

Follow-Up to Our June 2nd Conversation

Arvind,

Lindsay and I thank you for the time we had together to discuss a constructive path forward for your leadership of the University of British Columbia. It bears repeating, that the Board of Governors wishes you success in the role.

A lot of territory was covered in a short period of time. Like you, we would like to move forward with some urgency. First, we must achieve a mutual understanding of how the Board's key concerns, which have been formally shared with you, will be addressed by you in the coming weeks and months. For reference, the letter outlining our concerns has been included as an attachment found in the email delivering this note.

Your written response, sent to Lindsay and me on June 2nd, made very clear your aspiration to advancing UBC's stature within Canada and beyond. It was also appreciated that you clearly expressed your commitment to improving your effectiveness in the role, in the best interest of the University.

Arvind, you quite rightly suggested that for you to be effective as President of UBC, you will need the Board's explicit support. You had suggested that you would like to share your written response to the Board's concern's with the Executive Committee of the Board - which we support. Prior to doing so, we have some suggestions which we believe, if accepted by you, will strengthen your overall support by and confidence of the Board. While the commentary is direct and hopefully contextual, they are merely suggestions. We will reference the sections found within your written response:

Re: Creating an environment of trust, collegiality and collaboration

- **UBC Executive:** we believe that your proposed one to one meetings are a very good start at rebuilding relationships. We recommend that in doing so,

you acknowledge that you have not been as effective, as you would have expected of yourself, in building trust with the team and that as a result, you are seeking advice on how you can improve your relationships with the individual and the team. Furthermore, we strongly suggest that you commit to working closely with each individual and their team to provide greater clarity of success in their roles, near term and beyond, and specifically how those goals align to your vision for the University.

- **Deans:** both Lindsay and I found this section light on further strategies to improve your engagement with the Deans. We completely understand your desire to ensure that Dr. Redish has every opportunity to succeed in her role as Interim Provost, however, we ask that you reflect further on how you will build trust with the Deans in a more interactive manner.
- **Provost Search:** critical to you building trust with key stakeholders is how, and when, you intend to conduct a review of the Provost model. Moreover, proposing a timeline for when the Provost search will be conducted will lessen existing anxieties regarding your intent for the role. We suggest that your letter to the Executive Committee of the Board address how you propose to begin the process of the review and when you anticipate the commencement of the formal search. As an aside, we suggest engaging student leadership to request an exemption to current protocols and seek a more timely solution to selecting student representatives. Also, please do reference Dr. Redish as “Interim Provost”.
- **Board Engagement:** first and foremost, we suggest it is important to convey that you fully appreciate that the Board of Governors is a governance board with a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the university consistent with the University Act – no aspects of the Act are to be ignored at your discretion, only at the discretion of the Board. It will be ideal that you explicitly acknowledge your understanding that you report to the Board. This may seem like overkill, but the Board is very concerned that you may not fully appreciate the importance of formal governance, in every aspect of your role. There is general consensus that your actions and reactions to the Board’s concerns, advice and inquiries suggest you possess

an indifference or intolerance of the Board at best - or worse, an intended disregard of its authority. That being said, your expressed desire to involve the Board more strategically is very welcome and we look forward to more engaging Board discussions. We suggest conveying that you accept taking greater control of the agenda.

- **President's Office:** we remain deeply concerned that you have a very inexperienced team around you. Elaborating on how you can make your office more effective and trusted is important on a go forward basis. Specifically, do you have the right people in your office and do you have sufficient resources to get the information you need on a timely basis and in accurate form? How will you resolve the issue of trust?

Communication and Coordination

- We appreciate you acknowledging the need for improving your communications with internal and external stakeholders. Would you consider having Sandra Danard and the VP External reporting directly to you to get unfiltered insight of emerging public and external relations concerns? The President is responsible for the "brand" and reputation of the university and it is critical to have a finger on the pulse of key issues emerging within stakeholder groups.
- Are you able to commit to more expedient replacement of individuals in key roles? The VP External and Heather's role in development come to mind. We remain concerned that individuals are let go in advance of you crystalising your views of what the solution will be on a go-forward basis. Can we expect crisper execution of key developments within the professional ranks?

Challenges of Change

- You mention in your letter that your first year of leadership concentrated on building the foundations for change. From the Board's perspective, it feels that the foundation has weakened, as a result of the turmoil on campus, within key stakeholder groups. While you have

accomplished many good things in your first year, acknowledging that the foundation has been weakened as a result of your leadership style would be an important observation by you.

- Can you outline how you will build consensus around your vision and the tactics required for effective execution of the strategy in support of the vision? What are the next steps to be expected by the Board so that you can manage the Board's expectations?
- Relatedly, we agree with you that you must empower your direct reports. Critically important is how you will impart clarity of purpose, that will inspire your direct reports, through the visioning process? How do we remove the sense, fairly or unfairly, that the "ship is rudderless"? Can you lead in anyway differently to inspire and guide your team?

Arvind, these are suggestions for you to consider in your letter to the Executive Committee of the Board. We have provided you with these suggestions to support you in your discussions with the Board. We appreciate that you may not agree with some of them and therefore leave it to your judgement as to how or if you edit your original letter.

In my discussions with Lindsay and Greg this morning, we suggest that we spend considerable time discussing your letter at the Executive Committee of the Board with you present but then end the meeting with 30 minutes of in-camera. From that discussion, I will sit down with you and provide you further feedback from the Executive Committee on an appropriate plan for pushing forward.

We share your sense of urgency and the need to openly and genuinely support you as a Board. My hope is that from Monday's meeting will come a mutual understanding of the conditions for success.

Sincerely,

John