



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Faculty of Dentistry

# **IMPACT 2020-2025**

TRAILBLAZERS IN ORAL HEALTH FOR BC AND BEYOND

UBC Faculty of Dentistry Strategic Plan

The University of British Columbia Faculty of Dentistry acknowledges that the university's two main campuses are located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Musqueam and Syilx (Okanagan) peoples, and that UBC's activities take place on Indigenous lands throughout British Columbia and beyond.

# UBC DENTISTRY COVID RESPONSE

The Faculty of Dentistry's Strategic Plan "IMPACT 2020-2025: Trailblazers in Oral Health for B.C. and Beyond" was originally introduced mid-March, 2020 at an alumni event held prior to the Pacific Dental Conference. Our UBC campus launch event was planned for April, 2020. Unfortunately, with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the British Columbia Provincial Health Officer called a public health state of emergency leading to closures, including all UBC on-campus activities. All of our academic programs swiftly transitioned to online delivery; a drastic action taken over a single weekend. In order to transverse the disruption of COVID-19, Dean MacDougall convened a COVID-19 Rapid Response Leadership Team to initiate planning for our academic and research programs, as well as general operations. Team members include: Drs. Andrea Esteves, Eli Whitney, Riki Gottlieb, Jolanta Aleksejuniene, Zul Kanji, Denise Laronde, Chris Wyatt, and Rick Carvalho. UBC Dentistry's Nobel Biocare Oral Health Centre remained open for emergency care by volunteer faculty, but all other patient care by students was suspended. All non-COVID-19 research activities were also suspended with laboratories and core facilities closing.

By mid-May the Faculty of Dentistry was able to begin the process of slowly reopening, focusing initially on our graduate programs with resumption of patient care, and then in June resuming clinical simulation and patient care for our DMD and dental hygiene students—ensuring the clinical competencies of the Class of 2020. In September, through the hard work, resilience, and diligence of our faculty and staff, The Faculty of Dentistry began the 2020/21 academic year with preclinical and patient care for all programs. This was possible through development of safety guidelines approved by UBC and the B.C. Ministry of Health, various planning scenarios, and collaborations with other dental schools, the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry and the American Association of Dental Education.

The COVID-19 pandemic radically upended our lives both personally and professionally. Despite the many challenges, UBC Dentistry's faculty, staff, students, and alumni are finding innovative ways to contribute to creative solutions and give back to our community. Our strategic plan, IMPACT 2020-2025, provides a strong foundation for our ability to transverse the devastating phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this adversity, we forged a strong TeamSmile spirit rooted in a bond of kindness, understanding, compassion and tolerance. More importantly, living through this pandemic has taught us that we can adapt and change. Despite the disruption, we have made transformative, innovative changes that demonstrate our ability to be "Trailblazers in Oral Health for B.C. and beyond".

*Dean Mary MacDougall*

# MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

**Still relatively new to the university and the Faculty of Dentistry, as I look forward I am struck — and inspired — by opportunity.** We are poised, and empowered, to make a meaningful difference in multiple ways: through innovative and dynamic educational programming; through impactful research; through facilitation of a more systemic approach to oral health; and through capacity and connection-building in the dental and dental hygiene community across our Faculty, the University of British Columbia (UBC), Metro Vancouver and the province of British Columbia. There are challenges, both internal and external, but we have a solid foundation for continued achievement and progress, and an extraordinary sense of pride and commitment to excellence.

The process of developing this plan has been one of dialogue and discovery toward building consensus. We have engaged extensively with students, faculty, staff, alumni and partners, interacting with over 250 individuals through the consultation period. Initiated by surveys of faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders, we have solicited input around strengths, impediments and priorities for attention and change. Several members of the Faculty participated in targeted discussions to develop the components of the plan, with some colleagues offering feedback through a dedicated portal. We also conducted targeted meetings with alumni and other partners to seek their advice and guidance. We then convened three times as a Faculty to share the emerging strategic framework and to refine ideas. These comprehensive team working sessions were pivotal in shaping the plan and in building a shared sense of purpose, direction and vision.

