



Announcement of Campus 2020: Thinking Ahead

**Premier Gordon Campbell
July 17, 2006**

I want to say thanks to you, Tony Knowles, for your exceptional leadership here at BCIT.

BCIT is one of our crown jewels in the advanced education system in British Columbia.

I'm pleased to be here with Yona, who is a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia, and with Lindsay, who is a BCIT student. They're going to share a little bit of their educational experiences with you in a few minutes.

I also want to thank the class of students who are here at the summer camp to explore trade and technologies.

As we see these young students and we hear from Lindsay and Yona, it's pretty important for us to recognize that the quality of our life in British Columbia is really going to be directly impacted by the quality of the gift of education to young people across this province, and it's important for us to remember that the world is changing.

There are seismic shifts taking place in the world that are demographic shifts, shifts in technology, a shift in how the economy works. All of those shifts have changed the educational landscape, and one of our goals is to establish a learning landscape in British Columbia that responds to the world in which we live but, more importantly, imagines the kind of educational system we will need over the next 10-to-20 years and responds to that, starting today.

I went to university a long time ago now, and it's important to recognize that students today have a totally different background. They have many different ways of learning. They're much more interested in being out in the world than being in the classroom or in the lecture hall. And one of the things that we have to do is take the incredible asset we have built in the province of British Columbia over the last 30 years — our college system, our university system, BCIT, our private and public institutions — and make sure that they are responding in a constructive, positive and imaginative manner to the world in which we live.

Seventy per cent of all future job opportunities that we can envisage right now in British Columbia are going to require what we today call post-secondary education. Even that term, "post-secondary education," suggests where we've been in the past, and it may in fact sometimes constrain us from thinking about where we should be in education in the future.

At some point, people decided we would have kindergarten, elementary school, intermediate and middle grades, high school, post-secondary education, advanced post-secondary education, trades education. All of these activities come together in a way that's got to be, I think, both homogenous and thoughtful as we try to provide for a public response in terms of our advanced education system — a system that meets the needs of learners in every corner of the province in every way that we can.

We have over the last five years invested significant dollars in advancing research through the Leading Edge Endowment Fund, through the Michael Smith Foundation, and through regional economic development chairs.

We've advanced hundreds of millions of dollars to improve our universities, our colleges and our institutes. We've seen two new universities opened up: Thompson Rivers University and the University of British Columbia Okanagan.

We've seen new medical schools opened up in Prince George and Victoria, and we have another one that we're planning for Kelowna. We've expanded nurse training spaces across the province. We've doubled the number of computer scientists and electrical engineering graduates that we have in British Columbia.

All of those responses from government were responses to the shortcomings that we felt that we had today. But it takes time for that to move its way through the system so that it can provide the full framework of opportunity that learners deserve across our province.

It's important for us to move beyond the "hardware" of education and think of the software — for us to think about, most importantly, the students that will come and take advantage of our advanced education system in British Columbia.

How can we do that? How can we challenge ourselves to move away from where we were and look to where we are going in a way that's imaginative, that's open, that's thoughtful and that's leading?

I am asking, and Murray is asking, for nothing short of a leadership framework for advanced education in the province of British Columbia.

When we talk about Campus 2020 and we talk about thinking ahead, we're talking about imagining the future that we want to have for advanced education — not rationalizing what we've got, not coasting to the future, because we should know this: if we coast, we will fall back. We want to be going forward.

We want to be moving forward in British Columbia with an advanced education system that responds clearly to the needs of students in every part of our province and takes advantage of the new technologies and of new institutional collaborations that we're starting to see develop across the province.

In fact, today, as we launch this program, I should be upfront with you: neither Minister Coell nor I nor the government have all the answers.

We have lots of questions, and we're asking the public, university leaders, college leaders, students, labour, business and other interested parties to talk to us about what they think we should be trying to do to take full advantage of the world in which we live.

As we launch Campus 2020, our goal is to provide the leadership framework that will guide our actions as we go through the years ahead.

The minister and I have asked Geoff Plant to become a special adviser with regard to this. Geoff is with us today. Geoff, thank you very much for coming.

Geoff will help guide this consultation across the province. He'll seek input from students, from the public and private educational institutions, from Aboriginal and multicultural organizations and from labour and business. He will draw on the work of several international experts who have agreed to draft white papers or discussion documents on key issues such as international post-secondary education, Aboriginal education, trades and skills training, e-learning and technology, the overall design of our advanced education system in British Columbia and the quality of our advanced education teaching and research opportunities.

Geoff is going to be assisted by three internationally recognized experts on advanced education: Dr. Harold Shapiro, the former president of Princeton University; Sara Diamond, president of the Ontario College of Art; and Dr. Graham Smith, a leader in alternative education studies with a focus on Aboriginal education.

