable source for the 70 percent number) is presumably the BC Student Outcomes surveys conducted under the auspices of the Research Universities' Council of British Columbia and carried out by BC Stats. A 2015 report states that 60 percent of 2013 UBCO graduates were living and working in the southern Interior two years after they graduated.⁶⁷ However, no surveys were conducted for 2008-12 UBCO graduates (only for UBC and OC graduates overall). The only survey of UBCO graduates is a 2015 survey of 2013 graduates, its purpose being to see where they were two years after graduation. One thousand and two of these graduates were contacted, and 451 completed the survey. Of those, only 199, or 44 percent, were still in the southern Interior. Two hundred and twenty-four of the 451 had taken further education since obtaining their bachelor's degree, so it is unclear whether they were living and working in the region or still studying. So the 60 percent number is, I think, somewhat suspect. The 2015 survey to determine where OC's 2013 graduates were two years after graduation was completed by 102 of the 187 bachelor's degree graduates contacted (predominantly the college's BBA graduates, most of whom were from the Okanagan). And, of the 102 respondents, forty-four (or 43 percent) were still in the southern Interior.

CONCLUSIONS

What policy lessons does this case study present, and what are the implications for public administration, public choice, and public accountability? Could UBCO have developed in such a way as to better meet the policy goals of the MoU? What sort of public administrative mechanisms could have resulted in a better outcome? Or is it the case that the provincial government has been quite happy to leave UBCO's development entirely in the hands of UBC no matter what the outcome?

It is clear that, contrary to the MoU between UBC and the provincial government, UBCO is not meeting the learning, laddering, and research needs of the southern Interior. It does not provide educational opportunities throughout the southern Interior, and it is not doing pioneering

⁶⁶ *UBC Annual Report on Enrolment 2015: Okanagan Campus*, December 2015, 7, fig. 10. <http://pair2016.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2016/04/2015-Enrolment-Report.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Research Universities' Council of BC, *Putting Degrees to Work: Second Annual Report, a Comprehensive Survey of Student Outcomes 2008-2012*, December 2015, 10. <http://www.tupc.bc.ca/pdfs/PuttingDegreesToWork-SecondAnnualReport-30NOV15.pdf>.

work in partnership with OC and thus leading the way for post-secondary education in Canada. It does not put special emphasis on First Nations and continuing education programming: it puts no more emphasis on the former than did OUC, and, unlike both OUC and OC, it has no continuing education program whatsoever. Nor does it have distance education programming. Indeed, what was promised is not what has been delivered, and nobody seems to have been held accountable for this.

The School of Arts and Sciences at UBCO cannot by any stretch of the imagination be characterized as having a level of academic excellence and an undergraduate learning environment similar to what is found at Princeton. UBCO has many less-skilled, non-research-oriented, and temporary faculty as well as large class sizes. Moreover, its current operations and program mix do not fulfill the intent of the MoU between UBC and the provincial government: certainly UBCO is not offering a liberal arts undergraduate experience unique in British Columbia. Nor does catering to the educational needs of the local population seem to be much of a priority. Indeed, UBCO does not enroll all that many local residents; rather, it has inordinate numbers of students from outside the region (e.g., Alberta), and this may or may not be a good thing for the Okanagan. Furthermore, a growing number of international students is causing bottlenecks in some disciplines.

In one sense, no matter what academic decisions might be made, given the winning combination of brand (UBC) and place (Kelowna), it was almost impossible for UBCO to fail. All that was needed was to provide programs that could grow quickly in order to meet the excess demand for similar programs (e.g., those in the arts, sciences, engineering, management, and health) on the Vancouver campus, which is what happened. Does UBCO have the correct program mix? Some faculties may be considered to be major failures – such as, for example the Faculty of Management, which has failed to establish an adequate permanent research faculty and increasingly relies on part-time faculty teaching many courses at inconvenient times (e.g., on weekday evenings, Saturday evenings, and Sunday mornings). Obviously, UBC was not going to pass up the cash cow known as an undergraduate business program, especially given the massive unmet demand for its bachelor of commerce program on the Vancouver campus. But an undergraduate business program that largely duplicated what was already being offered in the region was not only not needed but would not have occurred had OUC been kept and allowed to develop and expand its existing program. Moreover, due to UBCO's subordinate relationship to the Vancouver campus, UBC failed

to provide it with an MBA program, something that the region obviously needs and that UBC is uniquely placed to provide.

Other serious mistakes have also been made, such as closing down regionally important programs like the bachelor of social work and the diploma in fine arts. Obviously, the rhetoric related to UBCO was over the top (e.g., “being of sufficient quality to attract the best students and faculty in the world”). The simple aspiration to be a successful regional university campus would have been sufficient and would have led to fewer disappointments. UBCO’s lack of serious attention to the liberal arts and its poor linkages with OC, all in violation of the MoU between UBC and the provincial government, are its biggest failures, along with having the largest average class sizes in the province at the lower-level and second largest at the upper level. As noted above, the Okanagan is a region that needed, and would have been better served by, a local, regional, homegrown university rather than by a small overflow campus dependent upon the whims of a large internationally ranked university. It will be interesting to see what the future holds for UBCO.