
NEWS RELEASE COMMUNIQUÉ

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Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

UVic researchers, students ride waves of success with new science facility

VICTORIA – Students, researchers and staff at the University of Victoria (UVic) are conducting research into the effects of the world’s changing oceans and climate using a new modern, upgraded and centralized facility.

The official opening of the new \$9.5-million Ocean-Climate Building at the Queenswood campus was celebrated with Jonathan Wilkinson, federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard; Spencer Chandra Herbert, MLA for Vancouver-West End on behalf of Melanie Mark, B.C.’s Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training; UVic president Jamie Cassels; and university students, staff and faculty.

“The new Ocean-Climate Building is preparing for 21st-century careers in a diverse, strong, sustainable 21st-century economy,” said Mark. “By working together, students, researchers and businesses, along with Indigenous nations play a vital role in protecting our environment. Research produced at UVic will improve our quality of life, help B.C. rise to the challenge of climate change and support our plan for a better, cleaner future.”

The nearly 2,787 square-metre (30,000 sq. ft.) building, which opened in late July 2018, provides an interdisciplinary, collaborative space for UVic’s ocean, climate change and data management research programs. It is now home to over 200 researchers, co-op students, scientists and staff.

“With nearly 30,000 square feet dedicated to vital research to fight and adapt to climate change, and to protect our oceans, the new Ocean-Climate Building will help make a real difference,” Chandra Herbert said. “These facilities will help the over 200 researchers, scientists and students collaborate, discover and plot a path forward to a cleaner, more sustainable province.”

The Queenswood location now houses Ocean Networks Canada (ONC), an initiative of UVic. Its work includes sensor cables on the ocean floor to gather data and develop earthquake and tsunami, as well as whale collision-avoidance, alerts. The new World Data System International Technology Office, which manages, connects and co-ordinates information, is located in the new complex.

“The Government of Canada has had a long and productive relationship with the University of Victoria and Ocean Networks Canada,” Wilkinson said. “Canada’s investments, including those announced today, will help further our work with the University of Victoria and ONC to better support measures implemented through the Oceans Protection Plan and improve safety in Canadian waters. These investments will also help us better understand our oceans and improve our efforts to protect their health and sustainability, while also aiding efforts to

address the effects of climate change and protect aquatic species for our kids and grandkids.”

The total cost was \$9.5 million, with \$3.5 million from the Government of Canada’s Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund, \$850,000 from the Government of British Columbia and \$5.15 million from UVic.

“We are thankful to the federal and provincial governments for their support of UVic’s leadership in oceans and climate research, and one of the highest concentrations of researchers who are deepening the world’s knowledge about the interconnectivity of oceans and climate for a sustainable future,” Cassels said.

The building is a renovated and repurposed former residential care home. The extensive renovation includes new electrical, sanitary and waterworks connections, fibre optic networks and extensive seismic upgrades. A major feature of the redesign incorporates a flexible, demountable interior wall system to create large, collaborative workspaces as well as individual offices configured to serve specific needs.

The research conducted in the new facility builds on the spirit of reconciliation as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The work to improve environmental protections supports the work of First Nations who recognize the importance of the natural beauty of the province and were the original stewards of the land.

Government recently launched the CleanBC plan to cut air pollution, boost the economy and make life better for people. The research produced in this building can contribute to CleanBC by helping B.C. rise to the challenge of climate change, which supports British Columbians in leading the clean transition.

Investments through the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund are being used to modernize facilities at Canadian universities and colleges, as well as improve the energy efficiency of these facilities and reduce their impact on the environment.

Quick Facts:

- The building is within walking distance of the main UVic campus.
- The electrical and mechanical systems were upgraded to modern energy standards. This included energy-efficient variable refrigerant flow HVAC units, LED lighting and low water volume plumbing.
- The roof, which had reached end of life, was replaced. Additional insulation was installed.
- British Columbia has received \$256 million through the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund. Twenty public post-secondary institutions and one private First Nations institution in B.C. are benefiting from 30 individual projects throughout the province.
- The CleanBC plan puts B.C. on the path to a cleaner future. Initiatives include:
 - launching a standard to make all new car sales zero-emission vehicles by 2040, with a supporting plan to make them more available, convenient and affordable;
 - improving fuel standards to cut carbon pollution and make air cleaner; and
 - making every new building “net-zero energy ready” by the year 2032.

Learn More:

Canada's innovation agenda: <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/062.nsf/eng/home>

Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund:
<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/051.nsf/eng/home>

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