This is not an examination that will say what's wrong. It will take what's right about our exceptional advanced education system in British Columbia, and it will build on it.

We will tap into the creativity of those who are involved directly to be sure that we are charting a course for the future that will meet the needs of British Columbians.

This process will take a number of months, but we expect a report and final recommendations by the spring of next year.

This is really about imagining a future, establishing an agenda for action and making recommendations directly to government, and Geoff Plant will be doing that to the minister and myself in the spring of 2007.

Here are some of the things that we have to ask ourselves.

How can we be prepared for the changes that are taking place in our world?

They are social changes. They're demographic changes. They're the aging changes that we're seeing in our world. They're also economic changes. Over the next 12 years we'll see a million new job openings in the province of British Columbia, but today we can only see 650,000 young people graduating in that same period of time.

We've doubled our capacity in a number of areas, but there is much that we have to do. We may have to think about doing things differently. We will certainly have to think about doing things that respond and adapt to the world in which we live.

For example, by 2015 the number of trades workers retiring in British Columbia will surpass the number of new trade workers that we're graduating. That creates a challenge for us. It's a challenge we can see today.

We want to respond today so that we can move through 2015 with the same sense of opportunity and accomplishment that we have today.

How do we meet that demand, though, is the critical question.

We want to close the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. How does our post-secondary education system help achieve that goal, and what will we need to do, what will we have to change, what will our institutions have to change, to accommodate a whole new generation of Aboriginal learners?

How do we make most of the ever-increasing ties that we have with the Asia Pacific and the thousands of Asian students who come to learn in British Columbia?

Those are challenges for us. They're also opportunities. With imagination, with confidence, we can deal with those. That's what we're hoping that Campus 2020 will do.

We've faced these challenges in British Columbia before.

Forty years ago baby-boomers fuelled the last major expansion of post-secondary capacity in British Columbia and the opening of Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria and the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Today those same baby-boomers are starting to think about retirement. Some of our universities and colleges themselves are facing a 40-percent faculty turnover in the next decade as a result of that trend.

How do we manage that shift? It will be truly significant for all of us. How do we take advantage of it when we know that it's happening?

How can we act to adapt and apply technological change to help us deal with that with students across the province of British Columbia?

Just think about how technology itself has transformed even the simple day-to-day experience of learning. Rows of library index cards are now replaced with ranks of monitors to access on-line catalogues. Typewriters have been replaced by computers, and now desk-top computers are being replaced by laptops and campus-wide wireless networks.

I can remember when I was in university and I used to type away on my papers. And do you know what was a great invention then? It was this stuff called Whiteout. Carbon paper was gone. It was Whiteout that we used.

Today there's still Whiteout, but it's not much use on computer screens, where you just go back, you check your ideas and you move it forward. The world has changed. Today, lectures are being shared across the province via networks and podcasts.

Registrations at B.C. Campus, the access point for B.C. post-secondary on-line courses, have doubled in the last two years. Universities, colleges and places like BCIT are no longer isolated bastions of education. They are a critically important part of the fabric of our social and our economic life across the province.

It's important for us to open the doors of our institutions to all British Columbians so that they feel comfortable and confident when they to learn, because there's going to be no more important initiative that we undertake than establishing an environment and a culture of learning in the province of British Columbia — learning for our kids before they get to school, learning for our young adults after they leave school and learning for people like us for a long time to come.

We want to be a province that's recognized for leading and for the education initiative that we can undertake in responding to the needs of the people that live here. This is not just about meeting challenges. It's about getting ahead of the activity and the changes that we see taking place.

When my kids were growing up, I used to read them a little story about a bear, and the story basically that you have to be able to think inside, outside and upside down. That's what we're asking Campus 2020 to do — get outside of our institutions and look in. Get inside of our institutions and look out. Take the things that we've taken for granted and turn them on their head and see if they're working the way they should.

We want to use this a way of generating ideas and as a way of bringing the public into our advanced education system, of including the private sector and identifying their needs and the goals and objectives that they've had but, most importantly, of saying to students in British Columbia: this is the place you want to learn. This is your province. We want to give you the gift of learning — of learning new technologies; of learning trades; of learning and opening your minds to new inquiries, of new ways of doing things. Because we know in the world that we live in today, we actually will depend on the young people that we have in our province today to shape our future tomorrow.

This is a challenge that I give all British Columbians. I welcome it. I think it should be exciting, it should exhilarating, because it will lead to an even better education system for all of us, anywhere in the province, any time in the province. We want learners, we want people, to have access to the tools they need to build the lives they want.

Thank you very much.



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