Good morning. Thank you Mr. Chair. It is my pleasure to meet with your Committee. On behalf of the University of Victoria, I welcome the opportunity to present our recent successes as well as some ideas for the present and the future to build on BC’s successful investment in post-secondary education - a key goal for our university.

To begin, I join many other voices in stating that it is clear – BC’s is home to a world-class post-secondary system, including research-based universities such as UVic. We in the post-secondary sector have worked together to ensure BC continues to attract talent, educate people and generate ideas to continue to drive
our province’s social and economic prosperity. We will continue to build on this work to pave a strong and inclusive future for everyone going forward.

In my remarks today, I intend to provide a clear outline of UVic and the vital impact it has across BC, Canada and the world. With the Province’s support we continue to provide high quality education to more than 22,000 students every year making us the 3rd largest university in BC. And perhaps you may not know that 70% of our students come from outside the Victoria area. In fact, 3590 come from the ridings of members on this committee – a remarkable 16% of our student population. More specifically, if we remove the students from the ridings of our friends in Victoria, we have 1450 students from your collective ridings - or 10% of our total student population.

The economic impact of the University of Victoria in our province is substantial. Studies have shown that impact to be $3.2 billion annually. We have a total budget of $600 million with an operating budget of close to $325 million ($172 million of which is a provincial grant). What is most impressive is the quality of and success of our students and faculty. With government investment, research funds and more, our students have earned more than 120,000 degrees from more than 40 departments. At UVic we are focused on quality, student success, measureable outcomes and ensuring we provide the right combination of talent and ideas for this and future generations.

UVic by the Numbers

- 22,000 students overall
- Almost 4,000 graduate students
- Just over 4,000 international students from 118 countries
- Over 1,000 Indigenous students
- 2nd largest co-op program
- 120,000 alumni
- 93% satisfaction from our graduates
- 93% employment rate for our grads
- $3.2b in annual economic impact
- $567m in total revenues
- Over $100m in outside research funding
- 2nd in Canada in CFI grants per faculty member
- One of Maclean’s top comprehensive universities since the rankings’ inception
- One of Canada’s top universities as ranked by the Times, QS and Shanghai rankings
Our Dynamic Learning Edge

The Learning Edge is where UVic’s commitment to dynamic learning creates a natural advantage for our students. Here, research-inspired learning integrated with hands-on experiences accelerates personal growth and career success. We have the second largest co-op program in Canada (per capita), where well over 50% of our students participate in co-op programs and other forms of work integrated learning. In some programs such as Engineering and Business, that number jumps to 100%. We have more than 1200 employer partners all over the globe, including Silicon Valley with Google and Tesla, China, and right here in BC with our close partners at the Business Council of BC and the BC Public Service.

You will hear more about the importance of work-integrated learning later this morning, but I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize how experiences such as co-op, internships, practicums, work study and more are a critical learning platform for UVic. With over 3000 work-term placements every year, these placements meld academic learning with the attainment of necessary workplace skills, providing clear pathways to opportunity.

As our sector has outlined in the past, it is essential that we are see the linkages between the capacity and quality of post-secondary education and a strong regional and provincial economy.

More specifically, I want to emphasize the important role that our graduate students play. I will also pause and echo some earlier comments by my colleagues at SFU about graduate student support. BC is falling behind other provinces. Almost half of our graduate students are unfunded. These graduate students are essential to BC’s economic present and future. They bring knowledge and ideas from our universities into their communities. They are our highly qualified personnel and they are BC’s social, economic and technological future.

Maher Fahmi is one such graduate student. Maher graduated in 1994 with a degree in electrical engineering. Maher is now the Vice-President at Microsemi in Burnaby. Maher, like many of our graduate students, benefitted from world class teaching and research. We at UVic continue to build upon programs like the Engineering Entrepreneurship @UVic Program. Since its establishment in 2009, the Program has spawned five start-up companies; Tutela Technologies, Referral SaaSquatch, Pretio Interactive, Encepta, and Echosec Systems. Of the 16 students who have gone through the program, all 16 have graduated the program and immediately founded or co-founded companies. This 100% success rate separates the @UVic program from global competitors and is due in part to the extensive effort put in by program coordinators. These 16 graduates have created five EEMP founded companies, whose combined staff exceed 100 and which produce over $10M in annual revenues.

Our students go on to make a positive difference in BC’s social, cultural and economic growth. UVic’s programs directly align with the BC Jobs Plan and continually respond and meet the needs of BC’s dynamic labour market. Close to 80% of all anticipated job openings over the next decade will require college and/or university qualifications. Our grads find jobs – 94% after two years and 95% after five years - but not always in BC. UVic continues to respond to the BC Jobs Plan and Tech Strategy by creating more student places in critical fields than any other BC university.
Graph 1: Illustrates the rise in jobs that require a PSE education in Province of BC.