The Faculty's strategic plan is closely aligned with the university's plan: Shaping UBC's Next Century. We have defined our strategies around the same four core areas — People, Education, Research and Engagement — and several institutional priorities pervade our plan, including our focus on educational innovation, student research experience, faculty and staff recruitment and retention, wellness, and public relevance. Our commitment to Indigenous students, faculty and staff, and partners — also consistent with university focus — is not new, but we recognize that our impact in dentistry is still nascent. In collaboration with other UBC efforts, we are committed to making a marked expansion of our efforts.

Foundational to this plan is our intent to become a trailblazer in dental education and a resource for all members of the dentistry community — not just for our students. Given the pace of change in dentistry, our capacity to adapt, evolve and reshape is critical for us to remain relevant. We must promote and support the development and skill set of our faculty and staff; we must ensure that alumni engage in our mission through teaching and their personal continuing education; we must renew our processes and practices to ensure continued improvement in all that we do; and we must act as a thoughtful partner in advancing the state of oral health education and care and in active advocacy.

The strategic plan presents a clear, precise direction for the Faculty and a road map for action. It seeks to guide, rather than prescribe, and it will be operationalized through successive annual plans that enable focus yet promote agility. Our success in implementation is fully dependent on our team of diverse individuals who together make up the Faculty, and on the partners with whom we collaborate. Thank you to everyone who participated in, and contributed to, the creation of this robust plan. I look forward to working together as we strive to be — and remain — trailblazers in oral health for British Columbia and beyond.

# CHANGING CONTEXT

**Shifts in the landscape around us — in society, in health care and dentistry, and in academia — together present opportunities and challenges that must shape our actions as a Faculty.**

An aging and geographically dispersed population, increased focus on public health and prevention, new advancing technologies, and new models of team- and community-based care and patient-centred care mean that oral health practice needs to evolve to ensure that we are collectively meeting the expectations of students, patients and funders. The growing digitization and corporatization of dentistry are shifting the dynamics of the profession, and we must prepare our students accordingly. Moreover, there are pressing challenges around access to dental care and education in the province, as well as globally, and these must be addressed.

Similar forces are also changing the face of research and education broadly. University budgets are under pressure, and our Faculty's provincial funding is fixed. The research funding environment is increasingly competitive, yet investment requirements in research platforms, including data and systems, equipment and reagents, are escalating. Collaboration in research is a growing imperative, driven largely by the need for interdisciplinary solutions to complex problems, but also by the economic need for scale. In addition, there is a progressive shift toward translational research and innovation, in part due to opportunity and in part due to the associated prospects of commercialization.

Funding constraints and shifting expectations of learners and employers are also forcing universities to reassess their approaches to teaching and learning. Competency based curricula and expanded emphasis on active, online, community-based and experiential learning are gradually redefining the educational landscape. There is heightened institutional attention on student diversity and wellness. Universities today are expected to help prepare graduates for increasingly diverse and evolving career paths, knowing that many of the employment opportunities pursued by this generation cannot yet even be imagined.

We must take these external factors into account as we develop our priorities and strategies. We also need to recognize the assets and limitations of our Faculty and build intentionally from our current position. We need to leverage the strengths that define us today: research excellence; innovation in education; outstanding clinical facilities; talented faculty and staff; excellent students; and high levels of alumni and stakeholder engagement. It is imperative that we take advantage of opportunities enabled by increasingly sophisticated technology and ensure that we invest appropriately. In parallel, we must address our weaknesses: our relatively limited scale as an organization; inequities between appointment models that create friction across the Faculty; dated research facilities; and legacy and structural issues impairing faculty and staff morale and sense of connection to a cohesive team. Again, it is imperative that we find ways to manage or mitigate these as we move forward.

