

**Premier Gordon Campbell
University of British Columbia Announcement at QLT
October 18, 2002**

Check Against Delivery

We have a great province, and all of us know that our history is based on our natural resources. The most important national resource we have, though, is not the mountains, and it's not the ocean – it is the people who live here.

It is great to have an opportunity to talk a little bit about some of B.C.'s successes, and QLT is a perfect place to be doing this. QLT is Canada's tenth-fastest-growing technology company. It has created a mark for British Columbia in biotechnology and in research.

Dr. Julia Levy was a microbiology department professor in 1981 at the University of British Columbia when QLT was first formed. Since then, QLT – with UBC graduates – has created innovative photodynamic therapies that have put B.C. on the international biotech map.

Every high-tech company in the province will tell you that the most important resource they have is entrepreneurial, creative, thoughtful people who have the training and education they need to build the future in British Columbia.

Over the last decade we have seen high-tech employment increase by 68 per cent – three times the overall employment rate. Sixty per cent of our high-tech executives in British Columbia say that attracting and retaining skilled workers is one of the most significant concerns they face.

When we took office last year, the number of degrees per capita granted in B.C. in computer science was 75 per cent of the national average. In electrical engineering, it was only 48 per cent.

That's why we committed to doubling the number of annual graduates in computer science and computer and electrical engineering. The current number of graduates in these areas is 880 per year.

To meet our commitment, Shirley Bond, our Minister of Advanced Education, will be investing \$150 million over the next five years to add 3,400 new student spaces in British Columbia.

Those spaces will be added at UBC, SFU, UNBC and UVic. In April we announced that 825 new high-tech student spaces would be created this year. Of those, 351 will be going to the University of British Columbia.

Today I am pleased to be here with Minister Bond, who has been working tirelessly over the last year to launch a \$95-million capital program for UBC, SFU, UVic and the University of Northern British Columbia.

Specifically, I am announcing \$46 million for the University of British Columbia campus. The \$46 million in capital funding will go toward the expansion of three facilities:

- \$17.6 million will build a new addition to the UBC computer science complex.
- \$21.9 million will expand the McLeod electrical engineering and computer engineering building and the civil and mechanical engineering building.
- \$6.8 million will be for extra space in the planned new chemical and biological engineering building.

That's 10,000 square metres of facilities, including classrooms, teaching and research labs, student study space and additional office space for more faculty and students. This is an investment in the future of young people in our province and an investment in the future of technology in our province.

We know we have the people here who have the talent and the ability to drive British Columbia's technology industry so it is one of the top 10 in the world by the year 2006. To do that we have to work together.

We have to bring together the private sector, we have to bring together the public sector, and we have to make sure the universities and the colleges are responding to the needs and demands of our students who want to be part of this exciting new industry.

High-tech contributes four per cent of B.C.'s GDP today. Despite the occurrence of 9-11, B.C.'s high-tech employment grew by 5.2 per cent in 2001. High-tech accounted for 10 per cent of all employment growth in B.C. last year.

High-tech is a critical part of our economic future, and as everyone in the high tech and biotechnology industries will tell you, for them to reach their full potential, we have to provide our young people with the education and the opportunities they deserve.

I am pleased to be here to announce today \$46 million for the University of British Columbia to make sure we meet those goals. We're looking forward to making additional announcements at the University of Victoria, SFU and UNBC in the weeks ahead. Thank you very much.