Our Vital Impact

Figure 1: Graphic Illustration of UVic’s Inventions and Patents.
Moving on to research, I would like to emphasize that the research happening at UVic is vital to the development of social, economic and environmental innovation – and to BC’s future. In addition to teaching and learning, we are one of BC’s top research universities. Our research excellence has been recognized within Canada and around the world.

Working with many partners in public and private sector, including the Government of BC, we attract significant research investments. Last year, you heard The Research Universities’ Council of BC or RUCBC, representing the interests of the six major universities in BC, as they outlined the importance of maintaining the province’s commitment to the BC Knowledge Development Fund. Again this year, I would like to reinforce this message. At UVic, our faculty researchers bring in over $100 million per year to support research, training and skills development for the next generation of doers, thinkers and leaders and the BCKDF is instrumental in those efforts. We are grateful for their support and partnership.

Just last week, we hosted Minister Virk on campus to announce and celebrate BCKDF’s $8.7 million contribution to support TRIUMF’s Advanced Rare Isotope Laboratory (ARIEL), a two-phase multidisciplinary research facility that will advance our fundamental understanding of the world in which we live. When complete ARIEL will produce new isotopes for diagnosing and treating cancers, heart disease, Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s.

To further unpack our research, let me tell you about one of many important projects in your backyard.

First is our world-class oceans and climate teaching and research. As you know, our coastal communities are at risk - slope failures on the Fraser River delta, earthquakes, and other possible disasters such as spills and accidents that could damage or even destroy important infrastructure such as the Deltaport, Tsawwassen ferry terminal and more. Our researchers have deployed an array of instruments on our ocean floor to measure such events and the data we have collected is already having an impact. With the recent support of $5 million from the BC Government for early earthquake warning systems, it is now possible to think through how the instruments can be used as an early warning system for BC residents and how to better respond to spills and more. These partnerships are a pure demonstration of how research leads to commercialization, but also how study, learning and research leads to training, jobs and economic growth.

At UVic we continue to challenge ourselves in new and important ways, always thinking about how to bring better ideas and people to our greatest challenges. Perhaps none more important than clean technologies, oceans and transportation. Initiatives such as wave and tidal energy, or hybrid and electric technologies demonstrate our innovation and commitment to a cleaner and greener society. Consider the following: with support from Transport Canada and in partnership with BC Ferries, we have developed a model Based Design and Optimization Tool for Hybrid Electric Marine Vessels. The new research addresses the deficiencies of the traditional marine design tools. BC Ferries is providing the UVic research team access to the new hybrid electric ferry (M.V. Tachek) operated between Quadra Island and Cortes Island, to collect field data for the validation of vessel- and route-specific hybrid powertrain system models. These models will be used to form new design tools for the hybrid electric propulsion system of marine vessels, including ferries and tugboats off the BC Coast.
Research like this, with a vital impact, extends beyond our oceans and climate to health sciences, engineering, physics and astronomy. Areas critical to our mutual success. Our new Strategic Research Plan outlines our commitment to leading the field and bringing our people and ideas to bear on some of our greatest social challenges. With these great challenges in mind, our students and faculty are continually engaged in community based learning and research with real life implications and impact. Our graduates chair the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, participate in international roundtables on environment and Climate Change, harness waves to explore new forms of energy, facilitate land and water usage arrangements with First Nations communities and help find lasting solutions for mental health, addiction and homelessness.

*Our Extraordinary Environment*

The third pillar of our UVic Edge is our extraordinary environment. Place matters. We are a vibrant Pacific Rim community on Indigenous territory. Discovery, creativity, and innovation come naturally to us and we work exceedingly hard to inspire bold action and new ways of thinking.

Influenced by our extraordinary environment, our students and researchers lead in areas like oceans, climate change, sustainability, Pacific and Asian studies among other areas. Our students are active in learning and in research in critical areas such as technology, environmental sciences, social work and health sciences and law and Indigenous governance. In particular, UVic is a national leader in closing the educational gap for Indigenous students. With over 1000 Indigenous students on campus each year, we are strong in our resolve to advance reconciliation and healing for our students. We share the Government’s commitment to work to strengthen our Indigenous communities and provide the talent and the energy to ensure Indigenous peoples can share in social, cultural and economic prosperity. UVic is committed to improving the levels of participation and success for Aboriginal learners, and to implementing BC’s Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan.
Graph 2: Indigenous Enrollment at UVic – by the numbers.

