



SUBJECT	PRESIDENT'S EXCELLENCE CHAIRS UPDATE
MEETING DATE	SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

Forwarded on the Recommendation of the President

**APPROVED FOR
SUBMISSION**

Santa J. Ono, President and Vice-Chancellor

FOR INFORMATION

Report Date	August 22, 2019
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Presented By Andrew Szeri, Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Vancouver

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As per the request of the Learning and Research Committee for an update on the President's Excellence Chairs Program, please find attached a report which identifies the seven theme areas selected, highlights the recruitment status, and the future of the program.

Attachments

1. UBC President's Excellence Chairs Program - Update

STRATEGIC CORE AREAS SUPPORTED

- People and Places
 Research Excellence
 Transformative Learning
 Local / Global Engagement

UBC President's Excellence Chairs Program - Update

*At the very edge of human knowledge are
the people that will change the world*

With an allocation of \$21M from the Academic Excellence Fund, the President's Excellence Chairs (PEC) were created to attract outstanding faculty members who will enable cutting-edge research and an excellent student learning experience to appeal to top students.

Areas Selected

The Vice-President Research & Innovation selected the six theme areas after analysis to determine where these Chairs could have the most impact and raise the reputation of these programs.

The areas that were selected are: Biodiversity Studies, Brain Health, Forest Bio-Products, Global Development Policy, Media Studies, and Precision Oncology.

In spring 2018, a seventh chair was added to the Excellence Chairs grouping, the Edwin S.H. Leong UBC Chair in Healthy Aging.

Promotional Advertisements

In spring 2017, the PEC program was promoted in The Economist, Globe and Mail, Science Magazine, Nature, and The Chronicle of Higher Ed. The objectives of the ad were to create awareness of the program and to elevate UBC's reputation.

Recruitment Update

Three of the original six chairs have been filled by outstanding academics. They are:

- Dr. Claire Kremen, Biodiversity Studies

Dr. Kremen was previously a Professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management at University of California, Berkeley. As a conservation biologist, Dr. Kremen's applied research advances the fields of ecology, biodiversity and agriculture, seeking mechanisms to prevent or reverse the loss of biodiversity – one of the greatest environmental challenges facing humanity in the 21st century.

- Emily Cranston, Forest Bio-Products

Dr. Cranston joined UBC from McMaster University where she held the Canada Research Chair in Bio-Based Nanomaterials in the Department of Chemical Engineering. Dr. Cranston's research focuses on sustainable nanocomposites and hybrid materials from cellulose and other biopolymers.

- Sophia Frangou, Brain Health

Dr. Frangou will join UBC later this fall. Dr. Frangou is currently a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Icahn School of Medicine, Mount Sinai. Her research areas are pathological processes underlying psychosis, with emphasis on schizophrenia and bipolar disorder using clinical, genetic, cognitive, and neuroimaging techniques.

The search for the Edwin S.H. Leong UBC Chair in Healthy Aging is well underway. The unsuccessful searches will be relaunched this fall in the following areas:

- Global Migration Studies: This Chair would focus on issues at the heart of global population dynamics, nationalist political movements, international political movement, and international politics.
- Critical Infrastructural Studies: This is an emergent field, described as the study of “things and systems made, built, shaped, crafted, interwoven, old, new, lived, loved, hated, sustained, or resisted”. Its purview allows for creative intersections with Science, Applied Science Medicine and other faculties across UBC.
- Precision Oncology: The profile for this Chair is under development

Future of the Program

The planning around academic renewal at the University will include a proposal to continue the President’s Excellence Chairs Program creating as many as 32 new Chairs over the next decade.