

FROM THE OFFICE OF

Dr. Joanne MacLean
President & Vice-Chancellor



PART 1: A UNIVERSITY IS ITS PEOPLE

I have been your president for only a very short time but I have been your colleague for more than six years. As President, I understand that people are at the heart of our past, our present, and our future. After all, our university is built on our shared commitment to UFV, its values and its strategic directions. Together we “change lives and build community” and recognize that learning occurs 24/7, wherever we may be. Together we will make our university an even better place to work, create, and contribute to our internal and external communities’ development.

When we are at our best, we are forward looking, caring, and collaborative. There will always be more that unites us than separates us and, as we have seen at UFV, people of diverse interests, talents and priorities can produce remarkable results. Caring about our constant improvement will not only make UFV a better institution, it will also make UFV a better place for all of us to be.

In this first communication with you I would like to set out my thinking about our work together and open the opportunity for constructive dialogue that enables us to understand better our institutional commitments.

We serve our region through a broad range of education, training, research, and community development across our several campuses. Our students are our first priority and they have told us they feel we care about them. They are as diverse as Canada and British Columbia with dreams and plans as big and bold as our nation and our province. We treat each student as an individual

learner with unique attributes and goals and I am convinced that as a vibrant learner-focused institution UFV is ready to prepare tomorrow’s citizens for an ever-changing world.

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We help our students grow, and in turn, we learn from their insight, wisdom, and diversity. To help others, we need to enable ourselves to prosper and grow. If we do not have our professional development needs met, we cannot enable others. This is why I am committed to providing every employee on our campuses with support, encouragement, and an environment conducive to both good work and the fun that should come with it.

We all recognize that we live in changing times. Our enlivened focus on Indigenous needs, radical shifts in the ways in which we communicate, the far-reaching impacts of technology, challenging geopolitical shifts juxtaposing globalization and nationalism, all demand our awareness and openness as we empower our students and one another to adapt successfully to change.

As President, I have a unique leadership privilege and you have my undivided commitment to this role. You will always get the best from me as your President. And we are all role models who must portray strong positive values, demonstrate concern for the well-being of others, and seek to inspire others to achieve. Let there be no doubt that we will all need to be leaders at times and followers at other times and both are honorable and vital roles.

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TEAMWORK, TRANSPARENCY, COLLABORATION

I value, and will seek to engender, a culture of team and teamwork at every level. This is the coach in me! We will all need to juggle many varied and often shifting priorities and yet still find ways to pull together. As leaders, we need to be collectively strategic — aiming to achieve our goals and keep our eyes on the prize — positive, empowering, collaborative, and engaging in multi-way communication. I will do my best to exercise leadership that engenders teamwork, relationship building, honesty, and transparency. As has been said, none of us is as effective as all of us together and no single person can accomplish alone what we can accomplish as a team.

I will be active and visible on campus, personable and positive, and will work towards contributing to a culture where people are energized and take pride in their contributions. I will seek out the thoughts of constituent groups, encouraging best ideas and creativity that will drive our success and bolster the University's reputation. I will act in order to achieve strong working relationships with faculty, staff, students, the FSA, and the UFV Board of Governors, and with Indigenous communities, alumni, international partners, donors, governments, and Fraser Valley communities.

DIGITAL LEARNING EVERYWHERE

Earlier, I cited the changing world in which we work. I would like to address two major changes that directly affect universities and their operations. Now and into the future we will find our learners engaged with one another digitally, not in person, and even when physically together we will see them still working digitally. (Who among us has not seen a couple in a restaurant each on their own

phones. We can only hope that they are not texting each other!)

I do not believe that this “new” way of interpersonal engagement will fully exclude face-to-face classroom-based learning activities; however, these traditional educational experiences will recede steadily in both frequency and importance.

Learning everywhere, through varied and diverse means will become, if it is not already, the norm and not an innovation. What changes will we need to undertake to maximize the opportunities this presents?

First, we must embrace the increasing collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of knowledge. Our discipline-based scholarship is now heavily complemented by interdisciplinary studies and experiential learning. Some Faculties are drawn together by common themes: Health Sciences and Professional Studies are examples. These fields apply learning from diverse disciplines or forge new, often applied, fields. In other realms of study, traditional core disciplines are interacting as for example do history, literature, and political thought. We can expect more changes, even as some dig deeper in traditional sub-disciplinary ways. Complementing this, the solitary scholarship mode of the past has already become team-oriented in the sciences, health, and in business. And in the social sciences and humanities, too, research is in flux from an individually focused environment to a mix of individual and group scholarship.

Second, the digital revolution has just begun — though to many it might feel like it has been a relentless tsunami for decades. The internet and web, though in development earlier, only came on the scene 30 years ago and only became mainstream as some of our current

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undergraduate students were born. The impact of information technology and digitization will continue apace and will multiply each year in a way to make the original Moore's Law (things double every two years) seem quaintly conservative.

As was noted in our UFV Education Plan, Learning Everywhere, the K-12 Curriculum Redesign will affect high school leavers. "These learners will have experienced years of a learner-centred, personalized, concept-based and competency-driven curriculum in flexible learning environments with novel modes of assessment, including portfolios. They will have been given and assumed more responsibility for their own learning than previous generations."

It is also possible that adult learners, international students and others may have little to no experience with personalized, concept-based learning and may need considerable time and support to adapt to an ever-changing learning environment. In either case, there are increasing expectations by students, parents, governments, taxpayers, and others for ever-higher degrees of accountability, quality assurance, and results. Universities must now provide not just credentials but also assurances on what students have learned to earn those credentials.

EMBRACING CHANGE, HONOURING OUR ROOTS

To address these changes we too must change, carefully, deliberately but inevitably. Learning Everywhere is realistic about the demands we will face. We will need to act in concert with one another as we adapt to meet shifting and emerging educational trends. And we must make these changes without abandoning our core values and standards. The changes that influence us

are unavoidable, are (in many cases) positive, and are fundamentally important to our evolution. As President, I will communicate often about where we stand in the balancing act that allows us to stay true to our roots while embracing the opportunities of the future.

As students' views of learning change we will provide opportunities for team-based learning, and engage students in both reflective and service-based learning. Novel learning initiatives like CityStudio, embodied and performance pedagogy, mindfulness-based teaching, and e-portfolio learning tools are already being led by UFV faculty members. We will support this type of innovative teaching approach that drives learning everywhere, and emphasizes a model of civic engagement and social responsibility. Our faculty seek to put the learner first, and many study and contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning, at home and abroad.

I often reflect on the intersections of my experiences as a coach, teacher, researcher, and academic leader for more than 30 years. I have seen first-hand the value of team work, respect for others, the centrality of creativity, resourcefulness, and the empowerment of others, the role of listening in understanding and creating true impact; and I have seen the vital need to transform values into behaviours in building a better, more just society.

I hope that each of us will further our individual practices of listening, learning and reflecting, and encourage one another to do the same. Above all, I will always seek to practice what I teach. There is no better model for authentic leadership than that and I expect you all to hold me to account for this.

To Be Continued ... Part 2 coming September 10, 2018