# OPPORTUNITY

From those elements that characterize the Faculty, we believe there are three that collectively position us differentially for success. First, we are the **sole universitybased provider** of dental, dental hygiene and graduate speciality education in British Columbia and we take this responsibility seriously, working hard to ensure the quality of our academic enterprise, to integrate a public service mentality in all that we do, and to play a leadership role in the profession. Secondly, we are committed to sustaining a **balance between our clinical educational training and research**, something from which our patients, students, faculty, and staff all benefit. Third, as part of the UBC, must collaborate with fellow colleagues, leverage existing connections and make new ones, and access facilities that are amongst the best in the world. Together, these three aspects provide a strategic advantage providing a foundation for success. They enable us to attract outstanding people to our team, promote and support excellence in all that we do, and work with sector partners to address the most critical questions and issues in oral health.

# VISION, PURPOSE AND VALUES

We have refreshed the foundation of our strategy to reflect our changing landscape and to reassert our transformative aspirations. Bold and compelling, these vision, purpose and values statements provide a compass for the Faculty and reinforce what matters most to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, patients and partners. Developed by, and for, the Faculty, they are also consistent with the themes of inclusion, innovation and collaboration that underpin the university's strategic plan.

## **VISION**

Trailblazers in oral health for British Columbia and beyond

## **PURPOSE**

Advancing knowledge and practice in oral and general health through progressive education, innovative research, and serviceoriented community engagement

## **VALUES**

Integrity, Compassion, Inclusion, Innovation, Transparency

With our renewed vision and purpose, we boldly state that oral health (dental hygiene, dentistry and specialty training) is integral to general health and that we strive for impact provincially, nationally and globally. We emphasize that we must work in collaboration among ourselves and with others to succeed. We also reaffirm our commitment to balance across the Faculty between education, research and engagement.

With our revised values, we are setting the standard for our behaviour and shaping the filter through which we will make decisions. The values reflect our conviction that a diverse and representative community not only creates opportunity for traditionally disadvantaged individuals, but also strengthens the Faculty and enriches the experience of all stakeholders. More broadly, they demonstrate our understanding that doing good and being good are fundamental to excellence in oral health.

# OUTCOMES

Informed by discussion and debate through the planning process, we have articulated three overarching outcomes for the Faculty. These have shaped the development of the components of the plan. They have also shaped the metrics that we will use to manage implementation and support accountability. They accordingly provide an ongoing strategic reference point for the Faculty.

## ***RELEVANCE.***

In a world of expanding choice, we must ensure that we remain relevant for our students, our patients, our faculty and staff, and our partners. This demands careful attention to the shifting needs of these stakeholder groups, to the evolving world in which we operate, and to the actions and accomplishments of our peers.

## ***IMPACT.***

It is not enough for us to be outstanding educators and researchers. We also need to ensure that our activities make a meaningful difference in the lives of our graduates; in the development of our people, (i.e. students, faculty and staff); in the practice of oral health; and to our serviced community. Patient care and experience are ultimately the most important test of impact, and these perspectives are paramount in all that we do.

## ***EFFECTIVENESS.***

We will also judge ourselves by our capacity to achieve relevance and impact in ways that are financially and socially responsible. Resources are finite, and we need to ensure that we work in ways that generate results without undue stress on our people, budgets, partnerships or relationships.

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

In alignment with the UBC strategic plan, we have defined our strategies with reference to four core areas: **People, Education, Research and Engagement**. These domains are mutually reinforcing, and each of the strategies has connection across more than one area, but the framework ensures that we retain a balanced approach to ongoing development of the Faculty. Many of the strategies are related to broader efforts across UBC, including those focused on student wellness, research funding, and Indigenous engagement. We will coordinate their progression with the activities of our colleagues, taking advantage of available resources (internal and external) where appropriate.