In closing, it is these 3 themes of vital impact, dynamic learning and extraordinary environment upon which I would like to outline my proposal for investment in Budget 2017. There is a significant opportunity for British Columbians, building upon a strong and growing economy, to ensure continuous diversification and to support long-term job creation in the province, I propose the following opportunities:

**UVic’s Proposal**

First, UVic working together with the BC Government can make a vital impact on BC families and ensure a strong economy. As I mentioned earlier we are committed to thoughtful growth in the post-secondary sector. Government’s 2025 Labour Market Outlook estimates that as many as 935,000 jobs will open up in the province from 2015 to 2025 through retirements and new job creation. Occupations in Engineering – civil, management, green tech, clean growth – comprise some 5,000 job opening and all have some of the highest wage rates within their occupation.

Over the past four years, even without new operating funding, we have grown our programs in engineering, computer science and other related disciplines by nearly 80%. Student, community and industry demand for these programs have been exceptionally strong. Over the past six years, Applications are up 100%. For 2015-16 there were 2,616 applicants for 675 spaces.

We can do more, but not without additional classrooms, labs, and operating funds. Recent government support for renovations to one of our last war huts will provide some short-term surge capacity, but with some additional operating and capital funding we can do so much more. We are ready to build a new wing in our computer science and engineering complex that would allow us to continue this success - to meet the student demand and or provincial need for talent and ideas in these critical fields.
We need your support to build on our shared success and grow a more fully integrated program including computer science, electrical and computer engineering, software engineering, biomedical, mechanical and green/sustainable civil. UVic’s faculty of Engineering is proposing to expand to meet 20% of this critical labour market need for both BC’s diversified and expanding economy.

Second, UVic’s commitment to learning begins and ends with our students. Evidence tells us that students who live in residence have an academic advantage. The combination of designated study space, academic skills programming, scholastic role models, and peer study groups combine to create an environment conducive to academic acceleration.

UVic, along with many British Columbians, was pleased to hear about the recent announcement on housing affordability. The BC Government commitment of $500 million to the Housing Priorities Initiative Fund including student housing will ensure more British Columbian families have access to affordable rental housing and will have a real and lasting impact. In fact, it may be the first time we have seen student housing included in such an announcement.

We are currently working with numerous partners to try and bring forward practical and lasting solutions to the challenges of housing in BC and more specifically to the Capital Region. We would like to seek the Committee’s continued support for additional student residence(s) for 600+ students. These additional residences will take the pressure off community and ensure those in need, low income families, single income families and seniors are given the opportunity to live in an affordable home.

Within our region, a critical shortage of student housing exists. At the University of Victoria some 10,000+
of our total 20,000 students apply for just 2,700 on-campus units. This volume places a significant drain on available stock in the region and reduces vacancy rates, including the rentals available for essential workers in the region. The vacancy rate is 0.6 in Greater Victoria, the lowest in Canada. UVic has land to accommodate several hundred new units within our own fiscal reserves. We are very actively pursuing a number of innovative partnerships for an expanded student housing continuum that we believe will have significant transferability for our system colleagues.

Third, our extraordinary environment is the setting for partnership. And in particular, our Indigenous partnerships. UVic has a new Indigenous Plan that carefully outlines a way forward for our university and our role in Indigenous reconciliation. With a commitment to Indigenous education, language revitalization, and social, cultural and economic development we are at the forefront of Canada’s nation to nation conversations.

UVic is dedicated to creating pathways to success for our Indigenous students. Over the past decade we have seen a better than 100% increase in our Indigenous student enrollment. We continue to ensure our programming is responding to the needs of the communities across BC. We understand government is taking a team approach to reconciliation and de-colonization, and we want to be a critical partner. We understand the importance of capacity building, and investment in Indigenous leadership and governance. Finding solutions to challenges such as the well-being of children and families is at the heart of much of our work.

We would like your support to continue to invest in Indigenous post-secondary education and by extension support leadership, public service and capacity-building in our Indigenous communities. Our graduates and their ideas are essential to re-thinking and re-tooling the system to allow for the critical conversations and efforts that will move us toward reconciliation. At UVic we are dedicated to fully integrating our teaching and research programs across the full range of social, cultural, legal and economic issues. It is only through this horizontal and fully cohesive approach can we hope to move forward. Investment in teacher education, social work, language revitalization, law and Indigenous governance and entrepreneurialism will make a difference. These fields of study and areas of action are essential to help transform our institutions and processes based on sharing principles for the benefit of all British Columbians while deeply honouring our Indigenous people’s rightful place in an inclusive society and a progressive economy.
I trust I have outlined what I believe are UVic’s strengths and contributions to BC’s social and economic fabric. The future looks very bright for our students and for our Province. We appreciate our partnership with the Government of BC and look forward ensuring greater prosperity for all.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. You will hear from me again shortly as the Chair of RUCBC and I look forward to speaking on behalf of the sector about the opportunities for the system as whole.

Jamie Cassels,  
President, UVic