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A Time of Transition

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



VISION

A global alumni community for an exceptional UBC and a better world.

MISSION

To reach, inspire and engage alumni through lifelong enrichment by:

- Nourishing pride
- Empowering personal growth
- Supporting professional development
- Enabling contribution



As this report will demonstrate, the 2019-2020 year has been characterized by change, challenge, and the launch of new initiatives.

Some of those changes involved the replacement of key personnel, as is evident from this opening message. We both started in our current roles this year: Ross was elected Chair of the *alumni UBC* board at our AGM last September. Natalie took on the role of Executive Director of the association and of AVP, Alumni, this spring, having served in an interim capacity when Jeff Todd left us earlier in the year to pursue new opportunities.

We consider ourselves lucky to be leading such a talented and resourceful team of professional staff and alumni volunteers, and we are proud to present you with this report of *alumni UBC's* activities and successes over the past year.

From educational travel to expert panel discussions, from giving career advice to receiving it, and from social gatherings to volunteer opportunities, UBC alumni have had more opportunities to engage with each other and UBC than ever before. While we've continued to build upon existing and proven programming, we've also added some new learning opportunities, experiences, and services to the mix.

These initiatives have helped us to surpass our goals for the year by engaging more than 78,000 alumni. We've also seen a sizable increase in the number of more deeply and strategically involved alumni, who offer their guidance in consulting roles across both campuses, support vital UBC research, or act as ambassadors and influencers to help further UBC's goals.

One major undertaking this year has been the comprehensive review of our communications programming, with extensive audience research indicating the need for a few changes in approach, both in terms of what we communicate about and how we deliver it. We've learned that UBC's alumni have a particularly strong appetite for hearing about societal advancements and innovations. Future content choices will be guided by this and other insights we've gained into the shared preferences and interests of our alumni.

The biggest and most unexpected change, of course, has been that posed by COVID-19 and all its associated challenges – which only started to become apparent at the end of this reporting year. We had just launched an online career-coaching program and were in the process of setting up our communications office for a digital-first future – both initiatives that will stand us in good stead for serving our alumni in the months ahead and keeping them involved in the world of UBC.

A cohesive and connected UBC community is more important now than ever. A robust online strategy will be key to maintaining positive momentum, and we trust that our work over the past year will prove that physical distancing does not have to come at the expense of social distancing.



A background image showing a group of people, likely students or alumni, using mobile devices. In the foreground, a person's hand is holding a smartphone, with another hand visible in the background holding a tablet. The image is slightly blurred, emphasizing the text overlay.

Transforming *Trek* Magazine

Getting to know You

Trek magazine is one of our primary means of connecting with alumni and has consistently been well received by readers over the years. However, each new graduation class introduces a subtle demographic shift in our alumni audience – and over time this amounts to changes in the most prevalent audience reading habits and areas of interest.

How do we win the attention of our more recent grads without losing our established reader base? And with such a diverse audience representing multiple generations and spread across 150 countries, how do we identify content to please everyone? The only way to find out was to ask.

This year saw an extensive review of the magazine, at the heart of which was audience research in the form of surveys and focus groups. We discovered that our audience, although diverse, nevertheless share some common interests and perspectives:

CHANGE

Alumni are eager to learn about societal advancements and innovations that spark public discourse and positive global impact.

COMMUNITY

Alumni want to belong to a prestigious community that is personally meaningful.

CONNECTION

Alumni seek an ongoing connection to the university's past and present to feed their sense of nostalgia and pride in the institution.

CAREER

Alumni want support for their career development, particularly during the beginning and middle of their career path.

These core interests form the backbone of our approach to a redesigned and reimagined print publication for UBC alumni that will showcase the best of their university, nurture a sense of pride in its contributions and leadership, and reflect a dynamic and enviable community that is a force for change in the world.

A Digital-First Approach

While research showed that the print format of *Trek* magazine is read more than its online equivalent, it also demonstrated that a growing proportion of our audience habitually seek their news and entertainment from online sources.

