THE EMINENCE PROGRAM: CLUSTER DEFINITION AND EXPECTATIONS

Research clusters are interdisciplinary networks of researchers focused on solving key challenges facing society. The scholars that comprise clusters are leaders in their areas of expertise and clustering enables them to work together, as a unit, on complex problems that may transcend traditional departmental or institutional boundaries. Clusters are expected to perform high-impact research and to develop new knowledge that allows UBC to solve big open questions. Establishing and supporting clusters of research excellence is central to UBC’s research strategy.

Clusters will be benchmarked using objective and concrete evidence of research excellence. Research outcomes will be expected to be impactful and will have standard bibliometric and discipline-specific measures. Base-line measures will include funding levels, bibliometrics, prizes and awards, and partnerships. Discipline metrics will vary and will be proposed by cluster applicants.

At UBC Okanagan, we expect our research clusters to be/become:

- A draw for faculty and trainee recruitment;
- Groups that are highly competitive for funding;
- Capable of vertically integrating with undergraduate and graduate training programs;
- Capable of developing and leveraging regional, provincial or national assets and partnerships;
- Recognized as unique provincial centres of excellence, with aspirations to develop national and international profiles;
- Strategic, with likelihood of successfully competing for CFI, CECR, CREATE, NCE, SSHRC-PG, etc. funding in coming years.

Our campus strongly supports developing clusters that leverage existing strengths and are aligned with the strategic plans of the units, faculties, campus and university. Two planning retreats were held with the Okanagan Leadership Team in 2016 to begin to identify potential clusters of excellence. From these, six focused thematic areas were identified in which the campus has critical mass and demonstrated strength:

- Healthy Living, Wellness and Aging
- Ecological Resilience and Recovery
- Advanced Materials and Manufacturing
- Municipal Planning, Management, and Infrastructure
- Media, Culture and Information Technologies
- Society, Change, and Justice

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive. The emergence of research clusters from all scholarly areas on campus is encouraged, including those that may not be represented here.

Our campus is simultaneously committed to two cross-cutting strategic domains, articulated in Aspire, that emphasize our commitment to:

- Regional engagement for socio-economic advancement
- Respectful engagement with Indigenous and other local communities, taking into consideration the tenets of community-based research.