The following are the strategies that will guide the Faculty over the next five years:

## **PEOPLE**

1. Student, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention for strength and diversity
2. Renewal in structures and practices to enable personal and organizational effectiveness
3. Reinforcement of morale and connection across the Faculty and alumni

## **EDUCATION**

4. Curriculum and program development to support diverse career pathways
5. Investment in practices and technologies that advance excellence in teaching and learning
6. Enhancement of learning environment to promote student success

## **RESEARCH**

7. Alignment of research and scholarship to optimize contributions to new knowledge and impact practice
8. Expanded efforts to secure research funding through multiple channels
9. Coordinated and targeted upgrading of research spaces and facilities

## **ENGAGEMENT**

10. Integration of community service with learning opportunities for students
11. Advocacy for systematic improvement in oral health care and education
12. Strategic approach to peer and partner collaborations to ensure mutual benefit

# PEOPLE

Our strategic planning surveys confirmed for us that people are the foundation of our continued success and that we must address some of the structural and cultural challenges that are frustrating our efforts. Some of these can be addressed with new processes or systems; others will take time as their resolution is dependent on new attitudes and behaviours based on a team culture. We are firmly committed to making real progress; we know that this is a priority, and nothing is more important.

## **1. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.**

Clinical educators play an integral role in the Faculty's educational mission, and we are fortunate that so many contribute to the UBC Faculty of Dentistry through teaching and mentorship, research and connection with the profession and community. We must — and will — establish appointment models and practices that create, calibrate and sustain more full-time clinical faculty. We will continue to conduct proactive recruitment to fill faculty and staff gaps in our desired Faculty complement and build a more inclusive team. We will enhance recruitment and retention efforts, as well as reinforce pathways for Indigenous students. And, more broadly, we will consider more holistic admission practices to enhance the diversity of our student population and to ensure a close and ongoing fit with the values and evolving demands of the profession.

## **2. DEVELOPMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS.**

Consistent with our goal of investing in our people and organization, we will strengthen and formalize onboarding, mentorship and training to enable faculty and staff to work productively, and with purpose, in our team culture. We will adopt a more intentional approach to progression and succession planning, not least to address pending faculty retirements. Shared governance is a priority, and we will enhance structures and practices to help ensure decisionmaking through building alignment or consensus. Respecting individual duties and priorities, we will endeavour to promote and facilitate a greater sense of equity across faculty and staff. We will create mechanisms to support faculty and staff in academic and operational collaborations with colleagues in the Faculty and across the university. In addition to connecting our people with opportunity, these partnerships will help us both leverage scarce resources and extend our impact.

## **3. MORALE AND CONNECTION.**

We know that not all faculty and staff feel fully engaged or valued, and that there are silos within the Faculty that are impairing effectiveness and cohesion. It is imperative that we create a stronger sense of both identity and team through enhanced communication; that we foster an inclusive culture; and that we celebrate our many successes. We will amplify our efforts to build trust and awareness through two-way communication across the Faculty, as well as with alumni and partners. Mental health is a priority across the university, and we will promote and support student, faculty and staff wellness through both Faculty of Dentistry and UBC programs. We will facilitate opportunities for all members of the Faculty to come together. We will work hard to initiate and sustain a program of events and activities. **#UBCFODTEAMSMILE** is an essential representation of this intent.



# EDUCATION

The Faculty of Dentistry offers a wide range of outstanding education programs and is recognized for its innovation in both curriculum and delivery. Our undergraduate and graduate applicant numbers are strong, and our students profit from the expertise, experience and dedication of our faculty and staff. Most of our alumni remain and practise in British Columbia and many are highly engaged with our students as clinical faculty. But we must continue to evolve and strengthen our educational proposition to keep pace with the changing demands of dentistry, expectations of our students, and possibilities enabled by evolving technology.

## **4. CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT.**

We will establish mechanisms to support ongoing renewal and refinement of our curriculum and programs for relevance, quality and sustainability. This is especially important given the breadth of our programming and our sustained focus on aligning offerings with alternate and emerging career pathways, in academia and in practice. We will continue to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and experience throughout the curriculum and other learning environments. We will seek ways to enrich learning and skills acquisition through clinical training. We will also explore and pursue innovations that strengthen the effectiveness of our teaching and the accessibility of our offerings. These include interdisciplinary and distributed education, both critical in our increasingly complex world and for a Faculty with a provincial mandate.

