



SUBJECT	Update on the President's Academic Excellence Initiative
SUBMITTED TO	Board of Governors
MEETING DATE	September 26, 2022
SESSION CLASSIFICATION	Recommended session criteria from Board Meetings Policy: OPEN
REQUEST	Action requested - Recommendation to Board for approval
LEAD EXECUTIVE	Gage Averill, Provost and Vice-President Academic <i>pro tem</i> , UBC Vancouver
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PRIOR SUBMISSIONS

The subject matter of this submission has been considered previously by the Board of Governors on the following occasions:

1. [September 24, 2019](#) (OPEN SESSION)
Action: Approved revised ARWG Terms of Reference.
2. [June 13, 2019](#) (OPEN SESSION)
Action: Approved ARWG Terms of Reference

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The President's Academic Excellence Initiative (PAEI) is aimed at extending and enhancing the research impact of the University of British Columbia. It supports the hiring of additional research professors, and it puts into place various supports – professional and personal – that the University provides to assist them in their intellectual leadership.

Key benefits of the PAEI include:

- Adding to the existing research faculty complement through a careful development plan to create a research environment unmatched in Canada for research;
- Ensuring that research and teaching come together such that the benefits of academic renewal are available to all students (undergraduate and graduate) as well as post-doctoral scholars; and
- Strengthening the research ecosystem and ensuring research impact.

PAEI has two phases, see below.

Accelerate Phase

- 100 faculty lines (mostly assistant professors)
- Based on student FTE proportions, the campuses agreed to proceed with 84:16 split – 84 faculty lines at UBCV and 16 faculty lines at UBCO
- With additional enhancements and supports for graduate students, research infrastructure and services, library, and housing / dual career support
- *Was approved by Board of Governors on February 14th, 2020*

Campaign Phase

- 75 faculty lines (chairs and professorships)
- Based on campaign goals of each campus, the campuses agreed to proceed with 72:3 split – 72 faculty lines at UBCV and 3 faculty lines at UBCO.
- With similar types of enhancements and support as Accelerate

Accelerate Phase (UBCV)

PAEI Accelerate phase’s hiring is well underway, with many faculty members hired across many faculties, including Arts, Science, Medicine, Forestry, Dentistry, and Education, as well as extensive searches underway across each of the faculties (see table below).

Searches Finalized	Searches Underway This Year
20	28

At UBCV, strategic hiring plans developed by the Deans were approved by PVPA and VPRI, with principal themes that encompass, climate change and biodiversity; equity and inclusion; data science / data analytics; and hires in areas of the Faculties’ specific strategic aspirations.

In addition to the hiring of world-class faculty members, the Accelerate phase also provided an extensive package of academic enhancements aimed at elevating the overall research capability and support for the campus. These include additional library collections and data research support, research environment enhancements (shared research platforms, CFI top-ups and research support services), doctoral student support (which advanced its roll out to May 2020 in response to providing additional support to graduate students impacted by the pandemic, and housing and dual-career support to existing and incoming faculty members. The enhancements have been scaled to roll out at the same pace as faculty hires (with the exception of doctoral student support), such that infrastructural growth reflects and is able to support the faculty complement growth.

Campaign Phase (UBCV)

The Campaign phase builds on the success of the Accelerate phase – with the goal of bringing in additional discipline-leading scholars, as well as continuing to further the learning and research ecosystem across the institution.

The concept of the Campaign phase was tested by an extremely successful pilot, which observed six positions being matched across Faculties immediately after its inception – with positions distributed across Arts, Forestry, Education, Applied Science and Medicine in historical Indigenous Art, conservation, counselling, naval architecture, pathology and substance use.

The pilot demonstrated the immense interest from donors across the UBCV campus, and an additional eight and ten positions (from the 72) were released in 2021 and 2022 respectively to meet increasing demand while the details of longer-term funding for the Campaign phase are being finalized.

The positions allocated in 2021 have all been committed – with positions spanning across Applied Science, Medicine, Sauder and Arts in mechanical engineering, nursing (Indigenous cultural health and cardiovascular), ALS, respiratory medicine, pediatrics, accounting theory and Persian studies. Additionally, nine of the ten positions for 2022 are the subject of active discussions with donors across the Faculties of Medicine, Land and Food Systems, Science, Forestry, Applied Science and The Allard School of Law. The tenth position will be confirmed shortly, very likely in the Faculty of Dentistry.

The Campaign Phase's financial model is currently being simplified based on initial feedback from Development to aid the discussions with prospective donors, and the enhancements to come will reflect similar components as the Accelerate phase with the goal of continuing to further UBC's pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning, research and scholarship.

While PAEI Accelerate was implemented across both campuses, the UBCO Campus has determined that it needs to put its available resources behind their plans for new buildings, and so will not be actively participating in the Campaign phase. Should donors approach the campus for new faculty positions, they will make determinations based on the individual cases.

Recommendation to the Board of Governors for Consideration

PAEI has been a tremendous success across both campuses and its implementation, while operating within the approved financial envelope, is closely monitored by the Executive Team, including both Provosts, VPFO, VPRI, and VP DAE. Given the demonstrable progress to date and current initiatives that are underway, the Executive Team is appreciative of the guidance and advice that the Academic Renewal Working Group (ARWG) has provided in shaping this historic investment from UBC (whose most recent meeting was held on March 8, 2021).

As the initiative has been almost fully developed, the ARWG has fulfilled its intended purpose as outlined in the Terms of Reference. The Executive Team would like to take this opportunity to thank the ARWG members for their valuable input, discussions and time – and recommend the dissolution of the working group.