A major recommendation to emerge from this review was for the expansion of the *Trek* magazine brand into an overarching online communications brand that delivers compelling stories, useful information and up-to-the-minute UBC news and commentary to keep alumni connected with UBC all year long.

Although the print magazine is not going to disappear, it will be supplemented by a rich and dynamic website, along with a robust digital strategy that delivers more content, in a variety of formats, at regular intervals, and via multiple media platforms.



Supporting Career Growth

A priority area for serving our alumni is career development. Over the past year, alumni have been able to select from an impressive and ever-expanding library of resources, aimed at both recent graduates and mid-career professionals.

Our career development strategy focuses on five areas:

- Career Exploration
- Career Transition
- Communities and Networks
- Leadership Development
- Further Education

These are explored via a large variety of courses, webinars, workshops, blog posts, and podcasts. The presenting experts are typically volunteers drawn from our own alumni, a powerful network of well-educated professionals representing countless different career paths.

This year, we launched two new career programs. One is an 18-month series on leadership that launched in October. UBC President and Vice-Chancellor Santa Ono kicked things off at an intimate and informal evening event by sharing some of the insights gained from his high-profile roles in academic administration. The second initiative is an online book club focusing on lifelong learning and career development.

Almost 13,000 alumni made use of careers programming over the year – close to double our goal.



Creating New Connections

Our programming staff go to great lengths to keep established community events such as the Lunar New Year celebrations and the *alumni UBC* Achievement Awards fresh and engaging. At the same time, they are always on the lookout for new ways to serve our alumni and the university, and this year has seen several new initiatives, including the following examples:

Student Alumni Council

As part of our expanding student engagement strategy, we established UBC Vancouver's first Student Alumni Council, in partnership with the President's Office. The council is made up of student volunteers who are tasked with creating more student programming that involves the participation of alumni. This programming will support UBC students during their time at UBC, and simultaneously increase their awareness of the services and opportunities available to them as alumni after they graduate.

The Student Alumni Council complements the existing *alumni UBC* Advisory Council, a unique 40-member group of alumni volunteers, along with three student representatives, who are available for consultation by university leaders on key UBC developments and opportunities.

Notes from Alumni

Earlier this year, *alumni UBC*'s Okanagan office launched Notes from Alumni, a more personal way of connecting alumni and students. Alumni were invited to take a moment to help brighten a student's day by writing a note of advice or encouragement on a postcard. The completed postcards are distributed throughout the year to students.

The A Project

In December, *alumni UBC*'s Okanagan office launched The A Project, a volunteer program giving UBC alumni the opportunity to work shoulder-to-shoulder on local community service projects. For the inaugural project, alumni helped assemble holiday food hampers at the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank, which distributes 2,200 food hampers during the holiday season. This ongoing program provides a platform for alumni to give back to the community, while strengthening ties with fellow UBC grads.

alumni UBC Pro-Am Golf Tournament

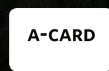
In May, *alumni UBC* hosted the inaugural Pro-Am at Point Grey Golf and Country Club, which was presented by Manulife and MNP Financial in partnership with the MacKenzie Tour – PGA Tour Canada. Under sunny skies, participants enjoyed some friendly inter-faculty rivalry while playing alongside the next wave of PGA Tour standouts. The winning team donated the scholarship prize to the Sauder School of Business.



Nourishing Pride



15,252
Address Updates
GOAL: 18,000



84,142
A-Card Activations
GOAL: 91,500



52,241
Publication Clickthroughs
GOAL: 29,000



51,758
Trek Online Readers
GOAL: 44,000



63,426
Social Media Followers
GOAL: 64,000



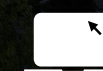
6,279
Social Video Views
GOAL: 34,000



Supporting Professional Development



12,804
Program Participants
GOAL: 7,000



3,670
Careers Newsletter Readers
GOAL: 7,500



1,917
Alumni Mentors
GOAL: 2,000



Empowering Personal Growth



9,916
Program Participants
GOAL: 7,000



15,119
Podcast Listens
GOAL: 10,000



Enabling Contribution



4,989
Volunteers
GOAL: 5,000



7,750
Donors
GOAL: 13,000