## **5. TEACHING EXCELLENCE.**

The quality of our teaching is integral to our vision and purpose, and we must do all that we can to ensure that we are supporting the growth and experience of both our instructors and students. Conscious of the impact of changes in our faculty complement and program offerings, we will review and realign teaching capacity, establishing protocols to sustain appropriate resource allocation within and across programs. We will bolster professional development to advance our teaching practices. Notably, we will enable more effective teaching through expanded access to, and training in, pedagogy and educational technology. Clinical simulation and artificial intelligence offer enormous opportunity, and we must integrate them purposefully, and with pace.

## **6. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.**

One of the clearest messages from our external survey was the crucial importance of preparing our graduates for the challenges of practice or academia. Our students, in turn, are seeking support so they can manage the workload and take full advantage of all learning opportunities while in the Faculty. We will assess opportunities to decompress and vary academic calendars to create opportunities for students to think, reflect, and excel, while enhancing their experience with advanced learning. We will provide more options for students to engage with different learning environments on and beyond campus, through which they will gain a sense of empowerment and build confidence and resilience. We will make changes to ensure the validity and reliability of student and teacher assessment.

# RESEARCH

Research excellence and innovation is one of the defining features of the UBC Faculty of Dentistry. Our research enterprise encompasses basic science, public health, and educational research, as well as clinical studies. This diversity is something to which we are committed, and we believe that it, in some ways, sets us apart. However, as the research landscape becomes ever more competitive and more reliant on costly technology and infrastructure, we need to complement the strength of our faculty members with institutional initiatives that channel and bolster their research and scholarship.

## **7. ALIGNMENT OF RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP.**

While continuing to celebrate and promote faculty member initiative and expertise, there are clear advantages to adopting a more strategic approach. These include scholarly and translational impact, productivity and reputation. We will work together to clarify areas of faculty strength and capacity for contribution to knowledge, practice and innovation. Facilitating interdisciplinary collaborations where relevant, we will then coalesce support and resources accordingly. We will channel recruitment, as well as undergraduate and graduate mentorship, to strengthen activity in these domains and create a more vibrant research community. Consistent with UBC's strategic plan, we will continue to embed opportunities for undergraduate and graduate research such that they benefit both the student experience and Faculty effectiveness in these areas of focus.

## **8. RESEARCH SUPPORT.**

Like all academic entities, we are under constant pressure to secure funding and support to enable research, scholarship and innovation. We are intent on augmenting our efforts to boost resources for research. In co-ordination with UBC's efforts, we will facilitate faculty support in grant applications, and we will strengthen connections with industry to foster collaboration and investment. We will strive to increase external visibility of Faculty excellence through promotion of faculty and staff for awards. This will position us differentially with funding agencies and industry partners. We will also seek opportunities to interface our research activities with UBC and UBC Health priorities, and in so doing, access additional and expanded sources of support.

## **9. RESEARCH SPACES AND FACILITIES.**

Our research facilities, with a few notable exceptions, are limited and dated, impairing both current faculty productivity and the recruitment of top researchers. We will take bold, yet pragmatic, transformative steps to renovate and expand existing Faculty research spaces, finding ways wherever possible to share facilities and leverage investment. We will review our clinical research model and ensure that it is effective and integrated into our research enterprise. And, in collaboration with colleagues across the university and partners throughout the sector, we will find ways to increase utilization and funding across core facilities (e.g., the Centre for High-Throughput Phenogenomics and the Frontier Clinical Research Centre).

# ENGAGEMENT

Closely related to our focus on people is our commitment to build upon our high levels of external engagement. We have a strong base of connections with alumni, professional associations and peer universities, and we are strengthening our government interactions. Now, we need to ensure that we are using these activities and relationships synergistically to extend our impact and help advance oral health and access to care. Our discussions with external partners suggest that we have the credibility and consent to do more; in fact, the Faculty is uniquely positioned to do more.

## **10. INTEGRATION OF SERVICE AND LEARNING.**

This is a critical need; we must ensure that our community engagement activities consistently fulfill the dual purpose of positive public outcomes, particularly in disadvantaged areas, and modelling student development and values. To do so, we will create senior management oversight and sustain an inventory of activity to support coordinated community engagement. We will realign existing, and set up new, educational engagement activities to integrate academic curriculum with community impact. We will also seek to leverage our Continuing Dental Education (CDE) program, including alumni and student interface, through the Patterson Dental Learning Centre and various study clubs, to help support broader community engagement goals and activities and to enhance lifelong learning.

## **11. ADVOCACY FOR SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT.**

There are some fundamental questions surrounding access to oral health, an aging population, and the diverse population in British Columbia, as well as across Canada. With sole academy status in the province, and as the lead dental school in Canada, the Faculty has an important role to play in helping understand and resolve these issues. We will map and assess our relationships across the sector and make changes to strengthen and sustain engagement. In alignment with the university's commitment to public relevance, we will work with government and other partners to heighten awareness of the impact of oral health professions related to general health. Through joint dialogue and planning, we will seek opportunities to enhance both the oral health education mission and access to care. Closer to home, we will invest in communications to enhance the visibility of the Faculty, increase external knowledge of the UBC Faculty of Dentistry, and facilitate connections with the expertise of our faculty and staff.

## **12. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIPS.**

Consistent with overall UBC strategy, we know that collaboration is integral to our success. We also know that we must prioritize and support partnerships that yield mutual benefit and foster new alliances in areas of shared, strategic importance. In conjunction with our efforts in community engagement, we will leverage renewed management oversight to ensure a coherent approach to Faculty partnerships. We will categorize and assess existing collaborations — provincial, national and global — and make changes to channel our resources effectively and enhance benefits. We will institute mechanisms to evaluate, and broaden awareness of, the impact of our partnerships. We will specifically seek to establish and sustain partnerships that strengthen Indigenous engagement and help foster oral health across Indigenous communities.

# ACCOUNTABILITY

We are firmly committed to this plan and will establish a dashboard of high-level strategic indicators to promote and facilitate accountability. By assessing outcomes in these key measures, we will be able to gauge how well we are advancing both our vision and mission as a Faculty and the three outcomes that underpin this plan: relevance, impact and effectiveness. The indicators will derive from our four core areas and associated strategies, but most will span more than one. We will confirm specific measures as we move forward; in some cases, new metrics may be put in place to reflect points of sharpened focus. Probable areas of focus are noted below:

- Quality of students
- Application numbers, quality, and acceptance rates
- Graduation rates and graduate outcomes
- Scholarly impact
- Contributions to policy and clinical practice
- Patient experience in our clinics
- Faculty and staff status and numbers
- Diversity of students, faculty and staff
- Student, faculty and staff satisfaction and culturalization
- Level of alumni engagement, including in continuing dental education
- Funding (all sources) and fiscal sustainability
- Faculty rankings

# IMPLEMENTATION

Having worked together as a team to build consensus on our direction and priorities, we must now continue to work together in implementation. The strategic and action plans will be fully transparent, as will our successes and setbacks in delivery. In addition to steady communication, we will endeavour to sustain the high levels of engagement experienced in the development phase. Specifically, building from the success of the strategic planning retreat, we will institute periodic opportunities for all members of the Faculty to review status, consider changes in the strategic landscape, and shape the action plan for the following year.

We will take a very deliberate approach to implementation and management to ensure traction. Consistent with our emphasis on shared governance and teamwork, executive leadership will oversee the implementation in their focus areas. An action plan will be developed annually that translates the strategies into concrete tasks and deliverables for the following year. We will be relentless in prioritization, ensuring that we focus on activities that drive impact, address pressing issues, or create the conditions for emerging initiatives to succeed. We will ensure that these activities are properly resourced and supported, and we will regularly evaluate our performance in achieving these milestones through a clearly defined metric to monitor outcomes. This focus on specific measures of progress will complement our higher-level evaluation of movement in the key strategic indicators (see “*Accountability*”).

# CALL TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

We are at a pivotal juncture in our evolution as a Faculty. This plan is a clear statement of intent. It is a platform for engagement and partnership. Last, it is an invitation to the oral health community to step up and work with us as we develop and then celebrate our successes. The next five years will be a demanding — but exciting and rewarding — journey as we move forward. This strategic plan will be the compass that charts our direction as trailblazers.



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